

**TREATY OF UTRECHT CHAIR AUTUMN 2010:
THE ACADEMIC AND THE CIVIC in EUROPE**

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Historically, relations between active citizenship and the universities as the location of academic research have been a matter of perennial concern. The academic and the civic have been regarded as, variously, opposed, inextricable, and mutually complicit. In most European universities higher education and scientific research have aimed at producing enlightened, functional and discerning citizens. In response to economic and political globalization and advances, however, this classical model of the social relevance of academic excellence has been reviewed. In a globalized and technologically mediated world in which information is readily at hand for most Europeans, the question of the specific role of the European universities has become a political focal point which has led to a number of soul-searching debates: firstly concerning the public perception of the universities' knowledge production, value and relevance to their surroundings. Secondly about the serviceability of the academic community in regards to citizenship, on the national as well as the European level. Thirdly, the question is asked of the extent to which this renewed concern for the academic and the civic in a global context re-shapes the very idea of 'scientific research' and its value to society. More specifically: what is the impact of the European Union in redefining the civic and social responsibilities of the university today?

Awarding Frans Timmerman the Treaty of Utrecht Visiting Professorship for the autumn term 2010 allows Utrecht University, through the Centre for the Humanities, to focus on the particular relationship between European citizenship and academic social and civic responsibility. Through sustained emphasis on the construction of social sustainable relations and a serious political engagement with academic knowledge transfer on a European level, the programme related to the new Treaty of Utrecht Professor aims at debating the project of a knowledgeable, respectful and open European citizenry. The multicultural or pluri-ethnic dimension is especially relevant to this discussion. Cultural practice has shifted in significant ways in response to globalization, mostly under the impact of two major factors: increased social mobility of culture users

and makers on the one hand and more pervasive technological mediation on the other. The notions of cultural diversity and technological mediation have become central to the ways in which ideas are produced, circulated and preserved. This appointment will therefore address particular aspects of the pluri-ethnic dialogue between the European society and their universities. What did, and do, the European nations want from their universities and their academics in Europe today?

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