On 11 September 2013 scholars from 20 countries on five continents descended on Bozen / Bolzano, gathering for the annual conference of the International Association of Centres for Federal Studies (IACFS), hosted by one of its member centres, the EURAC-Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism.

IACFS is a unique interdisciplinary association of centers and institutes throughout the world with interests in independent research and publication about political, constitutional, legal, administrative, fiscal, economic, historical and philosophical issues relevant to political systems which have federal features. IACFS seeks to further the study and understanding of federal principles and patterns in all their variety. The Association had its founding meeting in 1977 when centres from Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Israel and Australia met in Basel, Switzerland. The founding president was Daniel J. Elazar, who, in subsequent years, was followed by Ronald L. Watts, John Kincaid and Cheryl Saunders.

Over the years centres of scholarship joined from established federations of Austria, India, and Argentina. As more and more countries adopted federal arrangements as solutions to political, social and economic contestation, so did centres from Spain, Italy, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa and the United Kingdom join this family of federal scholars. Currently there are 27 member centres from 15 countries on six continents. The most recent member, admitted at the Bozen / Bolzano conference, is the Centre for Multilevel Federalism from New Delhi, India.

Annually the Association convenes for a conference, hosted by one of its member centres, the proceedings of which are then published. During the year there are many informal exchanges and cooperative ventures among members. One major research initiative by IACFS was when it joined forces with the Forum of Federations to produce an eight volume series called the Global Dialogue on Federalism, published by McGill-Queens University Press. The challenging theme of the 2013 Bozen / Bolzano conference was “Federalism as decision making – changes in structures, procedures and policies”. The question that was posed was whether “federalism as a pragmatic and adaptable governance tool provides answers”. The emphasis fell on the dynamics of federalism – the innovative potential that lies at the heart of federalism as subnational government are living laboratories of social change. The papers addressed three broad questions. The first was concerned with federalism theory: How can decision making be done across divides in multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic federations? A second set of questions revolved around the pragmatics of federalism: what are the participation procedures that inform and structure decision making? The third set of questions focused on the application of participatory decision making in substantive policy areas such as environmental protection where complex sets of multilevel government arrangements are par for the course.

The incisive and stimulating papers and deliberations yet again illustrated the vibrancy of IACFS’s comparative approach to federalism. Although papers reflected on the experiences of countries with often vastly different federal systems, much was still to be learnt from each other, how common problems are faced through the innovative capabilities of federalism.

Nico Steytler
President IACFS and Professor at the Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, RSA
Debating Federalism
As Decision-Making

The EURAC-Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism was pleased to host the Annual Meeting of the International Association of Centres for Federal Studies (IACFS) from 11th – 13th September 2013.

Experts from 25 research centres from all continents discussed how federal structures, procedures and policies can contribute to ever more inclusive decision-making. The outcomes of how a trans-disciplinary theory of federalism as decision-making serves the purpose of pluralist governance, both territorially and socially, will be published in 2014. Special attention is paid to revising federalism theory, to re-interpreting intergovernmental relations and to analyzing single policies from a comparative perspective (environment, security, regional and national development plans, economic growth, subnational democracy and financial affairs).

The organizers are thankful to The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle Meranio for their sponsorship.

The participants of the IACFS Annual Meeting 2013 in Bolzano/Bozen
European Autonomies in Practice

Young researchers from five European countries debated on autonomy in Sfântu Gheorghe/Romania in May 2013. The interactive workshop was organized by the Covasna County Council in Romania and was financed with the support of the EU-Lifelong Learning Programme.

Three EURAC-researchers, among them Greta Klotz from the Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism, attended the workshop and discussed territorial forms of autonomy, tourism in ethnic-sensitive areas, cross border cooperation and financial aspects of self-governance. The participants, coming from Turkey, Romania, Slovakia, Italy and Finland, were mainly representatives of national minorities of their respective countries and could thus exchange personal experiences, opinions and thoughts regarding autonomy and minority rights as well as learn from each other. Additionally to the theoretical debates, the full time programme offered many social activities, through which the participants got to know the local surroundings with its characteristics. A further highlight of the event was a public lecture on the mainly Hungarian-speaking Szeklerland.

Officina dell’Autonomia 3

In collaboration with the Fondazione Museo Storico del Trentino, the Institute organized the third edition of “L’Officina dell’Autonomia” from 13th to 17th May 2013. Taking into account historical, institutional, and legal developments, the series of conferences focused on the evolution of the tools of different territorial autonomies in Europe, comparing the experience of the Province of Trento with that of neighbouring South Tyrol as well as with the territorial autonomies of Catalonia and Scotland.

