

ISTITUTO ITALIANO
DI STUDI GERMANICI
VILLA SCIARRA~WURTS
SUL GIANICOLO

THREE-YEAR PLAN 2013-2015

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES IN THE TRIENNIUM 2013-2015

The Italian Institute of German Studies, begun in 1932 in the legal form of a cultural institution and transformed in 2006 into a not-for-profit national public research entity, is the only humanistic research institution in Italy with the goal of promoting the scientific development of knowledge within the field of the humanities (in relation to other disciplinary areas of German Studies, of the applied sciences, of the historical, economic and judicial sciences and European and international historical studies) related to German- and Scandinavian language-speaking countries.

It bears restating and reaffirming that the peculiarities of humanistic research, traditionally based on individual investigation, consist in the fact that their results and influence on knowledge have unforeseeable timespans, in-as-much as they follow informative and popular channels and paths that are not always obvious nor institutionalized; furthermore, the dimension of research in and of itself is not easily definable in terms of its temporal development. Taking into consideration and following the indications contained in the PNR 2011-2013 as to the potentialities of interdisciplinary keys of the humanities and the “cultural dimension as a dialogical or conflictual meeting point between different traditions of thought,” the great question of cultural identity cannot but make use of the extensive and multiple contributions of humanistic research, which is divided among various disciplinary fields.

The Italian Institute of German Studies intends therefore to implement as far as possible methodologies of research that favor pluralistic research based on the involvement and the competition of researchers belonging not only to academic institutions, but also to national and international research centers. The aggregation of more force commensurate with the objective, to the institution and the objectives of the respective research projects, while aiming at an interdisciplinary perspective, is designed with the following in mind:

- a) participation in European open competitions, with specific reference to the VII Framework Programme and to Erasmus Mundus, with the goal of creating, together with adequate financial support, a web between the various institutions involved in the project itself; participation in open competitions related to PRIN (Program of Scientific Research of Relevant National Interest) in cooperation with universities and FIRB (Fund for Research Investment) competitions;
- b) placement of fixed-term contract personnel (through Co.co.pro., research fellowships, Firb, Prin) and temporary secondment of permanent personnel to universities subject to stipulations contained in agreements following from the recent decisions of the MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research) together with the Conference of Rectors.

The grave economic situation at present reflects heavily upon the actual financing and human resources of the IIGS. The permanent staff, originally 9, has gone down to 6, of whom 5 are active. As far as rationalization actions and obtainable budgetary savings in the three-year plan 2013-2015 are concerned, different activities or the start of projects and initiatives have come to light. Nevertheless, it is important to specify the following: the new Board of Directors, who took office in 2011, inherited a disastrous situation from the previous management which for years had used the FOE without producing scientific results, continuing to handle everything rather statically until August 2011. The former management limited itself to organizing the occasional presentation and conference without the help of any defined programmatic criteria. In addition, it did not continue with the publication of the historic "German Studies" journal, nor with the updating and cataloguing of the library; and finally no funds were allocated to research fellowships or research projects.

It is therefore necessary to highlight the specificity of the situation of the IIGS. With its extremely scant regular funding, destined to a large degree to cover personnel and management costs, there is very little left over for research. Therefore it is evident how a valid and vigorous savings plan could only come about through a re-launching of the institute itself. This responsibility, taken up by the new management, foresees a completely new way of using the resources allocated by the FOE. In light of this fundamental reflection, in the proposed 2012 Budget, there are savings in management costs, including telephone bills (which have been reduced by 50%); it also foresees an INTRANET at zero cost for those within the institution. Cleaning costs have gone down as well by reducing the budget line items (one general cleaning per year as opposed to two, etc.). Among other things, the institute does not employ a porter/operator and those responsibilities have been given to personnel. It must be noted that every member of the staff has demonstrated great flexibility and spirit of service and has actively participated in the rebirth of the Institute by always being ready to compensate for any gaps.

As a source of self-financing, the institute's headquarters have been established within the Villa Sciarra (Rome), which was donated to the Kingdom of Italy in 1931. This offers remarkable potentiality for "commercial" activities, considering the splendid location, the furnished convention halls, the terraces, the library with its reading room, and other meeting spaces. As the headquarters of the IIGS headquarters are State property, procedures for obtaining necessary authorizations have begun.

Contact with the State, the Ministry for Culture and the Environment, the Commune of Rome and other entities has been undertaken in order to analyze whether or not the conditions for the energy requalification of the building exist. The project, still in its beginning stages, foresees the identification of areas to set up solar panels and a suitable cost estimate, together with detailed cost/benefit analyses. The IIGS is deeply committed

to seeing that research paths are continued, forcefully underlining however that the sole entity of humanistic research in Italy must be duly supported with adequate funds. Budget cuts at headquarters would seriously compromise the development of research activities. The new management has in fact begun an important re-launch of the institute with a redistribution of funds and savings measures. Furthermore, the assessment of the scientific activity promoted by the Institute cannot but take into account the human resources, rather slim, employed for its development.

The three-year plan aims to realize the programmatic lines enumerated in the introduction, strengthening the institute as much as possible in its role as a center of high-quality education for young scholars, in the creation of projects in synergy with national and international research institutions and in being a point of reference for scientific initiatives.

In consideration of the guidelines contained in the National Program of Research (PNR), in particular those related to cultural patrimony, the institution proposes to promote the substantial and invaluable bibliographic sources of the library to the utmost, presenting a Pilot Project.

The projects described in the relevant sections will be financed by the State (MIUR). In the three-year-period the IIGS will strengthen international collaborations already underway, in particular with the Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst, the Goethe Institut, the Thomas Mann Gesellschaft of Lubeck, the Walter Benjamin Gesellschaft of Dusseldorf and the following cultural institutions present in Italy: Villa Vigoni, the Casa di Goethe, the Austrian Cultural Forum, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the Max Planck Institute, the Fondazione Brodolini, ÄDV-Ägyptischer Deutschlehrerverband, AMPA-Association

Marocaine des Professeurs d'Allemand, AGDV-Algerischer Germanisten und Deutschlehrerverband, ODV-Oraner Deutschlehrerverband (Algeria), TGDV-Tunesischer Germanisten- und Deutschlehrerverband, TDV-Tuneisischer Deutschlehrerverband, and UNIMED – Mediterranean University Union.