

Key points: This project focuses on holding a workshop on Political Leadership in the European Union (EU) 'EULead', a public event with leading EU officials, publishing the results in an academic journal and disseminating the knowledge through a policy brief and the media. The policy brief will be presented at a final dissemination event in Brussels.

Background and rationale: The financial crisis has made clear that the EU faces difficulties in exercising political leadership. Ample questions have been raised in popular press and public debates about the leadership of the EU in this context. However, the issue plays hardly a role in scientific debates and analyses. Recently a few edited volumes have been published on the topic e.g. Beach/Mazzucelli (2007), Hayward (2008), but they only deal with selected aspects of the issue. Furthermore, they lack an encompassing theoretical framework and present rather a patchwork of preliminary conclusions instead of an encompassing scientific analysis. Against this background, we aim at raising attention to the importance of political leadership in the EU, stimulate research on the topic, and thus to generate new insights into and theoretical understanding of the issue. This, in turn, might spur further academic research and point to possible solutions for politicians and administrators alike.

We aim to hold a workshop in Osnabrück, Germany. This location is chosen for cost effectiveness reasons, and also to be closer to the European citizens and its civil society. The workshop has as goal to prepare original articles for publication in a leading peer-reviewed international academic journal. For this workshop and the eventual publication, a group of leading scholars on the issue have been confirmed as presenters, together with few PhD-candidates whose doctoral research covers innovative aspects of EU leadership. The following research questions will structure the individual papers and the debates of the workshop: How do individuals and institutions exercise political leadership in the EU? What are the institutional, situational or individual resources and constraints that enable or hamper the exercise of political leadership in the EU? To what extent can theories of political leadership in the context of national political systems be transferred to the European context? What elements of leadership theories are most suitable for a study of leadership in the EU?

The three activities include: a scientific workshop concluded by a public session, an editors meeting, and a dissemination event.

The objectives: to contribute to the scholarly debate on leadership in the EU, to contribute and inform the public debate about EU leadership, and to disseminate our findings to a policy community of practitioners, EU officials, the general public and to civil society. The draft papers will be available on a website (but taken down from that website during the review process). The final scholarly papers will have gone through peer review before being published.

The main outputs: background paper, draft contributors papers (on the website), workshop, public event at the end of the workshop, editors meeting to finalise the papers, final papers submitted to review, final papers published in a special issue of a journal, policy brief, dissemination event of this policy brief, engagement with new social media and traditional media.

The outcomes and impact: to have produced the above-mentioned main outputs. The quality of the public event and the dissemination will be assessed through an evaluation form completed by those present.