The “Officina 2013” was structured into three panels analyzing the autonomy of the Province of Trento from a comparative perspective by investigating the reasons and the transformations of different autonomies in the context of European integration. During the fourth and final meeting of the “Officina 2013”, the organizers created a participatory game to bring citizens closer to the topic of autonomy by actively discovering its history in various places of the city of Trento.

Conference on Politics of Diversity at the University of Innsbruck

From 19th to 21st September 2013 the Drei-Länder-Tagung on “Politics of Diversity [“Politik der Vielfalt”]” took place in Innsbruck – a big event jointly organized by the three Associations of Political Science from Germany, Austria and Switzerland in cooperation with the South Tyrolean Association for Political Science.

The conference analyzed answers from political science and from politics on the increasing diversity of our society. During the three days, over 300 participants had the opportunity to choose between 34 different topics in seven parallel panel sessions. From our Institute Elisabeth Alber and Greta Klotz organized and chaired panels on new forms of democracy in multilevel democracies as well as right-wing populism in Europe. Furthermore, Christina Fraenkel-Haeberle presented a paper on civic participation-experiments in Italian regional laws.

Italian Association for Regional Science (A.I.S.Re) - Annual Conference 2013

Territorial governance, transport and urban development are just some of the topics that researchers and experts analyzed during the 14th Annual Conference of the Italian Association for Regional Science (A.I.S.Re) which took place in Palermo 2nd-3rd September 2013.

The Association (www.aisre.it) is a scientific institution founded in 1979 to stimulate research related to the analysis of regions and regional issues, including the utilization of tools, methods and theoretical frameworks which are specifically designed for regional analysis. In addition, the association is concerned with concepts, procedures and analytical techniques to disseminate the results of such research.

Martina Trettel presented the case of the Comunità di Valle, which represents an intermediate level of government between the municipalities and the Province of Trento. This is an innovative example of inter-municipal cooperation. Her paper “Territorial governance: developments and opportunities” focused on the legal aspects of the reform that introduced the Comunità di Valle and on the consequences derived from its concrete implementation.
Winter School on Federalism and Governance 2014

The 2014 edition of the Winter School will focus on “Federalism and Multilevel Constitutionalism” and take place from 3rd to 14th February 2014 in Innsbruck (Austria) and in Bolzano/Bozen (Italy).

Establishing, organizing and limiting powers are the core tasks of constitutionalism. In a post-national constellation, the fulfillment of these tasks takes place simultaneously at different levels of government. Debates about multilevel constitutionalism have focused mainly on the compound European constitutional system, which is formed by national constitutions and the Treaties of the EU. There are, however, many other integrated multilevel constitutional spaces. From the perspective of federalism, it is important to include the subnational dimension as well, which is key in making multilevel systems work.

Our fifth Winter School on Federalism and Governance explores how federalism contributes to the understanding of multilevel and integrated decision-making. It is a unique opportunity for students, researchers, civil servants and practitioners to be trained on theoretical and practical aspects of federalism from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective.

The Winter School is a 10-day cross-border postgraduate programme, jointly organized with the University of Innsbruck and is held under the auspices of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

For further information, costs, scholarships opportunities and enrolment procedure, please visit: www.eurac.edu/winterschool => 2014

Special thanks go to our sponsors: Land Tirol, Stiftung Südtiroler Sparkasse, Land Vorarlberg, Universität Innsbruck - Italien-Zentrum

Winner of the EURAC Federal Scholar in Residence Programme 2014

Andrew Hughes Hallett is EURAC Federal Scholar 2014! The International Jury of the Second Edition of the EURAC Federal Scholar has awarded this year’s prize to Prof. Hughes Hallett, University Professor for Economics and Public Policy at George Mason University (USA) and Professor of Economics at the University of St Andrews (Scotland). His manuscript “The Practicalities of Economic Federalism: A Critical review of How to Apply the Lessons of Fiscal Autonomy in Practice” has been ranked first among all received applications. The principal theme of his paper is to elaborate a model of fiscal federalism where comprehensive powers over taxation and spending are devolved, but remain consistent within a union-wide macro-economic framework and constitutional integrity. He concentrates on the case of the UK and more specifically on Scotland. The paper also makes reference to several other case studies.

