



Viessmann European Research Centre @ LAURIER



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MANDATE

The principal aim of the Viessmann European Research Centre (VERC) is to foster research on issues facing Europe in the 21st Century. This does not preclude retrospective analyses that have a bearing on the shape and evolution of the European experience up to the present day. The Centre is intended to be a multi-disciplinary institution. Relevant topics of research would include European economic integration, regional development, external linkages, trade and political expansion, as well as other overarching socio-economic problems. Another research area of the Centre focuses on new EU members, and on the so-called accession countries, that is, the countries currently hoping to join the **European Union**, and how they relate to the older established member countries. Lessons for other regions of the world, from the European experience, is yet another topic of interest among researchers affiliated with the Centre. It is envisioned that faculty in the social sciences, humanities, and the School of Business, would be the most active members in the Centre. The Centre has also entered into a number of co-operative arrangements with a variety of institutions and research centres, and in Europe or in other parts of the world. A web site explains the VERC's activities. You will also find a copy of the first five year Report on the Centre's activities. The URL for the Centre is:

<http://www.wlu.ca/viessmann>

CENTRE'S HISTORY

Over time there has been a substantial interest by faculty and students at Laurier in European affairs. A large number of courses in different departments focus on European issues, and a number of faculty have major research interests in Europe. Laurier has over 20 co-operative partnerships with European universities and many students study for a semester or two in Europe. The initial impetus for the creation of the VERC took place in 1992 when a number of WLU professors organized an informal research interest group on Europe. The group, then called the *Laurier European Interest Group*, cooperated with a similar interest group at **Philipps University** in Marburg, Germany, a partner institution of WLU since 1983. The group has held a number of symposia over time, hosted guest lectures, and published a discussion paper series. Electronic copies are available for download on the VERC's website. This series was first published as hard copies and later as papers on the Internet. In 2001, thanks to a generous endowment from **Hans Viessmann**, the Viessmann Research Centre on Modern Europe was created. The Centre's name was changed to the Viessmann European Research Centre in 2006.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Research conducted by the centre consists of the following:

- Work in progress, usually conference and workshop papers that appear in electronic form on the Viessmann website.
- The Centre holds an Annual conference at WLU, or at a partner institution, each year. The theme of each Conference will vary year to year but the theme will always deal with a policy question of direct interest to Europe and academics who study European affairs. The Centre also sponsors a number of workshops on a variety of topics.
- The VERC publishes a **Europolicy Briefs**. These are short pieces that deal with a policy issue of concern to an audience interested in European affairs. The Brief is intended to be accessible to a wider audience than simply the academic community.
- It is also expected that senior undergraduate and graduate mentoring, in the form of projects/thesis/dissertation research, will be a highly desirable by-product of the Centre's activities. The Centre also hosts visitors and has office space and some resources to accommodate them on campus. We encourage both short-term and long-term visitors from outside WLU.
- It is expected that research supported by the Centre would be published, normally, in refereed journals, edited books, and other forms of peer-reviewed research.

CONFERENCES and WORKSHOPS

Conference and workshop locations alternate between WLU one year and a location in Europe or elsewhere. A call for papers is posted on the VERC's website as well as elsewhere (e.g., SSRN, Inomics). Following the inaugural Annual conference held at WLU, subsequent meetings were held, for example, at the European University – Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, and the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal. In 2006, to celebrate the 20 year link between Philipps University and WLU, and 10 years of financial support from the Viessmann family, the Annual conference was held in Marburg, Germany. In 2008 the 10th year of EMU is being celebrated with a Conference at the University of Münster. Smaller workshops that have a more focused theme are also held on a regular basis. The first one, dealing with the state of European economic cooperation in 2006, was held in April 2006. Another workshop on financial system stability was being held in Capri, Italy, also in 2006, a workshop on the frontiers of research in central banking was held at the National bank of Hungary in 2007, while a workshop on asset prices bubbles was co-hosted by the Norges Bank at their Venastul facility in Norway. The Centre has been sponsored by several outside institutions including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and the Humboldt Foundation.

