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**TOPICS OF THE CONFERENCE “EUROPE,
THE WORLD AND HUMANITY IN THE 21ST
CENTURY: DIALOGUE IN CULTURE – DIALOGUE
BETWEEN CULTURES”**

Ljubljana, 10–12 April 2008, Slovenia

In talking about intercultural dialogue in Europe, we increasingly forget that this dialogue is possible in the context of historically mediated life forms that have constituted the European cultural consciousness. Intercultural dialogue, for which we strive today in Europe, cannot be established only on the level of social communication or cultural information. The »European encounter« has been achieved historically precisely in matters of philosophy, science, religion, art and politics. This also, of course, applies for the encounter with cultural traditions and civilisations outside Europe, on which we have bestowed or enforced these values.

If establishing intercultural dialogue is intended essentially to contribute to shaping the future of European society and the associated political decisions, then we must open this discussion above all within these elementary frameworks, which have historically enabled it, which have become problematic precisely as historical possibilities. Europe cannot therefore simply be reconciled to the process of globalisation of the world, but must find answers to it, above all concerning the responsibility to humanity, to which our understanding of »culture« is bound. This also perhaps captures the key idea of dialogue in culture, as well as dialogue between cultures today.

Individual themes:

1. Understanding and encounter in culture and between cultures as a specific European challenge.
 2. Historicity as the »identity« of Europe.
 3. Philosophical premises of European self-reflection.
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4. Spaces of art as the place of European encounter.
5. Language of literature and European dialogue.
6. Christianity and Europe: Europe in terms of dialogue between religions.
7. A common ethos and the ethics of individuality.
8. Europe between its own and the alien: geopolitical boundaries and delineations.
9. Diversity of cultures: power or impotence of Europe?
10. Globalisation and changes in understanding the importance of culture.
11. Europe as a knowledge society: an answer to globalisation?
12. Intercultural understanding and the future of common European policies.

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The conceptual framework of the conference entitled *Europe, the World and Humanity in the 21st Century: Dialogue in Culture – Cultures in Dialogue*, organized by the Nova revija Institute during the Slovene presidency of the European Union and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, developed over several years within various intellectual circles, in particular Nova revija, which strove to open cultural dialogue characterized above all by creative and critical openness to the world. This dialogue has been fostered by philosophers, writers, artists, theologians, natural scientists, journalists, politicians, jurists, sociologists and historians from Slovenia, Europe and other parts of the world. At a time when increasingly specialized intellectual and artistic circles rarely meet one another, such spontaneous collaboration is undoubtedly something very special; and it is this continual encounter that encourages us to ponder on what the point of Europe is today, what has happened to its humanistic tradition, and what humane message can Europe convey to the world today.

In this sense I expect that the papers delivered at this conference will highlight the path winding between questions and answers, which is revealed when looking for the significance of intercultural dialogue.

Translated by Martin Cregeen