Prof. Hughes Hallett has taught in over 15 Universities in Europe and in the U.S. He is ranked in the top 1% of economists world-wide (295 out of 34.280) by publications, citations and readership. Beyond the academic world, Prof. Hughes Hallett is consultant to the Fiscal Affairs division of the European Central Bank on debt management and lead economist in the working group set up to design the policy framework for autonomy/independence for Scotland after the referendum in 2014. He has acted as consultant to the World Bank and the IMF as well as for the Federal Reserve in Washington, the Peterson Institute for International Economics and to the UN, UNESCO, OECD and to various governments and central banks in Europe.

He will be making a research stay at EURAC in January-February 2014, and will present his research findings at the International Winter School on Federalism and Governance in a public lecture scheduled on 10th February 2014 in Bolzano/Bozen.

The EURAC-Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism is now accepting applications for the EURAC Federal Scholar in Residence Program 2015.

TO BE ELIGIBLE: applicants must hand in an unpublished manuscript in either English, German, Italian, French or Spanish by 1st July 2014 and be able to undertake their research stay at EURAC in February 2015.

Detailed information is available at:
http://www.eurac.edu/fedscholar
Federalism is (not) a game!

Within the last two years a team of the Institute has developed a series of simulation games called “Let’s go federal!® Verbünden wir uns!® Federiamoci!®”

The overall aim is to create living labs where participants assume the function of political decision-makers as well as of civil servants. By doing so, the participants themselves epitomize the quintessence of decentralized government and governance: federalism as participatory decision-making. Autonomy, cooperation and coordination are underlying principles of each role play.

One simulation game focuses on the establishment of a decision-making process (strong or weak second chamber and/or system of intergovernmental relations). This decision-making process will then be adopted while distributing the powers (exclusive and shared ones) between the government levels and also when deciding upon the system of fiscal and financial relations. While coping with problems of decision- and policy-making, participants of the simulation games are made accountable for having taken specific decisions in both intergovernmental procedures and policy fields (education, transport, environment, culture, justice, integration, health, work, foreign policy, finances).

The different role plays can either build upon each other or be carried out separately. All depends on both the target group and the time available. Researchers facilitate the simulation game both in monolingual (English, German and Italian) and bi/trilingual versions.

The researchers are also available for prep-lectures as well as Q&A sessions. The simulation games are, among others, carried out as part of the course on Comparative Public Law at the University of Verona (with 200 students) and as part of the Anglophone as well as trilingual branch of the Master in Advanced European and International Studies (CIFE•IE•EI). For two years, a simplified version of the role play has also been used in interactive seminars in cooperation with students of high schools (aged 15-19), and within the EURAC Science Camp each June.

WHAT: Simulation game “Let’s go federal!® Verbünden wir uns!® Federiamoci!®
TARGET GROUPS: Students of high schools, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
WORKING LANGUAGE: Monolingual (English, German and Italian) and bi/trilingual versions.
WHEN AND WHERE? Upon request
INFO: sfere@eurac.edu

Federalism and Better governance

“Federalism, Alternative Forms of Democracy and Better Governance” is the title of a 2-year-research project financed with a grant of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol. The project is carried out by the Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism and the German University of Administrative Sciences (Deutsche Universität für Verwaltungswissenschaften Speyer).

The analysis builds on research from several disciplines. The main question to be answered is: How can democratic decision-making processes be adapted to the changing conditions of modern states as well as to sub-national and supranational integration in order to further advance our so-called living democracies? This adaptation requires examining not only ideas for the reform of existing institutions and procedures, but also approaches to strengthen democracy through “alternative” sources of legitimacy. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the character of the changed circumstances which states are now facing, such as the various manifestations of globalization and the simultaneously growing importance of the local level (“glocalization”), the digitization of economy and society, increased migration and demographic change. The project analyses federally and/or regionally organised States through a contextualized approach from comparative law and political sciences. As one aim, the project examines the interaction of representative and direct democratic forms of participation in policy-making at different levels, in addition, the project analyses the approaches and concepts that link the decision-making process with new instruments of citizen participation in order to overcome political disenchantment of the public at large and indifference towards societal goals.

The project started in February 2012 and will be concluded in 2014 with an international conference at EURAC on 17th January 2014 (see box below), followed by a publication.

