

FOR_HUM

Forum za humanistiko
Forum for the Humanities
Forum per gli Studi Umanistici
Forum für Humanwissenschaften
人文学论坛



VILLA VIGONI

International Conference

Europe at the Crossroads of Contemporary World
100 Years after the Great War

September 6 – 9, 2018

Villa Vigoni, Lovenò di Menaggio, Italy

Today, 100 years after the end of the First World War, Europe stands at the crossroads that burden it immensely, and at the same time somewhat hinder planning and deciding for its future. This is not the case only in regard to the state of affairs within the EU, but also to the circumstances defining its global position. Therefore, the conference intends to question our relation to the past and critically reassess it in the perspective of a common future.

Precisely the questioning, which takes the past into account and nevertheless remains oriented towards the future, draws within the countries and institutions of the EU attention to concrete political, economic, scientific, social, and cultural connotations and challenges. On the one hand, it can be presupposed—even hoped for—that Europe needs a fundamental humanistic reconsideration. On the other hand, we are confronted with opposing opinions claiming such a reconsideration to be obsolete and without real effect in the constellation of contemporary world. Yet, the denial of the European idea emerging solely from the acceptance of the state of affairs ultimately leads to a situation, wherein we have found ourselves now: namely, in face of concrete European political situation we do not possess the necessary or at least clear guiding lines for orientation.

Reexamining the question what comprises the sense of contemporary Europe, we must take into consideration the fundamental values, which have *through* history been established as *the Europeanness* of the continent. These are: European cultural and linguistic differences, the abundance of artistic and intellectual tradition, individual freedom, social justice, religious tolerance, as well as political efforts for the effectuation of democratic processes in the countries, which have in the last century suffered under totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and which today still wish to continue with the process of overcoming the traumatic past under variously changed social-political circumstances.

Perspectives regarding future existence and development of otherness within Europe cannot be surrendered to the melting-pot of a uniformization of identity. Thus, we are confronted with an exceptional interpretive complexity, because historical experience among European nations is very diverse, although certain common characteristics can be elaborated. We are,

therefore, obligated to strive for an overcoming of mainly extremely painful past through the disclosure of novel perspectives.

The actual situation of Europe characterized by the flow of fugitives and migrants, the security issues associated with such a situation, the persisting economic crisis, which still plagues many European countries, and, furthermore, the manifold degrees of development among the countries within Europe, as well as the conflicts on its margins and borders calls for an honest and thorough social discussion amongst intellectuals.

Against such a background, the well-founded question arises whether an outlook for development based predominantly on the techno-scientific accomplishments would also take into account the care for human dignity and interpersonal solidarity as key elements of the European lifeworld within the worldwide challenges of the new globalization.

Today, Europe is at an important turning point regarding the formation of its own future. For this reason, there exists a great demand for debates bringing together competent representatives of miscellaneous disciplines (from the human and social to the economic sciences) and political decision-makers in the search for solutions capable of founding the future of Europe.

Through history established and operative humanistic fundamental values could most excellently ground the future of Europe and “Post-Europe” (Jan Patočka). Such values cannot be taken for granted, their preservation and reinforcement are a civilizational duty that should not be evaded, wherefore it is necessary—quoting the old Aristotelian conviction—*to act in accordance with virtue*.

Discussions taking place within the proposed problematic framework of the conference will address the following thematic realms:

Authorities and Entities in Power
Individuality and Community
Freedom and Justice
Paths and Deviations of Democracy
Developmental Potentials / Regions on the Margins
(Southeast and East Europe, Mediterranean, Near East, Africa)

Conclusions:
Historical Experience
and
Humanistic Challenges for the Future

Invitees of the conference include: historians, philosophers, sociologists, jurists, economists, literary and art historians, religiologists, politicians, and businessmen, who actively co-shape the ways and sideways of Europeanness, and thus also co-constitute the future of critical *European consciousness*.