



INSTITUT FÜR HÖHERE STUDIEN
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
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PUBLIC LECTURE

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"Realizing the Impossible: Reforming the European Union"

Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 17.00 pm
IHS, Stumpergasse 56
1060 Vienna, Lecture Room SZ VI

The European Union has tried to reform its institutions from the mid 1980s to the beginning of the 2000s every three to four years with little success. In the meantime, reform became even more necessary by several rounds of enlargement. In 2001 the heads of government launched a comprehensive reform attempt, and, after many backlashes and crises, the change of the EU institutions was achieved eight years later in the end of 2009.

Drawing upon the empirical results of our forthcoming book, the talk will answer a set of important empirical puzzles which emerged along the reform process. What allowed political leaders to shape the EU institutions during this stretched-out period of nearly ten years, during which national elections caused almost all political leaders that initiated the project to be out of office when the treaty finally was ratified? Why did leaders announce referendums to ratify the constitutional document even though parliamentary ratification was an option and political majorities inside those parliaments were practically guaranteed? How did they find compromise solutions over time, in particular after several backlashes of failed summits, negative referendums and periods of "reflection", which suggested the end of the reform process? And, finally, why did Irish voters first reject but then accept the final treaty despite only minor modifications to the document itself?

Daniel Finke is Junior Professor for Political Science at the University of Heidelberg. His research on constitutional and comparative politics has been published in *European Union Politics*, the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Political Studies*, the *Review of International Organizations* and the *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. In 2010 he published a book on „European Integration and its Limits“ (ECPR Press) and a second book which he co-authored with Sven-Oliver Proksch, Thomas König and George Tsebelis on „Reforming the European Union“ is forthcoming with Princeton University Press.