

## **Panel Proposal**

The European Association for Southeast Asian Studies 10th conference  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
10 to 13 September 2019

**(1) Title: The Development Challenges of Post-Socialist Southeast Asia:  
The Politics, Economics and Geography**

(2) Convener: Dr. Andrzej Bolesta  
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(3) Brief Description

Scholarly literature often considers Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam as post-socialist countries of Southeast Asia that have been undergoing a systemic transformation. Indeed, CLMV, as the countries are often referred to, have a number of institutional features in common. They have also been the fastest growing economies in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in recent decades. However, despite their development achievements they remain among the poorest countries in the region. What are then their specific development challenges that impede their ability to accelerate poverty reduction and how can these challenges be addressed?

Sectoral research tends to produce generic analyses and generic policy recommendations confined to a specific scientific discipline. These analyses often draw on the fact that CLMV share common intuitional and systemic features. However, to understand the development predicaments among post-socialist Southeast Asian countries one needs a multidisciplinary approach, as each country is different and there is no effective one-size-fits-all policy. This multidisciplinary approach needs to consider economic, political, social and even geographical factors. For example, it is believed that for Myanmar the biggest issue concerns political instability and ethnic conflict therein, for Laos – geographical predicament related to “landlockedness” and lack of access to international sea routes, for Cambodia – social tensions related to growing disparities, whereas for Vietnam – the economic obstacles in the form of an inefficient banking sector. All of these states also suffer from inadequate foreign investments targeted to specific sectors, which would more effectively accelerate the process of poverty eradication. This list of political, economic, social and geographical challenges specific for CLMV is not exhaustive. There are indeed others, and to identify them and address them means going beyond the confines of one particular discipline.

This panel will discuss the multidisciplinary predicaments related to development challenges in CLMV. It will use a broader comparative analysis to illustrate the cases and provide policy recommendations.

(4) Single Session (90 mins), 4 presenters.