The State of Peace Conference in 2013 is committed to the interpretation of the worldwide emergence of civic protest, uprisings, revolutions and violence beginning in 2010 in Greece and Tunisia. These events raise questions about their impact on political legitimacy: What do continuous manifestations of civic discontent mean for the political legitimacy of the state? What do repressive or violent counter-measures by states say about their own legitimacy, and what do they say about civic action’s legitimacy?

The conference will be organized by the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) in close cooperation with its partner institutions within the Conflict Peace and Democracy Cluster (CPDC): the Institute of Conflict Research Vienna, the Democracy Centre Vienna and the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education at the Alps-Adriatic University of Klagenfurt/Celovec. Invited international experts – researchers and practitioners – will convene at the Peace Center, Schlaining Castle, in an intensive workshop environment, to not only discuss and analyze the current
situation and issues, but also to identify potential solutions and alternative courses of action. In particular, the debate will focus on the following key themes:

- Theory of Political Legitimacy and Violence
- Civic Uprisings in the European Union
- Questioning (Political, Economic and Social) Order – Occupy
- Contesting (Semi-)Autocratic Regimes
- Reconsidering Information Society Governance

General Overview

Greek authorities arresting protesters and firing tear gas, Egyptian and Syrian governments turning off the internet, nearly 3,000 assassinations of political activists in Columbia in the last decade; People are expressing their discontent with the political situation, demanding certain rights, wanting change, attacking governmental institutions and their actors, not only in Latin America and the Middle East, but also in the USA, central and southern Europe: Governmental measures against civic pressure and civic resistance as demand for political change – despite the power asymmetry, both are measures towards one side’s understanding of peace and order.

Public manifestations of violence, be it in the form of mental and physical repression or direct violence, are considered as a sign of a certain disturbance in the balance of political order: Every society claims a certain set of values and rights as foundation of its order and state of peace. In order to maintain this state of peace, a society accepts an institution which it legitimizes to exercise power over its individuals. In a modern state this power is monopolized within the government and thus the only source of using violence with legal legitimation.

The young third millennium has already experienced various civil uprisings, governmental repression and public violence all over the world. Especially continuous civil uprisings in Europe, where the governments and sovereigns are commonly considered to rule with legitimation of the people, bring up questions about the legitimacy and scope of violent governmental means aiming at order and peace, as well as about the legitimacy and scope of civic protest and its means of expressing discontent. Furthermore, the continuous presence of violence also raises questions of the role of violence in a system of political order. This is also applicable to the online sphere in times of Wikileaks or Anonymous and drastic political counter-measures.

All these incidents and developments of continuous manifestations of civic discontent raise questions about the legitimacy of the state as well as drastic counter-measures again raise the question of the legitimacy of civic action. Therefore, the State of Peace Conference will reflect the question of political legitimacy of states as well as the legitimacy of civic actions. This topic refers to a wide scope of different understandings of peace and violence: legitimate means to defend legitimate rights in order to obtain peace from one side, might be considered illegitimate violence by the other side or vice versa.

As this abstract question of (il-)legitimate pressure and violence is raised by several incidents all around the world, it can be discussed through several examples of social movements and protest events. The purposes of this conference are on the one hand to discuss its general theoretical
question of political legitimacy, and on the other hand to analyze the global manifestations of discontent and state counter-measures regarding the theoretical question. The examination of various situations and incidents in different world regions and various political systems will be of added value for the abstract theoretical question of political legitimacy and violence. The conference will be structured in different panels. Apart from the panel with the theory focus, the panels will be set up more or less following the type of addressee and context of the civic action.

**Programme**

**Keynote Presentation**

**Chantal Mouffe**

A political theorist educated at the universities of Louvain, Paris, and Essex, Chantal Mouffe is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Westminster. She has taught at many universities in Europe, North America and Latin America, and has held research positions at Harvard, Cornell, the University of California, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. Between 1989 and 1995 she was Directrice de Programme at the College International de Philosophie in Paris.

