

Press Release 008/2009

13th Karlsruhe Talks Focus on European Right-Wing Extremism

Presentations, Discussions, and Cultural Program from February 6 to 8

“Extreme Right: Right-wing Extremism in Europe Today” – under this title, the 13th Karlsruhe talks will focus on expressions of today’s right-wing extremism as a challenge for society in Europe. From February 6 to 8, 2009, the ZAK | Center for Applied Cultural Science and Studium Generale of Universität Karlsruhe (TH) will organize presentations, podium discussions, a film night, and a theater play. All events of the “talks” sponsored by the Sparda-Bank Baden-Württemberg and the city of Karlsruhe will be open to the interested public, mostly at no costs. Detailed information on the program can be found under www.zak.uni-karlsruhe.de.

Extreme right-wingers can be found in nearly all societies in Europe. In the past years, they increasingly joined border-crossing networks – as a party, social movement, or sub-culture. Extreme right-wing positions also get a word in numerous parliaments, which aggravates efforts to integrate immigrants and establish a multicultural society on an institutional level. Right-wingers enter into discourses like the criticism of globalization, which have been in the focus of left-wingers so far. Moreover, an extreme right youth culture is supported by the internet. “Young people increasingly visit virtual worlds”, says ZAK director Professor Caroline Y. Robertson-von Trotha, “and Facebook and Web 2.0 can also be exploited for non-democratic purposes.”

The 13th Karlsruhe talks will focus among others on right-wing extremism as a challenge for Europe, European networking of right movements, national expressions of right-wing extremism in the EU member states, the causes of right-wing extremism, sneaking right-wing populist processes, and potential countermeasures. Scientists of varying provenience, but also practitioners and persons affected will comment on these issues.

The opening on Friday, February 6, 19.30 hrs, will be made by the renowned conflict researcher Professor Wilhelm Heitmeyer from Bielefeld (SpardaEvent-Center, Baumeisterstraße 21). On Saturday, February 7, the program will be continued from 9.30 hrs at the Karlsruhe Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Lammstraße 13-17). Among others, the professor of psychology Birgit Rommelspacher will talk about right-wing extremism and the middle of society. On Sunday, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, former member of parliament for the FDP and Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, will open the podium discussion at the SpardaEvent-Center. Here, the word will be given in particular to practitioners, who deal with right-wing groups daily. Speakers from France, Great Britain, the USA, and Sweden have agreed to participate.

The evening program of the Karlsruhe talks will focus on right-wing extremism using the means of art: In cooperation with the ARTE broadcasting company and the ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, a film night with documentaries and filmlets will take place. Furthermore, the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe will present the theater play "So kam ich unter die Deutschen".

The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is the merger of the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, member of the Helmholtz Association, and the Universität Karlsruhe. This merger will give rise to an institution of internationally excellent research and teaching in natural and engineering sciences. In total, the KIT has 8000 employees and an annual budget of 700 million Euros. The KIT focuses on the knowledge triangle of research – teaching – innovation.

The Karlsruhe institution is a leading European energy research center and plays a visible role in nanosciences worldwide. KIT sets new standards in teaching and promotion of young scientists and attracts top scientists from all over the world. Moreover, KIT is a leading innovation partner of industry.

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