

Call for Papers

The *Canadian Studies Centre* at the University of Innsbruck
in cooperation with
the *Africa Focus* of the Institute of Contemporary History is organizing

an international and interdisciplinary symposium on

Responsibility to Protect: A Canadian Heritage. Peacekeeping, Diplomacy, Media, and Literature Responding to Humanitarian Challenges

from

**November 11-14, 2009
at the University of Innsbruck**

"Responsibility to Protect", a Canadian invention, is intended to successfully counteract the international community's powerlessness and failure to act in the face of crises and humanitarian catastrophes. Originally established in peacekeeping, R2P also involves other areas of operation such as diplomacy, media, and literature, whose specific contributions can be defined as "need to debate" (diplomacy), "necessity to inform" (media), and "courage to transcend" (literature). A separate section will be dedicated to each of these four fields.

1. Peacekeeping – Responsibility to Protect

The principle of taking responsible action (also military) in a crisis situation, as such accepted by the United Nations in 2005, commits the international community to become active in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes – in extreme cases even against the will of the state concerned. R2P also constitutes an answer to the missing capacities of regional actors, who have so far been referred to as the responsible first instances.

2. Diplomacy – Need to Debate

R2P as a concept has gained in importance after the international community's failure in the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The obligation to intervene confronts diplomacy with completely new challenges. It is diplomacy's duty to take up the task of defining the narrow path between the necessity or illegitimacy of an intervention and to elaborate reliable guidelines.

3. Media – Necessity to Inform

The example of Rwanda has shown that responsibility without information does not work. Information is necessary for the analysis of a situation; its results constitute the basis for all further decisions. Information, however, and in particular journalistic information, can also contribute to raising public awareness, just as paucity of information, information blackouts, disinformation or the monopolization of information obscure the individual's and the community's responsibility.

4. Literature – Courage to Transcend

Literature, too, plays an important role in creating public awareness and in helping to come to terms with past traumas. In many cases, pain, distress, torture, the menace of death, flight, and

migration trigger off the creative process of writing, which for its part provides the necessary distance for coping with trauma. In this context, the possibilities of literature go far beyond mere documentary writing as literature develops its own strategies and scenarios and projects its own visions of how to solve and to avoid conflicts.

5. Junior scientists and researchers forum

The symposium brings together renowned representatives of the four fields mentioned above. At the same time, it intends to offer a forum for junior scientists and researchers (postgraduates, postdocs) to engage in a multidisciplinary dialogue and to discuss their own research positions in an exchange with other disciplines.

The symposium in Innsbruck

- *seeks to instigate an interdisciplinary dialogue on an international issue,*
- *serves as a communication platform for representatives of peacekeeping, diplomacy, media, and literature (studies) to learn about each other's judgment of the same issue, and*
- *seeks a dialogue between representatives of international organizations, researchers, and junior scientists.*

Conference languages: English, French

Application deadline for the submission of articles (abstract of max. 300 words):

June 1, 2009

For further information please contact:

Canadian Studies Centre of the University of Innsbruck

Herzog-Friedrich-Str. 3

A-6020 Innsbruck

canada.centre@uibk.ac.at

Tel: +43/(0)512/507- 2594; Fax: +43/(0)512/507-9824

Dr. Thomas Spielbüchler

Africa Focus

Institute of Contemporary History of the University of Innsbruck

Innrain 52

A-6020 Innsbruck

thomas.spielbuechler@uibk.ac.at

Tel: +43/(0)512/507-4407

The symposium is supported by the research focus group "**Kulturen in Kontakt – Cultures in Contact**" of the University of Innsbruck.