

# EUROPE•NYC

New York Consortium for European Studies

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY • COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

December 2007

## Affirmative Action in French Education Systems

By Elise Langan

**CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND  
MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES**  
New York University

285 Mercer Street, 7th floor  
New York, NY 10003  
Telephone: 212.998.3838  
Fax: 212.995.4188

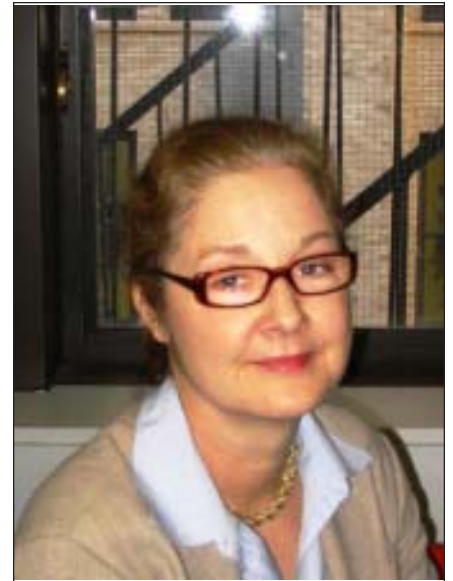
**K. E. Fleming**, Director  
**Jennifer Denbo**, Assistant Director  
**Leah Ramirez**, Administrative Aide  
**Alexandra Larschan**, Co-Editor  
**Lyublyana Stoyanova**, Co-Editor  
**Geneva Jones**, Writer

**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY  
OF EUROPE**  
Columbia University

School of International and Public  
Affairs  
420 West 118th Street  
New York, NY 10027  
Telephone: 212.854.4618  
Fax: 212.854.8599

**Volker Berghahn**, Director  
**John Miggiel**, Executive Director  
**Kevin Hallinan**, Assistant Director

The French educational system was created as a means to uphold the republican principles emanating from the Revolution. The 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the French Constitution says the Republic assures equality before the law of all citizens without distinction of origin or race. Thus, it is not only forbidden to discriminate, but also to make distinctions that privilege one category over another. The republican ideal is that all citizens are French and nothing but—not Catholic, nor Muslim, not of Algerian nor Portuguese descent, not woman nor man. In short, the privileges bestowed by French citizenship override identification with ethnicity or religious groups and stipulate that difference does not exist in the French public sphere. Theoretically, this means that all French citizens, irrespective of religion, race or social standing, should receive the same education and be afforded the same opportunities and rights. The



*Professor Elise Langan is a visiting scholar and instructor at the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies at New York University.*

Jules Ferry education laws of 1881-1884 guaranteed free, compulsory and secular education for all French citizens, consequently turning the republican ideal into an institution.

*Continued on page 4*

### More in this issue:

- Outside the Euro Club: European Neighborhood Policy.....2
- Sarkozy: The First Six Months.....3
- EU and US Economic Relations....2
- EuroDigest.....4
- The EU at 50.....3
- Upcoming events.....9

#### SUBSCRIBE

The Center for European Studies hosts EUROLIST, an electronic medium through which the NYU community can be kept aware of information and events relating to Europe. To subscribe to EUROLIST, please go to <http://forums.nyu.edu/cgi-bin/nyu.pl?enter=eurolist> and click on "join eurolist". It is also possible for subscribers to submit messages to the list.

## Outside the Euro Club: The European Neighborhood Policy

New York University: Friday, November 9  
By Alexandra Larschan and Lyublyana Stoyanova

A lecture by Professor Katja Weber focusing on the new directions in the development of a European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was held at the New York University Center for European and Mediterranean Studies. Professor Weber also presented the book *Governing Europe's New Neighborhood: Partners or periphery?*, for which she was a co-editor and a contributing author.

Although the EU previously used membership as a policy tool, Weber suggested that the EU can no longer apply this technique as it is approaching the limits of its capacity to accept new member states. Thus, the European Neighborhood Policy serves as the main policy tool to promote democratic government and economic development in the countries neighboring the EU. The policy works to establish a relationship with a ring of friendly and democratic states in the Union's

periphery; these include states in Northern Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Southern Caucasus. The ENP is a chance for the European Union to secure peace and stability along its borders. While the European Neighborhood Policy is often described as a new initiative, it is actually rooted in several decades of EU cooperation with non-member states. One of the challenges in consolidating European policy is dealing with individual national policies and prior relationships between states. This is especially the case in nations with special ties to former colonies. France, for example, has recently worked to assert its own leadership in the Mediterranean region through Sarkozy's proposed Mediterranean Union. Discussion following the lecture focused on the role of the new EU Reform Treaty and the varying uses of the ENP in different regions.



*Katja Weber is an Associate Professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Co-Director of the European Union Center of the University System of Georgia.*

### From Free Trade to Deep Integration: EU and US Economic Relations

CUNY: Tuesday, November 13  
By Geneva Jones

The CUNY Graduate Center held a lecture by Norbert Walter, Chief Economist of the Deutsche Bank Research Group, which reviewed the current state of EU-US economic relations. The talk also commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Otto Walter (no relation to the speaker).

