"Where is Civil Society in Central Europe heading to?"

Report of the Summer school of political ethics 2014 organized by the Institute of Applied Ethics of prof. Alexander Spesz at Faculty of Theology (Catholic University Ružomberok) in Košice

During September 15-24th Faculty of Theology became a host place for participants of the Summer school of political ethics. Participants were students of doctoral studies in humanistic sciences from central European countries – Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and Russia as well as the PhD. student of the Faculty of Theology, Andrea Križanová with her lecture on Personality of a volunteer in missionary work.

The Summer school with the title „Where is Civil Society in Central Europe heading to?“ was organized by the Institute of Applied Ethics of Prof. Alexander Spesz at Faculty of Theology in Košice together with the Exchange network CEEPUS which associates university teachers, PhD students in Central Europe within the network AT 702 „Ethics and politics in European context which is led by Professor Ingeborg Gabriel, head of the Institute of Social Ethics at the Catholic Faculty of Theology (Uni Wien) and includes 16 universities in Central Europe. Students who could not participate through CEEPUS were given grant from the Association for social ethics in Central Europe and from the Foundation Pro Oriente, both residing in Wien.

Participating students were received by the dean of the faculty, Prof. Cyril Hišem and the week program was opened by docents ThDr. Ing. Inocent-Mária V. Szaniszló, OP, PhD. (Secular state and common good) and the director of the Institute, ThDr. Martin Uháľ, PhD. (Current political and social situation in Slovakia).

The program of the summer school consisted of the lectures of one or two pedagogues which were followed by lectures of 15 doctoral students with rich discussions. Namely, there were students from Philosophical Faculty of the University of Beograd Milan Radovanović (Lecture about the jewish exodus from Yugoslavia to Israel from 1949) and Nikola Milikić (Pictures of Yugoslavia in historical tests of the former yugoslavian republics), students from the University of cardinal Stephan Wyszinski in Warsavia – Alina Gut (The role of civil society in development of regional government in Poland), Robert Mieczkowski (Importance of rememberance in forming foreign policy in central and eastern Europe), Adam Raszewski (Political philosophy of the baron de Chambord as an example of the doctrine of monarchical legitimism), student from the Faculty of political sciences at University of Bucharest, Roxana Marin (The superiority of political elites between normative and descriptive approach), Iuliu-Marius Morariu from the Orthodox Faculty at Babes-Bolyai university of Cluj-Napoca (Future of romanian society among communist reminiscences and their democratic incapability), Péter Jenei from the University of the reformed theology in Debrecen (What does it mean to be an emigrant in biblical era?), Edwin Bonislawski (Social human rights after the fall of the communist system in Poland) and Lyudmyla Ivanyuk from the University of Vienna (Church and human rights in the process of democratization in Ukraine), Petro Darmoris from the Catholic University of Lviv (Religious pluralism face to face community of
freedom according to D. Hollenbach), Erwin Tereščenko from the Institute of st. Cyril and Methodius in the Moscow patriarchate of postgradual studies (Society, state and Church in postcommunist in Russia), Karolína Šípková from the Charles University Prague (Personal autonomy during illness and narrative approach in bioethics), Justyna Suchý from the University of Opole (A Workoholic in family – the pros and cons). In the middle of the week their presentations were enriched with lectures of other professionals such as Prof. Matthias Voght from the University in Zittau-Görlitz (Art and culture in civil society), Dr. Marijana Kompes from the University of Wien (Conceptual history and ethical relevancy of the civil society), Prof. Ingeborg Gabriel (Religion in the public sphere), Dr. Adriana Jesenkoví from the Philosophical faculty UPJS Košice (Concept of the public), Prof. Radu Preda – director of the Institute for study of the totalitarian era and romanian exile at the Government Office of the Romanian republic and profesor of social ethics at the University Cluj-Napoca (Civil society and dealing with the past) and Prof. Piotr Sula, Deputy Director of the Institute of political sciences at the University of Wroclaw (Civil society in Poland). All together were discussing not only about the future politics in current Europe but also about the role of the Church within civil society.

Eventually, we can say, that students of the postgradual studies showed exceptional erudition in topics of their dissertation works and professors themselves showed pleasure from the cooperation with young, future experts. The top of the Summer school was panel discussion with the Vice-President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, a member of Parliament from Christian-democratic movement (KDH) and former MEP Ján Figel' together with the mayor of the city district Rudolf Bauer. Both of them were discussing about civil involvement in public space. Discussion was embellished by the artistic performance of the christian rock music band „Snovrat“ from Bardejov and finished with gala dinner at the Theological faculty.

Socio-cultural activities of the summer school included visit of the Technical museum, Archbishop palace, St. Elisabeth Cathedral, Chapel of St. Michal and „La Traviata“ opera performance in the State Theatre Košice as well as visit of the catholic church in the Roma settlement Jarovnice and later tourist visit of the sacral space of old monastery „Červený Kláštor“ and rafting on the river Dunajec. The trip was ended in the Orthodox church in Prešov which was highly appreciated by the one third of students who were of orthodox faith.

It seems, that the first Summer School of the Institute was very useful and enriching foreign as well as domestic students who welcomed critical discussion about methods of individual researches used in their dissertation thesis owing to which they were able to make a new step ahead. During the Summer school arised a fruitful community of academics who were reciprocally changing scientific knowledge and theories with practical experience. Participants expressed satisfaction and pleasure for the fact that they could share their study direction in unifying fields. The result of this is establishment of the internet group where discussion continues.

Košice which was the European city of culture in 2013 and (this was also the reason why the Summer School was organized right here) left deep impression in hearts of the students and pedagogues. Their enthusiasm was the best reward for the organizers.