

**FUSING LOCALITIES?**

UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On 29 November 2013, academics, policy-makers and practitioners from the UK, Germany and Sweden came together to debate the role of local government in the European integration process. The event took place in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Languages of the Manchester Metropolitan University.

The event started with a workshop focusing on the efficacy of the Fusion approach as a conceptual framework for the study local government. The workshop explored to what extent local authorities across Europe have ‘fused’ into the EU’s compound system of governance. Papers by Lee Miles (Loughborough University), Roger Lawrence (Wolverhampton City Council), Christopher Huggins (University of Portsmouth), Magnus Lindh (Karlstad University) and Marius Guderjan (MMU) provided an excellent basis for a fruitful discussion. A special thanks goes to Tassilo Herrschel (University of Westminster) and Carlo Panara (Liverpool John Moores University) for their attendance.

The workshop was followed by a panel discussion about the European engagement of local and regional authorities. Professor Lee Miles highlighted the need for local government to refocus their scope of action in times of austerity and crisis. Magnus Lindh provided insights into regional cooperation around EU policies in Värmland and West Sweden. Dr Marius Guderjan provided a short overview to the situation in the North West of England and North Rhine-Westphalia, before Nora Ricken from the North Rhine-Westphalian Government presented an innovative set of guidelines to certify ‘Europe active’ local authorities. The last speaker was Cllr Sue Murphy, Deputy Chair of Manchester City Council, who talked about the European and international activities within Greater Manchester.

I would like to thank all participants for their contribution to a successful event. Despite its growing importance, the study of local government and the EU is still a niche within European studies. We were very pleased to assemble a dedicated group of people with various backgrounds for the purpose of exchanging views, knowledge and opportunities for future cooperation.