In the beginning of his lecture, Norbert Walter presented biographical information about the late Otto Walter, focusing primarily on his effort to establish friendly relation and political dialogue between Germany and the United

States after World War II. Otto Walter was also a strong proponent of the EU. Therefore, Norbert Walter remarked, the commemoration of his birth with a lecture on US-EU trade negotiations is appropriate to honor his achievements in the sphere.

Walter focused his talk on the current status of transatlantic trade. He stated that there is fresh political impetus in the EU under Angela Merkel to reevaluate long-standing economic concerns. Under Angela Merkel, the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) was established to

expedite the breaking down of trade barriers through regular monitoring and reporting. The TEC met recently in Washington, D.C., and set an agenda to focus on strengthening economic integration through policy coordination. Walter elaborated that areas of focus will include innovation, product standardization, and intellectual property rights. At the same time, priority industries are expected to be financial markets, aviation, telecommunications, and government procurement. Walter concluded his presentation by predicting a trade enhancement between the US and the EU as a result of the TEC's activities, especially when policies governing the above-mentioned industries are regularized.

## The EU at 50: Fifty years young or midlife crisis?

Columbia University: Wednesday, November 14  
By Lyublyana Stoyanova

A talk by Mattias Sundholm, Deputy Spokesman for the European Commission Delegation to the US, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, to be celebrated on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, took place at Columbia University. The anniversary of the treaty that established the EU's predecessor—the European Economic Community—coincided with the ongoing political debate on the EU Reform Treaty, which prompts a re-evaluation of the concrete achievements of the EU, and its political, economic and legal implications for its members.

Sundholm pointed out two major successes of EU integration policy—the preservation of peace in Europe, and the process of

enlargement, which was carried out regardless of the political, social and economic consequences. He defined EU enlargement as the ultimate transformative power of the EU, which the Union uses to align acceding countries to the standards of democracy and market economy. Also unique to the EU, according to Sundholm, is the voluntary principle of participation in the structures of the Union, and the absolute parity of new members with old core countries upon accession.

As another achievement of the EU, Sundholm mentioned its increased role in global affairs, which is evidenced by the Union's active involvement in peacekeeping operations, its humanitarian aid

contributions, dedication to security sector and judicial reform in developing countries, and most of all the initiation of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), under which some EU privileges, but not full EU membership, are extended to neighboring countries.

Sundholm concluded his presentation with an overview of the EU Reform Treaty, and its envisaged implications for the development of the EU. He referred to its voting-related provisions as facilitating the decision-making process in EU institutions, which in turn will result in increased adaptability of the Union to the conditions of a globalized world.

## Sarkozy : The First Six Months

New York University: Wednesday, November 27  
By Alexandra Larschan

In a month marked by strikes and riots in the *banlieue*, a dialogue with Jane Kramer on French President Nicolas Sarkozy's first six months in office could not have been more timely. Kramer used the forum to discuss her analysis of Sarkozy based on personal interviews and political assessments as the New Yorker's European correspondent. Focusing first on Sarkozy's presidential style, Kramer explained how both his policies and personality are full of contradictions. While often appearing impatient, he has been surprisingly calm throughout the recent strikes. Although Sarkozy sometimes plays the role of a relaxed President in the American style, Kramer argued that this conflicts with his own formality as a traditional French politician,

citing the example of Sarkozy appearing in a formal suit on a popular MTV-style morning show. Kramer suggested that these conflicting identities are also revealed in his policies. In French-US relations, Sarkozy is eager to show a strengthened relationship with the U.S. while still opposing the war in Iraq. In terms of economic policy, he shows a desire to encourage business development and reform the welfare state while simultaneously insisting on the *exception française*.

Much of the conversation focused on the topic of Sarkozy's immigration policy, which Kramer revealed as a further contradiction. Although Sarkozy is most notably remembered for declaring the *banlieue* residents "scum," Kramer added that Sarkozy has made a significant effort to form

a diverse cabinet. This discussion of Sarkozy's proposed immigration policies (including the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity and DNA testing as a requirement for family reunification) sparked a lively debate with the audience. While Sarkozy is often perceived as anti-immigrant, Kramer insisted that he is not xenophobic. Instead, she suggested that he is working to develop policy solutions to the difficult questions of immigration and integration. Finally, Kramer responded to the charges that Sarkozy has tackled too many issues during his first six months in office, suggesting perhaps that enacting economic and social policies simultaneously might be the most effective approach.

continued from page 1

The notion of secularism or "*laïcité*" was further illustrated in 1905 by a law<sup>1</sup> that made France a secular state, thus making it illegal for the census to compile data concerning race, ethnicity or religion. After World War II, the French social model of solidarity and fraternity was bolstered by the creation of the French welfare state—a construct that is currently under fire by French employees, labor unions and educational systems. With increased rates of immigration, especially from guest workers who came over after WW II and never left, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the question becomes: How can French society create cohesion if a substantial

portion of its citizens feel that one of its guiding principles, republicanism, is spurious? <sup>2</sup> Furthermore, to what degree, if any, has the republican model be-

"...all French citizens, irrespective of religion, race or social standing, should receive the same education and be afforded the same opportunities and rights."

en able to create equal access with regard to the education of minorities?

