

Report on the 7th Slovenian Social Science Conference

The 7th Slovenian Social Science Conference, co-organized by the Junior Sociologists Network, took place at the premises of the School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica, Slovenia, between 21th and 23th of August 2015. The common thread of the Conference was to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent political, economic and cultural transformations which took place after this ground-breaking historical moment to the present day. The thematic panels of the conference embraced various processes that have ranging from macro-level structural changes to life experiences of individuals.

The event was opened by the speech of the Dean of the School, professor Matej Makarovič, and by the speech of the President of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, professor Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik. The opening event was also accompanied by the welcoming words of the Chairman of the Junior Sociologists Network, International Sociological Association, Oleg Komlik. The Conference was enriched by the lectures of the invited guest speakers, namely Professor Sari Hanafi, Vice-President of the International Sociological Association, from the American University of Beirut and Professor Elena Danilova from the Russian Academy of Science.

A broad variety of presenters came from Slovakia, Romania, Germany, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Russia and Slovenia. Organized sessions were complemented by informal gatherings at the joint dinners, lunches and by the tour of the natural and cultural heritage at the last day of the conference.



Oleg Komlik's welcoming remarks:

Welcome to the 7th Slovenian Social Science conference "After the Berlin Wall: 25 years of transformations" in Nova Gorica!

The Junior Sociological Network of the International Sociological Association is proud to co-organize, along with the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Program and the School of Advanced Social Studies (Fakulteta za uporabne družbene študije), this unique scholarly meeting.

The last year and the recent months were evidently turbulent times for Europe. The so-called "Greek" crisis – which is essentially the European crisis, a crisis of neoliberal ideology and clash of established yesterday's political and business elites with grassroots uprising of labor and middle classes – undermines the fundamentals and the values of the European Union. The Ukrainian-Russian crisis hurts the geo-political order and environment built in Europe during the last 25 years. Growing waves of immigration into the EU from the Global South raise questions and doubts. Europe has obviously changed throughout these years, but while the Berlin Wall is not there anymore, it seems that new walls are arising across the European continent; new political, economic, social and civic challenges have been springing out from the transformed reality.

Social scientists have to tackle these challenges, explore their fabrics and spread the insights of the scientific inquiry to colleagues and the general public. "*...Sociologizing makes sense only in as far as it helps humanity*", famously said Zygmunt Bauman. I am glad this conference is devoted to this intellectual mission, which will be done based on interesting researches and enlightening papers that will be presented by scholars from different countries and various disciplines.

I extend special thanks to the organizing committee and the hosting institution for their multiple efforts and thoughts to set up this academic gathering.

I wish you a pleasant and fruitful conference! Enjoy Nova Gorica as a venue and experience some of the delights its beautiful surrounding area can offer.

