

Call for papers

Christian Democratic People's Parties and the Rise of Populism 1940s-2010s

**Civitas Conference at the Catholic Documentation Centre at the Radboud University Nijmegen,
the Netherlands, 21-22 November 2019**



Ever since the discussion about the name and nature of the European People's Party in the 1970s, Christian Democratic parties in Europe positioned themselves in an alliance with conservative people's parties. Corruption scandals, monetary crises, fear for loss of (national) identity and especially concerns about immigration, globalization, and internal security increasingly caused voters to drift away from their traditional parties and from Europe. New political formations at the left and the right, including populist ones, competed for these votes. While some historians asserted that Christian Democratic parties have successfully resisted the populist trend to scale down tolerance, recent observers are not so sure anymore. Some claim that these parties increasingly incorporated first neo-liberal and then populist ideas into their programs. Others suggest a wider perspective that include progressive competition as well. Beyond Europe, other responses towards populism could be seen. As representation through broad political parties in national arenas faced a crisis, this was even more the case on the European platform. The relationship between national Christian Democratic parties and their European ideals increasingly seemed a liability rather than an asset.

The transformation of the welfare state, the rise of neo-liberalism, the growing sense of uncertainty, and increasing economic and cultural tensions challenged the position of the Christian Democratic parties in Europe as people's parties. In this context this conference seeks to assemble an international team of researchers and scholars to discuss the following questions:



- How did the character of Christian Democratic parties in Europe change as people's parties in the course of this period in relation to populist voices? How did these attitudes compare to other political families?
- How and when did these parties as people's parties position themselves as supporters and critics of the European Community?
- Did European cooperation in the EPP challenge or support the national course of the member parties? Were these changes acknowledged?
- Did the inclusion of non-CD members in the EPP help or hinder their efforts to resist populist contenders both at the right and at the left?
- How did other (people's) parties influence the strategies in CD parties in responding to populism?
- How did internal discussions about populism in the member parties effect the other members in their repositioning of the Christian Democratic tradition in Europe?
- How do voters/members of CD parties differ or correspond with positions of supporters of populist parties?
- Which options do Christian Democratic parties have to survive as people's parties? Is there a future?
- How did populist parties position themselves vis-à-vis Christian Democratic parties?

The workshop, organized by CIVITAS – Forum of Archives and Research on Christian Democracy and the Catholic Documentation Center, will take place at the Radboud University in Nijmegen the Netherlands and especially welcomes junior researchers who are working in this domain. The event will be held in English, and afterward, the presentations will be published in a volume of conference proceedings issued by CIVITAS. The keynote speaker is Prof. Dr. Michael Gehler (University of Hildesheim).

Participants are invited to send proposals with title, abstract, methodology, sources (no longer than 1000 characters) and CVs to h.krabbendam@kdc.ru.nl by April 15, 2019.

Selection of the contributions is scheduled for May 2019, notification in early June.

The program committee consists of Prof. Dr. Michael Gehler (University of Hildesheim) and dr. Hans Krabbendam (Catholic Documentation Centre, Radboud University Nijmegen).

The scientific committee of Civitas consists of Paolo Acanfora (ILS), Alexander Brakel (KAS), Kim Christiaens (KADOC KU Leuven), Guido Formigoni (University of Milan), Wolfram Kaiser (University of Portsmouth), Piotr Kosicki (University of Maryland), Hanns Jürgen Küsters (KAS), Andrea Maria Locatelli (AMR), Renato Moro (Universita Roma Tre), Steven Van Hecke (KU Leuven), Helmut Wohnout (KVVI), the secretary-general is Michael Borchard (KAS).

Information about previous conferences and events can be found at <https://civitas-farcd.eu/about>