Over the past 25 years, the French nation-state has created educa-

tional policies that are intended to be more inclusive at both the secondary and higher education levels. Subsequent to the tumultuous 1968 student riots, the centralized Parisian university system was broken into 14 separate institutions while the *grandes écoles* were left in tact. The 2001 creation of France's only affirmative action program allows for increased access to Sciences Po, a highly selective *grande école*.<sup>3</sup> At the secondary level, measures have been taken to provide subsidy for schools in disadvantaged areas—all of which are being re-examined subsequent to the 2005 violent youth unrest in neighborhoods north of Paris, e.g.

## EURODIGEST: *Europe in November*

Nov. 10: Ireland is planning to hold a referendum next year on the Lisbon Treaty to reform the institutional framework of the EU; it is expected to be the only country to hold such a referendum after the Constitution was rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005.

Nov. 13: The Spanish government proposed a ban on extreme right rallies amid increasing fears of xenophobia following the death of a 16-year-old member of a left-wing activist group who was stabbed in the Madrid subway.

Nov. 13: European Union legislators voted to strengthen a plan to cap aircraft carbon emissions in part of a larger effort to take a leadership role in international climate policy.

Nov. 14: French rail unions walked out in a strike held to protest President Nicolas Sarkozy's plan to overhaul early retirement benefits for the public sector workers.

Nov. 18: Greece and Turkey opened a \$300 million pipeline on Sunday, creating an energy corridor that connects gas fields in the Caspian Sea region to Europe, bypassing Russia and the Middle East.

Nov. 23: After opting out of the common currency in a 2000 referendum, Denmark will get a new chance to join the Euro. Recent opinion polls have shown that a narrow majority of Danes now favor switching to the Euro.

Nov. 25: Uproar over the British tax agency's loss of computer disks with personal and financial information for 25 million people has raised new questions about the competence of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government and its ability to withstand the challenge of a resurgent Conservative Party.

Nov. 26: Riots broke out in the Paris suburbs after two teenagers were killed when the motorcycle they were driving collided with a police car. 21 officers were injured and at least seven people were arrested in the rioting in the suburbs of Villiers-le-Bel and Arnouville.

Nov. 28: Poland faces its first war-crimes prosecution in memory as seven Polish soldiers are accused of killing six Afghan civilians. The case has tested the public's support for military involvement in the U.S.-led coalition.

Seine-Saint Denis, since education is increasingly viewed as a means to quell unrest.

### Secondary Education Measures for Minorities

In 1982, Francois Mitterand's administration created "Educational Priority Zones" or "ZEPs" for secondary schools in disadvantaged suburbs or "banlieues." These areas are primarily composed of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian populations, and have unemployment rates of 40%, making them highly vulnerable to crime. The overriding principle of ZEP creation was that social inequalities affect education. The solution was to funnel extra monies, extra staff, extra teaching hours and to provide tutoring in subject areas and the French language to poorer districts. The creation of ZEPs was also an attempt to lessen the high teacher attrition rate in designated schools—a continuous problem. In order to qualify for ZEP subsidy, more than 30% of the student body must be of immigrant background. The ZEP policies try to strengthen the partnership between schools and local authorities, local associations, and families in an effort to establish more cohesive, creative and non-violent educational environments. Although the ZEP designation does allow for additional funds, it is only a 10% increase and falls below the allocation for per student funding in a *lycée* in central Paris, e.g. Lycée Louis le Grand.<sup>4</sup>

### Higher Education Measures

In 2001, L'institut des études politiques, commonly known as

"Sciences Po" created a controversial method of accepting minority students using a separate admissions process. Created during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic (1872), Sciences Po falls into the category of a *grande école* and was started to train the French elite for careers in civil service. *Grandes écoles* were initially created by the monarchy, the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic, and later by Napoleon, to train sons of nobles and upper

"Over the past 25 years, the French nation-state has created educational policies that are intended to be more inclusive at both the secondary and higher education levels."

bourgeois for specific careers at state expense. *Grandes écoles* enjoy considerable autonomy within the French university system. Historically there has been little communication between *grandes écoles* and universities although within the last 5 years measures have been taken to increase contact as a means of bolstering France's research agenda.

*Grandes écoles* are characterized by their competitive entry examinations, or "*le concours*," preparation for which requires two years beyond the *baccalauréat* and necessitates studying a specialized curriculum available in a limited number of selective secondary schools. Some *concours* preparatory courses are offered by the government for free, but only the best students are eligible. Private courses are even more selective: only 40% of applicants are admitted. A 9-month course costs upwards of \$8,000. The Sciences Po *concours* is comprised of 4 elements: an essay on 20<sup>th</sup> century history, an essay analyzing texts

