

## **Prestigious ERC Advanced Grant for Professor of Sociology Hans-Peter Blossfeld at Bamberg University** (2010/12/2)

The European Research Council (ERC) awarded an extremely prestigious Advanced Investigators Grant to Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Hans-Peter Blossfeld (University of Bamberg). ERC Advanced Grants allow exceptional research leaders in a particular field to pursue frontier research of their choice. The aim is to encourage research which is pioneering and involve ground-breaking or unconventional methodologies, whose risky outlook is justified by the possibility of a major breakthrough with an impact beyond a specific discipline.



Blossfeld's research project "Education as a Lifelong Process – Comparing Educational Trajectories in Modern Societies" (eduLIFE) is worth 2.5 Mio. Euro. The aim of the project is to study how individuals' educational career trajectories unfold over the life course in relation to family background, educational institutions, workplaces, and private life events. The project takes an explicit life course perspective and utilises innovative data from the new National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) in Germany. The NEPS data will be compared with longitudinal data from five carefully selected additional countries, namely the US, UK, Italy, Sweden, and France. Based on these cross-national comparisons of educational processes the project will do both, (a) establish the generality of findings across countries and (b) study the specific impact of variations in educational institutional settings within different countries.

The grant will enable Professor Blossfeld to attract bright young people and to build up an international group of researchers at Bamberg University who are familiar with the studied countries' educational institutions (and the datasets in these countries) and therefore, are able to analyse longitudinal data to their fullest advantage. "I am very excited about this grant, as it allows us to gain new insights into the dynamics of educational careers. By the end of this grant, I hope to have a better understanding of the cumulative mechanisms of educational processes over the life course," said Professor Blossfeld.

Hans-Peter Blossfeld, born in 1954 in Munich, Germany, has published more than 190 articles (mostly in peer-reviewed journals) and 23 books (with publishers of international renown). Over the last 20 years, Blossfeld's research was supported by a series of major grants from the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Volkswagen Foundation, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the National Science Foundation in the US, the German-Israeli Foundation (GIF), the European Science Foundation (ESF), and the European Commission. Blossfeld is the Principal Investigator of a network of excellence conducting the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS) in Germany. In 2008, the NEPS consortium has been awarded a fund of 75 m. Euro from the German Ministry of Education and Science. Based on his outstanding research achievements, Blossfeld has also been invited many times as a Visiting Professor to prominent universities and research institutions, such as Harvard or Oxford. Based on his significant research contributions, Blossfeld has become an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences in Germany (Leopoldina), the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, and the European Academy of Sociology. From 2004-09 Blossfeld was the Chairman of the European Consortium of Sociological Research (ECSR). At present, he is a member of the Steering

Committee of the European Science Foundation (ESF) programme 'Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences II' and Chairman of the Steering Committee of the ESF programme 'TransEurope'. For his major contribution to scientific excellence in the social sciences, Blossfeld received the Honorary Doctor from Tallinn University, Estonia, in March 2010. Blossfeld's landmark contributions to scientific knowledge span sociology of the life course, educational sociology, labour market research, demography and family research, cross-national comparative research, globalization studies, and modern methods of longitudinal data analysis.