**Theory of Political Legitimacy and Violence**

Contributor: Baldassare Scolari

Baldassare Scolari is a scholar of study of religion and philosophy of religion. His research area includes theory of religion, political theories, political theology, hermeneutics, history of Christianity, continental philosophy. He’s working on his PhD thesis in a Program of “Co-tutelle de thèse” at the University of Zurich (Switzerland) and the University of Macerata (Italy) with the following title: “Legitimation of Political Order – Monuments, Martyrs and Discursive Practices in the Contemporary Public Space”.

**Civic Uprisings in the European Union**

Starting in 2010 in Greece due to massive spending cuts in order to avoid state bankruptcy, manifestations of protests and civic uprisings have scarcely calmed down. Despite these drastic measures, the economic and social situation got worse – the middle class is disintegrating. Similar developments take place in Ireland, Spain, Italy and other EU countries: states cut their spending to fight the financial crisis accord to EU directives in return for its financial aid. The way these policies were introduced trigger constant uprisings. As especially the EU’s member states are commonly considered modern states which carry out sovereignty on a broad foundation of popular legitimacy, these continuous uprisings against their states’ policies raise serious concern about political legitimacy.

**Contributors:** Laurence Cox, Elena Begant, Kostis Stafylakis, Íñigo Errejón
Laurence Cox, PhD, co-directs the MA in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, where he also runs a PhD programme for participatory action research in social movement practice and teaches the sociology of revolutions. He has been involved in social movements for 30 years, with particular emphases on building alliances between movements, developing training, movement media and in dealing with repression. Laurence is a founding editor of Interface: a journal for and about social movements, co-editor of Understanding European movements: new social movements, global justice struggles, anti-austerity protest and Marxism and social movements and has published widely on various aspects of social movements in Europe and Asia: see eprints.nuim.ie for copies.

Elena Begant is a human rights educator and activist, founder, program director and trainer of the first HRE/EDC NGO in Slovenia since December 2000 (Center for Citizenship Education), international HRE expert and practitioner cooperating with DARE Network, FRA, Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, EIP International and OHCHR.

Kostis Stafylakis is an art theorist and visual artist. He holds a PhD in political science from Panteion University, Athens, Greece.

Íñigo Errejón holds a PhD in Political Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). He has been visiting scholar at different European, American and Latin American universities. His main research interests are the discourse analysis and the theory of hegemony, the political change processes in Latin America and the social movements and protest cycle in southern Europe.

**Questioning (Political, Economic and Social) Order – Occupy**

The sudden and spontaneous occupation of Manhattan’s Zuccoti Park near New York City’s Wall Street in October 2011 was surprising: The revolutionary spirit of the Middle East had reached the center of capitalism. Fuelled by indignation following the financial crisis, people occupied public space to express their anger. Protesters raised a sign, that they would not silently carry the Wall Street’s burden on their shoulders in terms of cuts in social spending. And the message of *Occupy Wall Street* spread all over the world – *Occupy* became a global movement. The 99 percent of the people, as they call themselves, claim to participate at the decisions, the 1 percent of mankind makes and by that decides the fate of the global majority. *Occupy* is a manifestation of indignation, a sign of protest against political, economic and social injustice: It strongly questions the legitimacy of power which does not take into account the basic desires and needs of the majority of the people.

Contributors: Johannes Diesing, Ingar Solty

**Johannes Diesing** holds a master degree from Rostock University.

**Ingar Solty** is a PhD candidate at York University in Toronto in Canada and has recently joined the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded research project The European Question in an Era of Economic and Political Crises directed by Stephen Gill. His research focusses on the interrelations of the economic, political and ideological spheres. Solty is author of “Die USA unter Obama: Charismatische Herrschaft, soziale Bewegungen und imperiale Politik in der globalen Krise” (Argument Verlag, Hamburg 2013) and together with Frank Deppe and David Salomon co-author of “Imperialismus” (Papy Rossa, Cologne 2011), an editor at Das Argument: Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaften, a Fellow of the Berlin Institute for Critical Theory and a co-founding member of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation’s North-Atlantic Left Dialogue.
Contesting (Semi-)Autocratic Regimes

After mass protests all over Tunisia had started in the end of 2010, civic uprisings spread all over an area of autocratic regimes. Nevertheless, these events were surprising as social discontent in the Middle East was scarcely expressed by political demands. These civic dynamics toppled two autocratic regimes and brought others into serious trouble. The so called Arab Spring seems to have seriously questioned common ways of legitimization of autocratic rule in the Middle East. Some authoritarian regimes have a large basis of charismatic legitimacy like in Cuba, others maintain their sovereignty by an oligarchical coalition of capitalism and violence like in central Asia, and some again rely on their ethnic group and violence, like many African dictatorships. In some of these cases, already certain signs by single people question the legitimacy of a regime.