with historic, economic, and/or geographic relevance, a foreign language test, and an essay based upon a surprise question. There is also a lengthy oral examination whereby applicants are not only expected to know the material but to be engaging and witty.<sup>5</sup> This highly selective examination process creates a mandarin class noted for its ability to pass rigorous oral and written exams. Critics of the *concours*<sup>6</sup> complain that it weeds out not only unprepared students, but those that do not come from the socially, economically and culturally favored social classes.<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu long postulated that French education, instead of being the integrator it set out to be, is in fact a vehicle for social divisions. This "social reproduction" produces a fracture in society whereby elite classes in France who make decisions about the nation are disconnected from the rest of society, which in turn compromises their legitimacy. Nonetheless, neither the Right nor the Left French political parties have been able to overhaul the process since they agree that it is the country's best interest for elites to run the country. Sciences Po offers coursework in political science, economics, and history. There are approximately 6,000 students enrolled; 75% pursue careers in business after graduation; 20% go into public administration and 5% go into research. Admission is a direct conduit to *L'Ecole Nationale d'Administration* ("ENA"), which provides access to careers at the pinnacle of French bureaucracy and politics. Valéry Giscard D'Estaing, Jacques Chirac, and Nicolas Sarkozy are all alumni of Sciences Po, although the latter repeatedly characterized himself as

continued from page 5

an "outsider" during his presidential campaign since he did not attend ENA, while choosing not to mention that he had attended Sciences Po. Seeking to alter its largely white, upper middle-class homogeneity by democratizing the admissions process, Richard Descoings, the director of Sciences Po since 1996, admitted 18 ZEP students in the fall of 2001, without requiring them to sit for the 2-day *concours*.<sup>8</sup> ZEP students are required to write two papers—one a synthesis of press articles related to a specific topic, the other an essay on the same subject—and defend them before a jury composed of teachers and administrators from their high school. If selected, they submit to oral interviews of 30-40 minutes at Sciences Po before a preliminary round of 5 judges. Those who pass go before 30 judges composed of academics, politicians and business executives and submit to a rigorous oral examination. Questioning is modeled on French oral presentation—a combative and intimidating process where maturity, personality and originality weigh heavily; students are evaluated on their potential, motivation, and ability to succeed at Sciences Po. In the 2006-2007 academic year, there were 359 separate admissions of CEP (*Convention education prioritaire*) students enrolled at Sciences Po from partnerships with 48 ZEP schools; 133 are from Seine-Saint-Denis; 55% of participants are second-generation North African immigrants, 65% are Muslim; 67% have at least one parent born outside of France; 55% have both. Approximately 50-70% of those admitted have parents who are unemployed or are working-class. Once admitted, the CEP class

rankings are comparable to traditional students. CEP students

"Other ideas to open up educational and employment opportunities were put forth by intellectuals and the corporate sector, including the use of blind CV's."

take the same classes as traditional Sciences Po students;<sup>9</sup> since 2001, the growth rate of the program is 30% per year.<sup>10</sup> The CEP students who are accepted to Sciences Po are provided with financial aid (75% are on scholarship) and optional tutoring. The program is financed by the state<sup>11</sup> and the private sector, including grants provided by corporations such as L'Oréal, BNP Paribas, Suez, Price-Waterhouse Coopers, and Accor.

In 2004, Descoings raised tuition for traditional students at Sciences Po to 4,000 euros a year (based on income) which generated a short-lived, disorganized protest in front of the main entrance on the rue Saint-Guillaume which quickly disbanded for lunch. According to Descoings, the reason for increasing tuition (for those who can afford it) was three-fold: to reinforce excellence at Sciences Po; to make the institution more internationally competitive; and to create a system of redistribution of aid for needs-based students. According to Descoings, "In order to amplify the democratization of knowledge, we have to raise tuition."

### Legal Aspects of Separate Admissions

In French, "Affirmative action" is translated as "*discrimination positive*." There is no conclusive

definition of positive discrimination but the concept originates from unequal treatment and is purported as a means of redressing inequality. The practice is largely unpopular since it evokes quotas and differential treatment—both of which are antithetical to republican principles. Critics such as Daniel Sabbagh point out that choosing students from poor neighborhoods is a proxy for choosing them based on race and ethnicity, thereby discriminating in favor of students from immigrant backgrounds.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, according to Sabbagh, the departure from universal competitive entrance exams is contrary to the republican principle of equal treatment under the law which in turn creates another type of exclusion since the selection of partner schools is decided by Sciences Po. Director Richard Descoings refuses to codify the separate admissions program as affirmative action and insists there are no quotas based on ethnicity.<sup>13</sup> Descoings and the director of the *Conventions d'éducation prioritaire* program, or "CEP," Cyril Delhay,<sup>14</sup> maintain that the program is instead a means of promoting diversity and that no unqualified students are admitted.<sup>15</sup>

The left-wing student union, *Union Nationale des Etudiants de France* or "UNEF" has criticized the CEP program since it is seen as an expedient substitute for the more demanding task of reconfiguring the socially biased *concours*. In 2001, France's leading right-wing union, the "National Interuniversity Union" (UNI) asked the Court Tribunal of Paris to cancel the CEP program, arguing that by creating an admissions track that is open to certain students based on where they live, the university was

violating the constitutional guarantee of equal opportunity. Subsequently, the National Assembly and Senate ruled that the Board of Directors at Sciences Po could determine its conditions and methods of admission and it was allowed to adopt procedures that assured diverse recruitment. In short, it allowed Sciences Po the right to experiment and reaffirmed the institution's autonomous corporate status irrespective of the fact that it receives government subsidy.<sup>16</sup> In 2003, an appeals court ruled CEP could continue with some modifications; UNI is still waging efforts to dismantle it.

