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From Tension to Conciliation:

Intraregional and Interreligious Relations in Southeast Europe

Kardinal-König-Haus (Kardinal-König-Platz 3, 1130 Vienna, Austria), November 21-23, 2018

Last update: Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2018, 4:30 p.m.

Conference of the PRO ORIENTE-Commission for Southeast European History
in cooperation with:

- Southeast Europe Association, Munich
- Austrian Academy of Sciences – Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research (INZ), Research Unit Balkan Studies
- Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz
- Institute for East European History, University of Vienna

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

Opening (14.00-14.30)

Welcome address:

Fr Friedrich PRASSL SJ, Director of Kardinal-Koenig-Haus, Vienna

Speakers:

- Ambassador ret. Gudrun STEINACKER, Vice President Southeast Europe Association, Munich
- Prof Dr Oliver Jens SCHMITT, Institute for East European History, University of Vienna; Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research (INZ)
- Prof Dr Harald HEPPNER, Chairman of the PRO ORIENTE-Commission for Southeast European History; Institute for Southeast European History and Anthropology, University of Graz
- Dr Konrad CLEWING, author of the conference concept; member of the PRO ORIENTE-Commission for Southeast European History; Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg

1st Panel (14.30-17.00)

Religions in Southeast Europe: Conservatism and social pluralism

With its traditional religious heterogeneity (Orthodox Christianity, and, albeit to a lesser extent, Western Churches and Islam), Southeast Europe can provide the rest of the continent with an idea of what is going to develop across the whole continent in terms of an ever growing plurality of faiths. With variations from country to country, religion plays an important role in defining social reactions to both profound internal transformations and to international entanglements all over the region. The panel serves to present insights particularly on the agency of Orthodoxy and Islam within their respective societies and on the thinking of religious elites on what social order they would like to see.

Chair: Prof Dr **Olga KATSIARDI-HERING**, member of the PRO ORIENTE-Commission for Southeast European History; Faculty of History and Archaeology, University of Athens

Speakers:

- Prof Dr **Basilus Jacobus GROEN**, PRO ORIENTE consultant and Graz section committee member; Institute for Liturgy, Christian Art, and Hymnology; UNESCO-Chair for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in Southeast Europe, University of Graz
“Religions in South-Eastern Europe: Conservatism and social pluralism”
- Dr **Jochen TÖPFER**, Institute for East European Studies, Free University of Berlin:
“Religious elites and societal order in South-Eastern Europe”

Discussant: Prof Dr **Oliver Jens SCHMITT**, Institute for East European History, University of Vienna; Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research (INZ)

17.10 Meeting at the reception of Kardinal-Koenig-Haus;
Transfer to Diplomatische Akademie – Vienna School of International Studies
(*by public transport; cf. “[Information on Logistics](#)” document*)

18.00 Evening Lecture at Diplomatische Akademie - Vienna School of International Studies

*The conference participants are invited to join the conference “Religionen für ein neues Europa – für Gewissensfreiheit und gegen Folter” (“Religions for a new Europe – for Freedom of consciousness and against torture”), organised by **Forum für Weltreligionen** and **World Conference Religions for Peace** in cooperation with **Diplomatische Akademie Wien** (Vienna School of International Studies), for the evening lecture:*

***The Bosnian basic experience of religious liberation
as mission for preservation and dissemination today***

Nedžad Grabus, Mufti of the Muslim Community in Slovenia, Ljubljana

19:15 Transfer to the Residence of the Bishop of the Serbian-Orthodox Diocese, Veithgasse 3, 1030 Vienna ([by bus](#))

19:30 Reception (Invitation of Bishop **Andrej Ćilerdžić**, Bishop of the Serbian-Orthodox Diocese of Austria and Switzerland – Italy and Malta, Vienna)

Return to Kardinal-Koenig-Haus or Vincenz-Palotti-Haus **on your own**
(*by public transport; cf. “[Information on Logistics](#)” document*)

Thursday, November 22, 2018

From

7:30 Breakfast (Vincenz-Palotti-Haus or Kardinal-Koenig-Haus)

2nd Panel (9.00-12.00)

The Social Impact of Religion in the History of Southeast Europe

While the connection between nationalism and religious belonging has often been stated in existing literature, research knowledge on the social position and on the role of religions and faith is lagging behind. The panel serves to draw attention to how and to what extent religion exerted influence on Southeast European society and culture, with a focus on modern history.