Contributors: Leo Gabriel, Paul Winter & Lukas Wank

Leo Gabriel (born 1945 in Lower Austria) studied law and political science at the University of Vienna and political anthropology in Paris where he represented the foreign students during the 1968 movement. He has been active as a researcher focusing on civil society in Latin America, as well as he was an activist himself not only in Latin America, but also in Austria. In addition to that, he worked as a documentary filmmaker of social movements in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. In 1986 Dr. Gabriel became the scientific director of the Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institut für zeitgenössische Lateinamerikaforschung (Institute for contemporary studies on Latin America) in Vienna and guest professor at the universities of Zurich, Managua and Mexico. He maintains close links to the Foro de Sao Paulo, a political platform of 140 Latinamerican parties and movements, the international Zapatist movement and Euromarch, a European movement against unemployment and for the integration of transnational trade-unions. Due to his engagement within the anti-globalization movement, he is one of the main organizers of the “Summit of Alternatives” which took place from May 10th to 13th 2006 in Vienna, simultaneously with the presidential summit between heads of State of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

Lukas Wank studied Development Studies in Vienna. He is working as an editor of “International” - Journal for International Politics and is a founding member of the information project “Shabka”. His research interests are peace and conflict studies, post-colonial and critical theory as well as ethno-nationalism and development studies; regionally he emphasises on the MENA-Region.

Paul Winter is enrolled in the Master’s programme of Development Studies as well as Education based in Vienna. His research interests are Global Education, Post-colonial theory, Nationalism(s) and the MENA-Region. He works as an editor at “International” - Journal for International Politics and is a founding member of the information project “Shabka”.
Reconsidering Information Society Governance

Since its existence, the Internet has changed the world as we know it. New information and communication platforms, in particular social media like Facebook, Twitter or Xing have transformed the global world society into a place of transparency, which allows its participants to exchange their personal interests and to reveal their privacy. On the other hand, this kind of global information dissemination is in contrast to worldwide information omission, which is mainly practiced by the governmental sphere and corporate groups. This ambiguity within the information society has provoked initiatives like Wikileaks or Anonymous, which are trying to unveil secret information that is widely unknown to the public. As the Julian Assange affair in the US has shown, the struggle for information dissemination and online resistance against information omission is still a double-edged sword concerning the ambiguity of personal freedom and public security.

Contributors: Wolfgang Hofkirchner, Ronald Tuschl

Wolfgang Hofkirchner was born in 1953 in Vienna, Austria. Being educated as Political Scientist and Psychologist, he acquired the venia docendi in Technology Assessment at the Vienna University of Technology (where he received a tenure position), was University Professor for Internet and Society at the University of Salzburg and Guest Professor in Spain and Brazil. His fields of interest are: Systems; Science of Information; ICTs and Society. Accordingly, he is co-founder of a research center in systems (bcsss.org), a society in information studies (is4is.org), and a network in ICTs and society research (icts-and-society.net). He counts close to 190 publications. He has been appointed an academician of the Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften zu Berlin and of the International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences.

Ronald Tuschl, PhD, was born in Reutte/Tyrol in 1969 and studied Political Science in combination with International Relations, Development Studies, Contemporary History and Informatics at the University of Innsbruck. He had his first research experience at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) in Germany as a Research Fellow and continued his work at the European Peace University (EPU) in Stadtschlaining/Austria in 1996. He became Secretary General of the EPU in 2006 and is now working as a Senior Lecturer. He also served as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Innsbruck and Vienna.