#### Affirmative action post-November, 2005

France has the highest youth unemployment rate in Western Europe, a figure that doubles among Muslims (including those who have completed secondary education) and ranges between 30-50%.<sup>17</sup> In 2002, when Nicolas Sarkozy was Minister of the Interior, he created the "French Council for the Muslim Religion" (CFCM); in 2003, he appointed France's first Muslim prefect.<sup>18</sup> Sarkozy—a recalcitrant graduate of Sciences Po—was the first French official to praise Sciences Po's initiative to recruit minority students from *les banlieues*.<sup>19</sup> Subsequent to the youth unrest of 2005, the French education system has been reexamined by politicians on all sides of the political spectrum as a means of mitigating further strife. Former president Jacques Chirac stated that he was against the practice of *discrimination positive*, and instead called for new government-funded preparatory courses. Chirac proposed that an

increased number of *baccalauréat* students, with the mention of "*bien*,"<sup>20</sup> would have a "guaranteed right of access" to *concours* preparatory courses. Sarkozy, as Minister of Interior, stated that he supported the adoption of separate admissions processes via *dis-*

"In the 2006-2007 academic year, there were 359 separate admissions of CEP (*Convention education prioritaire*) students enrolled at Sciences Po from partnerships with 48 ZEP schools."

*crimination positive* while affirming that it was the responsibility of the state to intervene if meritocracy could not produce a diverse elite.<sup>21</sup> Sarkozy also declared that ZEP secondary schools were responsible for increased inequities and proposed the recruitment of foreign teachers to improve the quality of instruction.

Other ideas to open up educational and employment opportunities were put forth by intellectuals and the corporate sector, including the use of blind CV's. Upwards of 250 French companies agreed that discrimination does exist and that when a minority candidate shows up, more often than not, he is not offered a position. A study was conducted whereby 50 CV's were sent out with the same qualifications and educational experience—one bearing the name of "Louis Dupont" and the other listing "Mohamed Boudiaff" as the applicant. One in 5 companies did not respond to "Mohamed's" application. The Institut Montaigne issued a report calling for *concours* preparatory classes to admit 2-3 ZEP students and

historian Patrick Weil called for a 5-7% acceptance of the best students from all lyceés.<sup>22</sup> This same idea had earlier been proposed by the Socialist party in 2005, but it was rejected by the Chirac government and by Parliament, the latter stating, "A just republic does not lower its barriers to create an appearance of equality." However, after the riots, Chirac appropriated the Socialist stance. As of yet, his successor has not orchestrated the plan's implementation. Former Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin invited 16 banlieue students to Matignon to discuss possible solutions to urban problems. The result of the conversation was de Villepin's proposal to start apprenticeships in business for 14 year-olds, and to fine companies found guilty of discrimination, in addition to publishing the offenders' names in the press.<sup>23</sup> In the spring of 2006, de Villepin tried to institute a policy that would no longer guarantee life-time employment after a two-year apprenticeship, i.e., make it virtually impossible to fire someone. White middle-class students then took to the streets of Paris and elsewhere for three weeks, rendering the proposal radioactive.

#### Conclusions

Since being elected president last May, President Sarkozy has not put forth new proposals to facilitate *discrimination positive*. After the riots, Sarkozy appointed Richard Descoings head of a laboratory at Leonard de Vinci University to study *discrimination positive* and to offer year-long "internships" to ZEP students whereby they are tutored by Sciences Po students at the state's expense. Sarkozy envisions that de

*Continued on page 8*

Continued from page 7

Vinci will serve as a model to create similar internships for other students in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Descoings supervised the establishment of a state and privately-funded "lycée expérimental" in Seine-Saint Denis (opened in September, 2007) which will be a feeder school to Sciences Po and, one would presume, to other *grandes écoles*. However, this has not been the case since Sciences Po remains the only *grande école* which has a separate admissions program. Others have not followed suit for various reasons, but mainly due to the majority position that *discrimination positive* is antithetical to republican principles. Others find fault with the fact that the CEP program is creating a two-track system at the secondary level—one for Sciences Po candidates and another for those who cannot compete—which is viewed as another form of inequality. Or is it? Is it instead a democratization of educational access that will incrementally change the demographics of position and power in a country where it has been bestowed largely by birthright? Over the past seven years, the success of the CEP students has been remarkable. Nine out of ten students go on to advanced coursework and do not feel stigmatized, in spite of what some contend.<sup>24</sup> If anything, CEP students relish being part of France's intellectual elite. Although vehemently criticized for implementing the CEP policy in 2001, Richard Descoings realized that French elites had to diversify their origins. Descoings astutely sought to counter Jean-Marie Le Pen's success at exposing the insular nature of elites to the popular classes—a never-ending source of

ridicule and amusement. It would seem reasonable that other elite institutions will eventually arrive at similar conclusions. As of this writing, the French suburbs are again imploding.<sup>25</sup> Thus, President Sarkozy and his cabinet will be forced to consider measures to address the unrest. No doubt educational measures will again be part of the discussion.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The law states "The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion."

