

October 17, 2011

## Subject: EES Seminar - Invitation letter

Dear EES colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to the upcoming EES Seminar: **“The vision and logic of evaluation”** that will take place on **December 2, 2011, in Brussels**.

Participation in this Seminar is **reserved and free for EES members** in good standing.

The main purpose of this event is to stimulate expansive and innovative thinking about evaluation by attempting to capture the shared values of evaluators, generating imaginative ideas and outlining new perspectives about evaluation theory and practice in the European space.

Most evaluation seminars, workshops, training events and conferences address “how to” and “how better to” questions. In contrast this Seminar will delve into the intellectual foundations of our meta-discipline and explore innovative and forward looking ideas about evaluation.

Three of our most distinguished European evaluation theorists and practitioners, Nicoletta Stame, Evert Vedung and Frans Leeuw, will present individually in the morning and engage in a moderated panel debate in the afternoon.

**Evaluation and learning in the current crisis** – Nicoletta Stame – Professor of Social Policy, University "La Sapienza", Rome.

*In the last two decades all European countries have promoted public sector reforms calling for evaluation of performance and results. But the current political and economic crisis puts a new challenge to evaluation. Faced with difficult choices, “irresponsible” governments tend to impose linear cuts to public expenditure in “distributive” policies: trimming a 10 or 20% everywhere, no matter how the different policies have been (or not) evaluated. It is as if the learning function of evaluation were completely dismissed.*

*How can evaluators take up the new challenge?*

*There is a tendency to promote “robust evaluations” that will produce evidence of “what works”, in the assumption that governments will learn, then act: keep what works and dismiss what does not. The implication is twofold: what matters for evaluation are the methods, policies should be enforced if they are evaluable. In a clear distinction of roles.*

*Having realized that effectiveness of policies is not directly related to spending, a different view holds that the current crisis calls for a change in attitude: public administrations should “learn to learn”, evaluation should become part of the business of government, and it should be incorporated into a “responsible” public administration.*

**Four waves of evaluation diffusion: Or is there a fifth wave around?** – Evert Vedung – Professor emeritus of political science at *Uppsala University* and author of *Public Policy and Program Evaluation* London: 1997 (2010).

*Evaluation is an incredibly widespread governance formula. In his speech Evert Vedung will elucidate evaluation as it appears from a European and Atlantic vantage point since 1960. Four waves have deposited sediments, which form present-day evaluative activities.*

- 1) *Science-Driven Wave*
- 2) *Dialogue-Oriented Wave*
- 3) *Neo-Liberal Wave, and*
- 4) *Evidence Wave.*

*By using the wave metaphor, Vedung attempts to set himself apart from Guba & Lincoln who used the generation metaphor and Marvin Alkin who used the metaphor of an evaluation tree.*

**Reference:** 2010, "Four Waves of Evaluation", *Evaluation*, 16(3), 263-277.

<http://evi.sagepub.com/content/16/3/263.full.pdf+html>

**Theories in and for evaluation: why, how and what about the future?** – Frans L. Leeuw – Maastricht University & Netherlands Research Institute for Security and Justice, Den Haag.

*In the **Mind the Gap** book that was edited by Jos Vaessen and myself (Transaction Publishers, 2010) we held a plea to link the practice of evaluation much more prominent with theoretical developments in the social and behavioral sciences, including economics. The growth of knowledge in these disciplines is not reflected in the work of most evaluators. Even when the concept of 'theory-driven' evaluations is used, or when evaluators label their work as searching or testing logic models or program theories, what in fact is produced often boils down to not much more than figures with arrows and boxes describing inputs, throughput and outputs while (behavioral and institutional) mechanisms are not addressed or only in a perfunctory way.*

*To stimulate the linkages between the practice of evaluation and theories, I will discuss the relevance of working with theories when doing ex ante evaluations, process evaluations and impact evaluations. I will also discuss how this 'gap' can be explained and what can be done to remedy it. The remedy will not be a new tick and flick check list, or a new "handbook" or something similar but.....wait and see .....*

As space is limited please register early and **not later than November 27, 2011** for this promising event through the EES website: <http://www.europeanevaluation.org/member-area.htm> , where you will also find details on the programme and the venue. Please note that registration will be closed after November 27, 2011.

**Programme:**

8:30	Welcome
8:45	Introduction
<b>9:00 - 10:00</b>	<b>Presentation (I)</b>
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee
<b>10:30 - 12:30</b>	<b>Presentations (II &amp; III)</b>
12:30 - 14:30	Lunch
<b>14:30 - 16:30</b>	<b>Panel discussion</b>
16:30 - 17:00	Coffee
<b>17:00 - 18:00</b>	<b>EES AGM &amp; closing</b>

I hope you will be able to make it and I look forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,

Ian C. Davies

*President, European Evaluation Society*

P.S.: The 2011 Annual General Meeting of EES will take place after the Seminar. More information and official announcement to come.

[www.europeanevaluation.org](http://www.europeanevaluation.org)