

**Das Institut für europäische Integrationsforschung  
der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften  
lädt ein:**

## **VIENNA LECTURE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION**

By Wolfgang Theodor Wessels (University of Köln)

### **Evolutionary Dynamics of the EU System: The European Council as a Motor of a Multilevel Fusion Process**

**Abstract:**

This lecture explores the fundamental question of how to explain the unpredictable and perhaps also unintended dynamic of the European system, which has developed from the original six member states of the European Community to an enlarged EU-27 with a state-like agenda. My answer: the institutionalized summits are the key to understanding the evolution. At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, and in more than 110 meetings of the European Council since 1975, the heads of state and government have used the EU system to address economic and political challenges at the international and domestic level. Based on a problem solving 'instinct' – sometimes slowed down or modified by a 'sovereignty reflex' – the 'Masters of the Treaty', represented by their highest political executives, have 'fused' procures and policies in many different ways. Intergovernmental in its composition, the European Council has time and again initiated EU policies and decided on a de facto basis to strengthen the role of supranational institutions. Central aspects of the functioning of the European Council and its democratic legitimacy will be discussed in the light of this dynamic.

**Moderation by:**

Gerda Falkner (Director of EIF; Professor, University of Vienna)

**Date: 8 November 2010, 17h00**

Wine & Cheese reception to follow

Place: Sitzungssaal der ÖAW, Dr. Ignaz Seipel - Platz 2, 1010 Wien

Organised by: Institute of European Integration Research (EIF)