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Suleiman, "France One + Divisible," Social Science Research Council, Nov. 18, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Technically speaking, Sciences Po, or L'institut des études politiques, is part of the Paris university system, but for all intents and purposes, it functions (and is funded) as a *grande école*.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Schweitzer, (former CEO of Renault) president of "la Haute Autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité" *Les Echos*, Nov 10, 2005, p.11

<sup>5</sup> One legendary story is that when a student was asked by his examiner how far the distance was if one were to dive from the Pont Neuf into the Seine, the student instantly replied that the bridge was slightly arched so the distance would depend on precisely where one was standing when jumping.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relations to Culture*, University of Chicago Press, 1979.

<sup>7</sup> See Vincent Tiberj & Madani Cheurfa, 2001, "The Concours: Inequality of Access and Social Inequality," where they concluded that *grandes écoles* are more discriminatory than universities. Of those that pass the concours, 62% are children of high-ranking government officials or professionals, i.e., favored classes; students represent 14% of the population of 18-25 year olds vs. children of workers who represent 31% of the population.

<sup>8</sup> Descoings also extended Sciences Po's curriculum from 3-5 years, made a year abroad mandatory, and offered more courses in English (currently about 25%) as a means of making the school more globally competitive and more attractive to foreign students.

<sup>9</sup> "Pour ou Contre la Discrimination Positive" *Le Journal des Grandes Ecoles*, Nov. 2, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Sciences Po, *Conventions Education Prioritaire (CEP): Bilan session d'admission, mise à jour, octobre, 2007*.

<sup>11</sup> 90,000 euros per year are given by the state to Sciences Po to run the CEP program; this includes 50,000 euros for partnership lycées and honorariums and fees for tutors, juries, etc.

<sup>12</sup> See Daniel Sabbagh, "Affirmative Action at Sciences Po," *French Politics, Culture, and Society*, 20 (3), Fall, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> "Pour ou Contre la Discrimination Positive," *Le Journal des Grandes Ecoles*, Nov. 2, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Cyril Delhay, director of Sciences Po's CEP program, Paris, Jan. 15, 2004; See Mark John, "Elite Paris college in positive discrimination case," *Agence Reuters*, Nov. 4, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> "Pour ou Contre la Discrimination Positive," *Le Journal des Grandes Ecoles*, Nov. 2, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> See U.S. Supreme Court Decision, *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 1819.

<sup>17</sup> Remy Leveau, & Shireen Hunter, "Islam in France," p. 9, in *ISLAM, Europe's Second Religion*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> See "Un attentat vise le préfet Dermouche," *Paris-Normandie*, Jan. 19, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Anais Gérard, "Conventions éducation prioritaire de Sciences Po Paris: 37 étudiants admis en 2003, 68% sont des enfants d'employés ou d'ouvriers," *L'Agence Education Emploi Formation*, Paris, Sept. 24, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Yearly, approximately 8,000 bac students receive the grade of "très bien" versus 28,000 who receive the grade of "bien".

<sup>21</sup> Many liberals wondered if Sarkozy's views were sincere or if they were contrition for the tensions which resulted after his infamous statement during the 2005 riots whereby he stated he was going to go into rioting neighborhoods and "powerwash the scum" or "nettoyage des cités au kärcher de la racaille."

<sup>22</sup> See la Patrick Weil's *Republique et sa diversité*, Broche, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Louis Schweitzer, (former PDG of Renault) president of "la Haute Autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité," *Les Echos*, Nov 10, 2005, p.11.

<sup>24</sup> See Tricia Danielle Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics and Social Exclusion*, Indiana University Press, 2006, p. 131.

<sup>25</sup> See Elaine Sciolino, "In the French Suburbs, Same Rage, but New Tactics," *The New York Times*, Nov. 28, 2007.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

--NEW YORK UNIVERSITY--

### CENTER FOR EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES

285 Mercer Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor. All events take place at the center unless otherwise noted. Tel.: 212.998.3838.  
<http://www.cems.as.nyu.edu>

Thursday, Dec. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Dialogue on Art and Memory: Dark Rooms of Memory: Visions of Trauma in the Works of Francesc Torres, with Francesc Torres and Arthur Danto  
Sponsored by the Catalan Center at NYU  
53 Washington Square South, 1st floor screening room

Friday, Dec. 7, 4:00-6:00 p.m.  
Gender in Transition workshop: «The Visible Woman: Interwar Romanian Women Writers, Modernity, and the Public/Private Divide»  
Voichita Nachescu, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, Rice University

Monday, Dec. 10, 12:15 - 1:45 p.m.  
European History workshop: «Science Taken for Wonders: The Ethnography of Popular Religion and the Fashioning of Algerian Primitivism»  
George R. Trumbull IV, Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow, Institute of French Studies, NYU  
285 Mercer Street, 8th Floor

**LA MAISON FRANCAISE AT NYU**  
16 Washington Mews. All events take place at the Maison unless otherwise noted. Tel.: 212.998.8750  
<http://www.nyu.edu/maisonfrancaise>

