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LISBOAN

Linking Interdisciplinary Integration Studies by Broadening the European Academic Network

Fourth Guest Lecture

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Fourth LISBOAN Guest Lecture, 17 May 2012, Istituto Affari Internazionali

Wolfgang Wessels, University of Cologne

Date: 17 May 2012

Venue: Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Host: Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

While half of Europe is pointing a finger at Germany, Prof. Wolfgang Wessels of the University of Cologne said that there is a strong 'demand' for German leadership today within the inter-institutional balance of the European Union (especially as regards the Council). This leadership is demanded to give Europe stability and Germany must face it, whether it likes it or not.

Wolfgang Wessels, visiting professor at the College of Europe, Bruges and Natolin, and Jean Monnet gold medal award winner, held a keynote address on 'The European Council and Germany: Towards an Institutional and Political Hegemony' at the IAI on May 17, in the framework of the 'Lisboan Project'.

The demand for leadership is twofold; the demand is for two kinds of leadership, stressed Wessels: on the one hand, 'transformative leadership', which is flexible and adaptable to changes; on the other hand, 'leadership in crisis', capable of facing external and unpredictable events. In both cases the leader's ultimate goal has to be, inevitably, to achieve the common good. The support of other EU member countries, primarily Italy, is crucial in this process: they have to support Germany in the construction and execution of leadership.

Prof. Wessels focused on the distinction between two concepts: 'hegemony' and 'leadership'. In particular, he emphasised the purely provocative meaning of the term 'hegemony', as it relates to 'power' and 'legitimacy', which, in turn, are difficult to define. 'Hegemony' denotes the predominance of one country over others and is a special form of leadership which, instead, refers to the interaction between those who, within a group, occupy a higher position than the rest of the group.

Germany has always shown a special interest in the architecture of European institutions and this role of 'guide' could be the focus of a process of what Wessels calls 'integrative balance', in which the European Council may have a central role.

Please find [here](#) a video interview to Prof. Wessels.