CONFERENCE: Fachtagung „Mehrebenendemokratie und Bürgerparzipation“ - Convegno scientifico “Democrazia e partecipazione nel sistema multilivello”
WHEN: 17th January 2014, 9.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
WHERE: EURAC main building in Bolzano/Bozen.
WORKING LANGUAGES: Italian and German, translation service will be provided
IN COOPERATION WITH: European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino
INFO: sfere@eurac.edu; the event is open to the public
Financial relations in the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino

At the presentation of this new publication some of the authors will discuss the financial relations in the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino from an interdisciplinary perspective: Birgit Oberkofler (Representative of the European Region), Francesco Palermo (Director of the Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism), Eros Magnago (Director of Finance Department of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen) and Andrea Locatelli (Researcher of the Banca d’Italia). Chair: Enrico Franco, Director of the local newspaper “Corriere del Trentino”.

The book develops and deepens the results of a workshop held in May 2012 with the purpose to analyse financial intergovernmental relations within a cross-border cooperation framework. Adopting a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, the volume combines both a theoretical and a practical perspectives. It investigates the institutional, economic and financial settings of the three member units of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino together with the intergovernmental dimension of the financial relations, with particular regard to the ongoing trends and the future scenarios from a domestic and European perspective.

BOOK PRESENTATION:
11th November 2013, 9.30 a.m., EURAC main building in Bolzano/Bozen. The event is open to the public.
WORKING LANGUAGE: Italian
INFO: sfere@eurac.edu

Second Chambers in the light of comparative legal studies

This monograph examines second chambers – both “federal” and “non-federal” – in the light of comparative legal studies. The “bicameral formula” is currently under strain but this does not affect the number and popularity of such systems throughout the world as the number of bicameral legislatures is still increasing at a steady rate. The book aims at detecting the reasons still supporting both the introduction and reform of bicameral legislatures in different countries. The answer to this question rests upon the rationale of bicameralism, which allows social, political, vocational and territorial pluralism to participate in decision-making processes through second chambers.

BOOK PRESENTATION:
22nd November 2013, 11 a.m., Sala della Regina, Palazzo Montecitorio (House of Deputies), Rome. The event is open to the public.
WORKING LANGUAGE: Italian
INFO: sfere@eurac.edu

Toward the Protection of Biodiversity and Ecological Connectivity

The year 2010 marked the deadline for the political targets set to significantly reduce and halt biodiversity loss at the international, EU and local levels. Notwithstanding the efforts to date, significant losses of biological diversity have been assessed and failure to achieve the 2010 targets has been acknowledged. A number of new targets have been incorporated in both international, EU and local agendas aiming at preventing further destruction, degradation and fragmentation of biodiversity by 2020. However, in order to successfully meet these objectives it is necessary to critically review and analyse existing policy and legislative measures as well as consider current gaps, failures, strengths and lessons learned. Accordingly, the book aims at investigating the legal and policy frameworks and instruments that directly or indirectly affect biodiversity protection and ecological connectivity at the international, EU, regional (Alpine and Carpathian Conventions), national and subnational levels.

Language Rights and Duties in the Evolution of Public Law

This volume explores, by means of a comparative method, the evolution of linguistic rights, concentrating particularly on some specific and radically different situations and constitutional experiences, such as those of Canada, Spain and India, which in various ways have paid great attention to linguistic pluralism. Linguistic rights are an original and specific expression of the rights of minorities and are, as such, part of the universal category of human rights. Over the past decade, linguistic rights have undergone many changes in Europe due to migration and the presence of new linguistic groups in many countries.
Call for Papers
European Autonomy and Diversity Papers

The European Autonomy and Diversity Papers (EDAP) is a high-quality online series of working papers, founded by the EURAC-Institute for Studies on Federalism and Regionalism and the EURAC-Institute for Minority Rights. Regionalism, federalism, minority protection, multiculturalism and more generally, ‘constitutional flexibility’ in Europe, are core topics that underpin EDAP’s focus. In particular, the papers concentrate on diversity from the perspective of comparative constitutional law and EU law. Contributions from other disciplines such as political science, international relations and economics are also welcome. For further information: www.eurac.edu/edap

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Mail: If there is anything else you would like to know about us, just drop us an email to sfere@eurac.edu

The homepage of our Institute: http://www.eurac.edu/sfere

The database “Observatory on Autonomy” is available on the Institute’s webpage at: http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/institutes/sfere/publicationsoa.html

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Editor-in-chief: Paulina M. Borowska
Authors of the contributions: Elisabeth Alber, Mariachiara Alberton, Christina Fraenkel-Haeberle, Greta Klotz, Matteo Nicolini, Martina Trettel, Alice Valdesalici.