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 7:00 p.m.  
Reading: Lecture de textes: Alaska (Ed. de l'Olivier, 2007)  
Eugene Nicole  
Professor of French, NYU  
In French

Monday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m.  
Special Screening: A Hero's Welcome: A Story of Friendship, Gratitude, and Remembrance  
A film by Robin Massee  
Presented by M. Francois Delattre, Consul Général of France in New York  
Cantor Film Center, Theater 101  
36 East Eighth Street

**INSTITUTE OF FRENCH STUDIES**  
15 Washington Mews. Tel. 212.998.8740. Email: [french.studies@nyu.edu](mailto:french.studies@nyu.edu).  
<http://www.nyu.edu/fas/program/frenchstudies>

Tuesday, Dec. 4, 12:30-2:00 p.m.  
Seminar: La fabrique de l'enchantement: jeunes travailleurs à Disneyland Paris  
Damien Babet, sociologist (Institute of French Studies/NYU – Ecole normale supérieure, Paris); In French Lounge

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 2:30 p.m.  
Roundtable: Publishing French Fiction and Non-Fiction in the U.S.  
Olivier Nora, President, Editions Grasset  
Eric Vigne, Editorial Director, Social Sciences and Humanities, Editions Gallimard  
Lucinda Karter, Director, French Publishers' Agency  
Jennifer Crewe, Associate Director and Editorial Director, Columbia University Press  
La Maison Française, 16 Washington Mews

### KING JUAN CARLOS I OF SPAIN CENTER

53 Washington Square South. All events take place on the first floor unless otherwise noted. Tel.: 212.998.3650  
<http://www.nyu.edu/pages/kjc>

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 6:30 p.m.  
Dark Rooms of Memory: Visions of Trauma in the Works of Francesc Torres  
With Francesc Torres & Arthur Danto  
Sponsored by the Catalan Center at NYU

Friday, Dec. 7 at 6:15 p.m.  
Poetry Series: A Celebration of Verbal and Visual Culture in Latin America  
Edwin Torres (Latino USA) and Roberto Echavarren (Uruguay)

Saturday, Dec. 8 at 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Poetry Series: The Archives Come Alive: The Spanish Civil War and Literature  
Co-sponsored by the King Juan Carlos 1 of Spain Center and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives

Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 7:15 p.m.  
Film Series: Del olvido al no me acuerdo (2001, Juan Rulfo)  
By Jose Carlos Rulfo

#### DEUTSCHES HAUS AT NYU

42 Washington Mews. All events take place at the Deutsches Haus unless otherwise noted. Tel.: 212.998.8660  
<http://www.nyu.edu/deutscheshaus>

Saturday, Dec. 1, 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Exhibition Opening: Douglas Chayka «Spree»  
On view until Jan. 4, 2008

Monday, Dec. 3, 12:00-2:00 p.m.  
Roundtable: «Immigration, Integration, and Security: Transatlantic Perspectives»  
Martin Schain (NYU), Simon Reich (University of Pittsburgh), Michael Minkenberg (NYU/Viadrina University Frankfurt), Sylvia Maier (NYU)  
NYU Deutsches Haus, 42 Washington Mews

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 7:00 p.m.  
Reading: Felicitas Hoppe, writer-in-residence  
In German and English

Friday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m.  
Film Series: The Passerby, 1982  
Directed by Jacques Rouffio

Friday, Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m.  
Lecture: Fear Thy Neighbor As Thyself!  
Slavoj Zizek, University of Ljubljana  
Sponsored by the Department of German and Trauma and Violence Transdisciplinary Studies  
The Cantor Film Center, Room 102, 36 E. 8th Street

Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 7:00 p.m.  
Reading: Mein Vater, die Deutschen und ich: Aufsätze, Vorträge, Interviews  
Christine Becker  
In German and English

#### CASA ITALIANA AT NYU

24 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Telephone: 212.998.8730. E-mail: [casa.italiana@nyu.edu](mailto:casa.italiana@nyu.edu)  
[http://www.nyu.edu/pages/casaitaliana/index\\_flash.html](http://www.nyu.edu/pages/casaitaliana/index_flash.html)

Monday, Dec. 3 at 6 p.m.  
Lecture: Pasta and Pizza in the History of Italian Identity  
By Franco la Cecla, San Raffaele University, Milan

Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 6 p.m.  
Reading: Sotto i tuoi occhi (Fazi, 2007)  
With Chiara Marchelli  
In Italian

Friday, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m.  
Conversation: Il sindacato in Italia oggi  
With Guglielmo Epifani (CGI) and Massimo Gaggi (Corriere della Sera)  
In Italian

Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m.  
Discussion: The Life and Art of Giuseppe Verdi  
With Gianandrea Noseda and Fred Plotkin

**GLUCKSMAN IRELAND HOUSE**  
1 Washington Mews. All events take place at the house unless otherwise noted. Tel.: 212.998.3950  
<http://www.irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu>

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.  
Talk: Community in Print: Irish-American Publishers and Readers  
With Eileen Sullivan  
Please RSVP to 212-998-3950 or email [ireland.house@nyu.edu](mailto:ireland.house@nyu.edu)

