



Philosophical Trends in Southeast Europe / Philosophische Entwicklungstendenzen im Südosten Europas

Introduction

Under the impression of democratic changes at the beginning of the 1990s, when the deposits of totalitarian regimes started collapsing, Europe uniting, and the world connecting globally, in 1992 from 9 to 11 July the Croatian Philosophical Society organised the “Contemporary Philosophical Trends in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina” symposium in the hometown of the eminent Renaissance philosopher Frane Petrić. The conference was initially conceived as an expression of “solidarity with all individuals and people who have opted for freedom and democracy”. Thus, in the ‘Happy Town’ a series of scientific conferences was born, at which key issues and topics of the contemporary world and the new epoch have been considered in open dialogue.

Two decades ago, the Iron Curtain tore and Communism came tumbling down the loudest and with terrible war destruction and conflict exactly in Southeast and Central Europe. In the meantime, there has been significant progress towards democracy and stability. Some countries were already part of the European Union, such as Greece and Italy, some became full members since, such as Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, some have just finalised negotiations on EU membership, such as Croatia, some have come across a lack of understanding and obstacles, such as Turkey, some have just started negotiations, such as Montenegro, some still await approval to start negotiations, such as Albania, Macedonia and Serbia, and some are only now preparing for negotiations, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. It is a fact that at the beginning of the third millennium the greatest task of the European Union – as far as its enlargement is concerned – is to be undertaken exactly in Southeast Europe.

This historical two-decade-long span represents the stimulus to retrospect and reflect on what has been happening, what the philosophical trends have been like, and what kind of perspectives of thought are opening today in Southeast and Central Europe within the wider context of the spiritual trends not only of Europe but also of the world at the end of the second and the beginning of the third millennium. The jubilee *Days of Frane Petrić*, which in September 2011 gathered more than hundred philosophers and scientists from 14 countries, had been conceived as a retrospective of its kind, as well as a perspective on future trends and reflections on today’s world, philosophy and science.

The programmatic starting point of the symposium was that both philosophy and science have the task of shedding light on the meaning of social happenings, and of initiating dialogue in seeking and considering the truth

from a *pluriperspective* view. On this path, the major steps are overcoming obstacles and opening up to better mutual understanding, which should oppose tendencies towards alienation and conflicts in Southeast Europe. This should help Southeast Europe to return to the task it had had in history, when European and major philosophy and science had budded and developed from there. With this purpose, the international symposium should serve as a basis for a dialogue between different perspectives based on an overview of the philosophical trends in different communities. The intention of the meeting was to throw light on institutional projects and individual creations, present communication networks and journals, book series and intellectual undertakings, promote some major books and new ideas. Various aspects and some research perspectives have been both evaluated and considered in the light of broader world trends in philosophy and globalisation processes.

As one of the parts of the jubilee *Days of Frane Petrić*, the “Philosophical Trends in Southeast Europe” symposium and the “Sixth Balkan Countries Seminar of Philosophy” were organised with support from the International Organisation of Philosophical Societies (FISP). The “Fifth Seminar of Philosophy” was held in 2009 in Istanbul, and the Seventh will be organised in 2013 within the framework of the 24th *World Congress of Philosophy* in Athens. During the jubilee *Days of Frane Petrić* on 21 and 22 September 2011, the Steering Committee of the International Organisation of Philosophical Societies held a meeting in Petrić’s ‘Happy Town’ of Cres. The meeting was organised and chaired by the President of the FISP, William McBride, and supported by the Secretary-General, Luca Scarantino.

A number of papers presented at the “Philosophical Trends in Southeast Europe” symposium was published in No. 126 (2/2012) of the journal *Filozofska istraživanja*. The following thematic bloc of *Synthesis Philosophica* brings another selection of papers from the symposium.

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