

Call for Papers
**Ad hoc group „European Civil Society and multilevel governance“ at DVPW-
Conference (German Association for Political Science) 2006 in Muenster**

The DVPW conference 2006 will take place at Muenster University from September, the 25th – 29th. On Friday morning (September 29th) an English speaking ad hoc group will focus on the subject “European Civil Society and Multilevel Governance”. The group is organised by a research group with the same name at Muenster University. Paper proposals can be submitted directly by e-mail to Dr. Matthias Freise (freisem@uni-muenster.de) until June, 12th.

Outline:

EU-enlargement has fostered the widening and deepening of civic networks in the European countries. At the same time, increased citizen’s involvement in policy processes ask for new forms of governance at the local, regional and European level. Against this background, civil society has emerged as a political programme and scientific and theoretical challenge for the social sciences in Europe.

Today, there is a decisive need for the development of an integrated European public policy towards civil society. However, for this very reason a comprehensive and comparative approach of the existing models of inclusion and of exclusion of civic actors have to be provided focusing on the different policy fields and regional contexts in Europe. The role of volunteering, of civic engagement is different in the national and regional context in Europe and shows also remarkable differences between the policy fields. The mobilization of existing social capital is unavoidable for the surfacing on a true European identity. In sum, the advancement and development of European integration heading towards the *idée directrice* of the “Social Europe”, “The Europe of the Citizens” or “The Europe of the Regions” asks for an in-depth understanding of civil society, its organizations and their embeddedness in the European member states.

However, it took some time, until civil society as a methodological approach has found its way from political theory to policy analysis and hence to empirical research investigating the dynamics of civic engagement, models of public-private partnership encompassing civil society organizations, as well as new trends towards corporate civic activity. Currently several EU-funded networks (e.g. CONNEX, CINEFOGO, TSEP) – have taken up this issue.

The ad hoc group will bring together current projects and networks. It is open for historical and qualitative as well as for theoretical and empirical contributions. Explicitly, the organisers want to bridge distinct research divisions - respectively those of Political Theory, Policy Analysis and European Studies - by linking the civil society discourse, which is primarily bases in Political Theory, with down-to-earth empirical studies investigating rationale and functioning of civil society organisations in various settings and different levels of analysis.