

ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE IN THE EU?

Venue: **CEPS, 1 Place du Congr s, 1000 Brussels**

Date: **Tuesday, 9 October 2018, 09:30 - 17:00**

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European integration has always been associated with the aspiration of upwards economic convergence. While the EU accession of new member states in 2004 and 2007 gave a positive spin to convergence, signs of divergence coming from EU's southern members have appeared over the past decade. Moreover, divergence pressures at a regional level are becoming more patent within countries. This conference will examine the process of EU economic convergence in its various forms and consider its driving factors.

How can we spot the crucial trends in convergence and how can they help us understand and stimulate the process? What roles do education, structural funds and regional factors play? What policy measures can the EU use to foster economic convergence and deter divergence in the coming decade? Can we expect convergence to continue forever? Representatives from the EU institutions, academic researchers, economists and other experts will debate these questions and offer their insights.

09:00 - 09:30 Registration and Coffee

09:30 - 09:45 Welcome and Introduction, Brigitte Preissl, ZBW Editor-in-Chief, Intereconomics and Daniel Gros, Director, CEPS

9:45 - 11:00 **Session 1: Trends of Economic Convergence**

Moderator: Jennifer Bourguignon, ZBW Editor, Intereconomics

Cinzia Alcidi, CEPS, *Convergence in the EU*

Barry Eichengreen, Prof. at Berkeley University, *Convergence and Divergence in the Euro Area*

Michael Burda, Prof. Humboldt University of Berlin, *Convergence of German Bundesl nder – Lessons for the EU*

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 - 12:45 **Session 2: Drivers of Convergence/Divergence in the EU**

Moderator: Cinzia Alcidi, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Economic Policy Unit, CEPS

Mathias Dolls, Senior Economist, Ifo Institute, *Incentivising structural reforms*

Christian Bodewig Program Manager, Southern Europe, World Bank, *Upgrading Europe's Convergence Machine*

Laszlo Andor, former Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, *Cohesion, convergence and the EU financial toolbox*

12:45 - 13:45 Lunch Break

13:45 - 15:00 **Session 3: What can the EU do?**

Moderator: Brigitte Preissl, ZBW Editor-in-Chief, Intereconomics

Ioana Rus, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Corina Cretu, Commissioner Regional Policy, European Commission, *Structural funds*

Dario Guarascio, National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies, *'Can (current) Europe do something? The interweaving of external constraints and domestic entropy'*

Jorge Núñez Ferrer, Senior Research Fellow at CEPS, *The impact of Structural funds on convergence*

15:00 - 15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 - 17:00 **Roundtable Debate: How much Divergence can the EU take?**

Moderator: Alan Beattie, Financial Times

Maria João Rodrigues, MEP

Daniel Gros, Director, CEPS

Barry Eichengreen, Prof. at Berkeley University

Charles Wyplosz, Prof. at the Graduate Institute Geneva

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