Friday, Dec. 7 at 9 p.m.  
Concert: Singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Crowley

Thursday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.  
Airneál na Nollag: An evening of traditional music and song  
In order to ensure a seat, please RSVP to 212-998-3950 or email [ireland.house@nyu.edu](mailto:ireland.house@nyu.edu)

#### --COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY--

**THE HARRIMAN INSTITUTE**  
420 West 118th Street, International Affairs Building (IAB), room 1219.  
Tel.: 212.854.4623  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/HI/>

Saturday, Dec. 1 at 9:30 a.m.  
Conference: Russia and Islam in the Archives of Eurasia  
Butler Library, Rm. 523, Columbia University

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Book discussion: Imagining Nabokov: Russia between Art and Politics  
With Irina Krushcheva  
Morris Room, Faculty House, 400 West 117<sup>th</sup> St.

Thursday, Dec. 6, 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
 University Colloquium: Taking it Personally: The Significance of Church History  
 Social Hall, Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway at 121<sup>st</sup> St.  
 RSVP required; please contact Professor John McGuckin at jam401@columbia.edu

Thursday, Dec. 6, 6:00–8:00 p.m.  
 Book presentation: Collapse of an Empire  
 With Yegor Gaidar  
 Harison Room, Faculty House (2nd Floor)

Friday, Dec. 7, 6:00–9:15 p.m.  
 Symposium: Transfiguration in Christ: Key Themes of Romanian Orthodox Spirituality  
 James Chapel, Union Theological Seminary 3041 Broadway at 121<sup>st</sup> St.  
 Thursday, Dec. 13, 6:00–7:30 p.m.  
 Talk: Exotic Peoples at Russian Coronations  
 Richard Wortman, History Department, Columbia University  
 Please RSVP to russia-islam@harrimaninstitute.org

**LA MAISON FRANCAISE AT COLUMBIA**

Broadway at 116th Street, Buell Hall, 2nd Floor. Tel.: 212.854.4482  
<http://www.maisonfrancaise.org>

Monday, Dec. 3, 7:00–9:00 p.m.  
 Book club: Ravel, Jean Echenoz

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 5:30–7:00 p.m.  
 Lecture: Celebration of Joan Scott's new book «The Politics of the Veil»

**EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN CENTER**

420 W. 118th Street  
 Phone: 212.854.4008; E-mail: ece@columbia.edu  
<http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/REGIONAL/ECE/>

Saturday, Dec. 1, 7:00–9:30 p.m.  
 A Night of Chopin: Fryderyk Chopin International Piano Competition  
 Sulzberger Parlor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Barnard Hall, Barnard College, 117th & Broadway  
 RSVP Monika Urbanowicz at mu2113@columbia.edu

Sunday, Dec. 2, 5:00–8:15 p.m.-  
 Monday, Dec. 3, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.  
 Conference: Dealing with the Past in East Central Europe  
 Room 1501 IAB

Monday, Dec. 3, 6:00–7:30 p.m.  
 Discussion: Kosovo's Final Status in Historical Context  
 With Ivo Banac, Larry Wolff and Susan Woodward  
 The New School, Orozco Room, 66 W12th Street, 7th Floor

Tuesday, Dec. 4, 12:00–1:30 p.m.  
 Lecture: Hungarian-Jewish Responses to the Persecution, 1944–1945  
 With Professor Gabor Kadar, ELTE University, Budapest  
 1219 IAB

Thursday, Dec. 6, 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.  
 Colloquium: Taking it Personally: The Significance of Church History  
 Social Hall, Union Theological Seminary 3041 Broadway at 121st Street  
 RSVP required; please contact Professor John McGuckin at jam401@columbia.edu

Friday, Dec. 7, 6:00–9:15 p.m.  
 Symposium: Transfiguration in Christ: Key Themes of Romanian Orthodox Spirituality  
 James Chapel, Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway at 121st Street

**THE ITALIAN ACADEMY FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN AMERICA**

1161 Amsterdam Avenue  
 Tel: 212.854.2306; email: itacademy@columbia.edu

Wednesday, Dec. 5 at 7:00 p.m.  
 Concert: Italian Music for Two  
 Adele O'Dwyer, cello  
 Cullan Bryant, piano  
 Call 212 854 1623 or RSVP: wb2149@columbia.edu

**--THE GRADUATE CENTER, CUNY--**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION STUDIES CENTER**

365 Fifth Avenue. Tel: 212-817-2051;  
 email: [eusc@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:eusc@gc.cuny.edu) <http://euromatters.org>

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 5:30 p.m.  
 Lecture: A Union At Risk? Reforming Education in the European Union  
 With Clive Belfield, Assistant Professor of Economics, Queens College, CUNY  
 365 Fifth Avenue, Rooms: C201/C202  
 RSVP by December 5, 2007; Tel: 212 817 2051/53; E-mail: eusc@gc.cuny.edu

**New York University**

*A private university in the public service*

**EUROPE•NYC**

*Center for European and  
Mediterranean Studies  
285 Mercer St, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10003*