**Beyond capacity, conditionality, and compliance –everyday practices in the EU-funding world**

The scholarly debate on European funding is strongly shaped by debates on the role of administrative capacities, governance by conditionality, or compliance with EU regulations. However, while these concepts are highly valuable for understanding why and how EU-funding isimplemented, they are of little help when it comes to grasping what EU-funding actually means for those who deal with it in their everyday work. Therefore, the proposed paper seeks to go beyond vertical top-down concepts, adopts a more horizontal perspective, and focuses on the subjective perceptions of EU-beneficiaries and how they position themselves in the EU-funding game. By comparing qualitative evidence (documents and expert interviews) from two different funding schemes (the ESF and research funding) in three different countries (Poland, Spain, Germany), the paper aims at mapping the beneficiaries’ everyday practices and their subjective perceptions of their work. How do they experience their own capacities in light of the perceived requirements of funding schemes? What does conditionality mean to them and how do they deal with it in their daily work? To what extent do they understand their work as a compliance with EU targets? And how are these practices and perceptions linked to both the EU-funding world and the domestic spheres of funding and project work? The empirical answers to these findings will not only provide comparative insights into the everyday practices of EU-beneficiaries, but shall also be fed back to the theoretical concepts of capacities, compliance, and conditionality in order to broaden the analytical scope of these approaches.