

Institute of European Studies “Alcide De Gasperi”

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The Institute of European Studies has been named after Alcide De Gasperi, one of the founding fathers of Europe - along with Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer and Paul-Henri Spaak - and a key figure of Italy’s post-World War II reconstruction. Unlike similar institutions in Italy and abroad, the Institute never confined its teaching and research interests to the western half of the European continent and to what was usually called “la petite Europe”. During the cold-war era and well before the fall of the Berlin Wall, a fruitful relationship had developed between our Institute and universities and research centers in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Besides its traditional European links, the Institute has become increasingly involved, since the early 1980s, in building up various forms of partnership with universities and research institutions in other continents and, especially, in the Asia-Pacific region. This relationship has materialized in the organization of several joint initiatives and exchanges of visits of both professors and postgraduate students.

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1. Origin and Purposes of the Institute

The Institute was founded in 1953 in Rome by Alcide De Gasperi, who served as its first Director, as a highly specialized research and teaching center in the field of European studies, operating at the postgraduate level and originally attached to a private university of social sciences. This was at the time a pioneer initiative intended to stimulate the interest of both scholars and students in issues concerning the emerging European cooperation and integration process.

The Institute subsequently became fully independent in the conduct of its scientific programs and activities. Placed under the administrative supervision of and financially supported by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Institute, basically operating on its own, has from time to time established links with universities and other institutions on an *ad hoc* basis for specific programs.

According to its founding Charter, the Institute:

- i) promotes studies on legal, economic, political and social issues in the field of European cooperation and integration as well as within the broader pan-European context;
- ii) organizes conferences, seminars and other meetings designed to encourage the exchange of research and scientific experience;
- iii) undertakes the publication of papers and research findings on subjects falling within its sphere of interest;
- iv) develops cooperation programs with Italian and foreign universities, research bodies and public and private institutions;
- v) operates the Postgraduate School of European Studies.

2. *The Postgraduate School of European Studies*

The School offers an expanding range of distinctive programs in European studies and is open to Italian and foreign nationals holding a university degree in subjects such as economics, law, political science, international relations and social studies.

The Institute also caters to the needs of civil servants active in national ministries and other bodies that conduct their activities in connection with the EU and other international agencies. Special courses are held to train young graduates for competitive examinations periodically organized by European institutions.

Depending on the nature and purposes of the program, the duration may vary from a few weeks to a full academic year with a mix of specialized and interdisciplinary studies. Attendance at the lessons is compulsory for all courses. The language of instruction is usually Italian, although classes in other European languages may be organized. Supplementary courses are held to help students become acquainted with the specialized English terminology of international organizations.

The teaching staff includes academics as well as practitioners across a wide range of fields. It is a matter of pride for the Institute that former postgraduate students have gradually taken up faculty positions.

The deepening of the European integration process in an ever-growing number of areas and the forthcoming enlargement of the EU after the end of the division of the continent have dramatically changed and expanded the prospects of European studies.

The long-established one-year course, organized on a regular basis since 1955-56 and leading to the *Diploma in European Studies*, has been supplemented by a further course in 1993-94, leading to the *Master's Degree in European Studies*. A third year has been introduced in 1996-97 for high-level specialized training of a selected number of researchers wishing to obtain the *Diploma of Specialization in the Organization of European Cooperation and Integration*.

Subjects of the basic *Diploma* course include the main historical, legal, economic and security aspects of European integration as realized within the EU as well as an overall survey of major pan-European and transatlantic institutions.

The *Master's* course, focusing on specific issues concerning the single market, the economic and monetary union and common policies and the external relations of the EU, is open to those who have successfully completed the first year, obtaining the *Diploma*, and is designed to provide an adequate training for careers in European and international organizations.

A specially selected topic is investigated during the third year, leading to the *Diploma of Specialization*, mostly devoted to individual research leading to the preparation of a written dissertation under the supervision and guidance of a professor.

Courses are supplemented by occasional lectures and round tables, organized in

cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament and other national and international bodies. Visits to the seats of European institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg are arranged at the end of each academic year to round off the academic curriculum with direct contacts with EU officials. Younger students are advised on curricular and career issues.

After having passed oral subject examinations that are periodically held, students are required to submit a written dissertation which is discussed before a special Committee.

The 49 courses of Postgraduate European Studies, held from the academic year 1955-56 through the academic year 2003-2004, were attended by over 1800 students coming from over 50 different countries. Of these students, 1279 were awarded the *Diploma in European Studies*, 224 the *Master's Degree*, and 25 the *Diploma of Specialization*.

3. Research Areas

The main areas of interest to the Institute have gradually developed over fifty years in order to follow the successes and shortcomings of European integration. The results of research are generally published in book form or in specialized journals.

The internal market and the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital as well as a number of important common policies (especially in the fields of agriculture, transport, energy and the environment) have constantly been at the core of the research work carried out by professors and students alike.

The presence of numerous foreign students, especially those coming from candidate countries, has given momentum to research in the ever expanding sphere of the external relations of the EU and, more recently, in the development and implementation of the common foreign policy with special regard to security and defence. The manifold implications of the ongoing enlargement negotiations have been dealt with in national and international seminars organized by the Institute on the future shape of the EU. The reform of EU institutions and decision-making process with a view to achieving greater transparency and efficiency will represent another priority area for the foreseeable future.

The institutional mechanisms and the activities of regional integration organizations in other continents, and especially in the Asia-Pacific region, have also been the object of sustained interest on the part of the Institute's researchers.

4. Conferences and Round Tables

In the course of half a century of activity, the Institute has organized, often in cooperation with other Italian and foreign institutions, in Italy and abroad, many events of a scientific nature dealing with a wide variety of subjects.

During the cold-war era, the Institute carried out several initiatives with eastern European institutions and centers concerning topical economic and security issues that were discussed in a frank, open and non-confrontational way. Contributions presented at the various meetings have generally been published in the form of books or occasional papers.

Besides its traditional links with other bodies in Europe, the Institute has been developing since the mid-1980s various forms of partnership with universities and research institutions outside the European continent, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, joint international conferences have been held in cooperation with research institutes and universities in a number of countries, especially China, Japan and Singapore.

5. Publications

The Institute has published during several years a yearbook entitled *Annali* containing original studies and research by the Institute's faculty and students and providing information about the Institute's activities.

The Institute has also published, in Italian and/or English, monographs of a historical, legal and economic character as well as collections of the proceedings of seminars held under its auspices.

6. Library

The Institute's Library specializes in books and periodicals in the field of European political and economic integration as well as in the current problems of major regional integration organizations in the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa.

Publications are mostly in European languages but there is a small section in the library devoted to works in Chinese.

7. The Alumni Association (Associazione di Promozione Europea - APE)

The Association was founded in 1990 by a group of former students of the Institute desiring to serve the cause of European integration while maintaining and strengthening the bonds of friendship established during their stay at the Institute. A newsletter is sent every two months to around 130 members and regular gatherings are held of both a cultural and a social character.

In close cooperation with the Institute, the Association has organized several conferences, seminars and workshops bringing together scholars, experts and decision-makers to deal with the most topical aspects of European integration.

The Association's major areas of interest currently include the political and legal aspects of federalism, direct and indirect taxation and Community competition law and State aid.

[Link to the APE site](#)