



New Zealand European Union Centres Network

**Victoria University Political Science &  
International Relations Programme and  
present: the NZ European Union Centres  
Network**

***A SEARCH FOR NEW EUROPEAN  
IDENTITIES***

**Professor Mitja Žagar, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana,  
Slovenia**

Few would contest the impact of collective identities on social stability, (inter)ethnic relations and conflict in ethnically plural societies in SE Europe. Recent tragic historic experiences in the territory of the former Yugoslavia showed possible destructive social and political potentials of certain exclusive collective identities. Exclusive (ethnic) collective identities based on aggressive nationalism served as the basis for political mobilization of followers by nationalistic politicians and movements, which led to the escalation of ethnic conflict in ethnically plural environments and, consequently, to tragic wars. Can collective identities also play a positive role? Can open and inclusive collective identities, which are positively defined and offer an adequate basis for equal cooperation based on common interests strengthen mutual understanding, trust, tolerance, coexistence, coherence and equal cooperation in plural societies? This talk investigates whether and how new common European identities might become such open and inclusive collective identities in SE European plural societies.

**Thursday, 27 September**  
Rutherford House LT3  
4.00-5.30pm

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