Chair: Prof Dr **Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU**, Application and Research Centre for Balkan and Black Sea Studies, Yildiz Technical University Istanbul

Speakers:

- Prof Dr **Klaus BUCHENAU**, Institute for History, University of Regensburg:
“The social impact of religion in the history of Southeast Europe”
- Dr **Radmila RADIĆ**, Institute for New History of Serbia, Belgrade:
“The social impact of religion – the case of Serbia”

Discussant: Dr **Zoran JANJETOVIĆ**, Institute for New History of Serbia, Belgrade

12.00 Lunch (Kardinal-Koenig-Haus)

3rd Panel (14.00-17.00)

Religions in Conflict and Inflections of Conflicts on Religion: Past and Present

Given their important role in society and their widespread proximity to nation-building and to politics, religious thought and religious communities have, on given occasions, the potential of contributing to both conflict escalation and de-escalation. The panel is going to focus on the role of religions in the armed conflicts of Yugoslav succession during the 1990s, on the consequences these conflicts exerted on local religions and on their controversial role thereafter during the processes of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Chair: Prof Dr **Thomas BREMER**, Ecumenical Institute, Faculty for Catholic Theology, University of Muenster

Speakers:

- Prof Dr **Davor DŽALTO**, The American University of Rome:
“The dangerous presence of ‘Religion’ in the political sphere (and vice versa)”
- PD Dr **Robert PICHLER**, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research – INZ, Vienna
“Albanian Muslims between national emancipation and the revitalisation of Islam – case studies from Kosovo and Macedonia”
- **András J. RIEDLMAYER**, Harvard University, Boston
“A European Islam in the Western Balkans: History, ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ and the future of coexistence”

Discussant: **Barbara ROHMANN**, Director of Human Rights and Communities Department in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Prishtina

17.00 Dinner (Kardinal-Koenig-Haus)

17.45 Meeting at the reception of Kardinal-Koenig-Haus; transfer to Vienna University, Campus Spitalgasse 2 (*by public transport; cf. "Information on Logistics"*)

19.00 Evening Round Table (Podiumsdiskussion) at Vienna University, Hörsaal des Instituts für Osteuropäische Geschichte, Universitätscampus (Spitalgasse 2/Hof 3):

Religion und Staat am Balkan. Ein Lernfeld für Europa? [in German]

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Florian BIEBER, Zentrum für Südosteuropastudien, Universität Graz

Grußadresse: Botschafter i. R. Dr. Alfons M. KLOSS, Präsident von PRO ORIENTE

Podiumsgäste:

- Mihail CEKOV, Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche von Makedonien, Strumica
- Bischof Andrej ČILERDŽIĆ, Bischof der Serbisch-Orthodoxen Diözese von Österreich und der Schweiz – Italien und Malta, Wien
- Imam Dr. Benjamin IDRIZ, Islamisches Forum Penzberg (Deutschland)
- Botschafterin a. D. Gudrun STEINACKER, Vizepräsidentin der deutschen Südost-europa-Gesellschaft
- Botschafter i. R. Dr. Christian PROSL, österreichisches Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres, Wien

Return to Kardinal-Koenig-Haus or Vincenz-Palotti-Haus on your own
(*by public transport; cf. "Information on Logistics"*)

Friday, November 23, 2018

From

7:30 Breakfast (Vincenz-Palotti-Haus *or* Kardinal-Koenig-Haus)

4th Panel (9.00-12.00)

Tacit neglect: diplomacy and international organizations acting on religion in the region since 1989

Adhering to a somewhat simplistic secularist agenda, international peace-building missions in the former Yugoslavia have not included a strategy to pay adequate attention to the interests of (or possible the reluctance or even resistance of) specific religious communities. EU strategy for stabilization and enlargement has largely neglected the existence of those communities regardless of their functioning as the strongest non-governmental structures throughout Southeast Europe. This tendency has provided, among other things, ample space for other extra-regional agencies striving for influence in those communities. The panel assembles reports of the speakers' experiences with OSCE and UNESCO strategies in Southeast Europe and it will serve to discuss possible alternative strategies.

Chair: Dr Vedran DŽIHIC, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Vienna

Speakers:

- Prof Dr Ingeborg GABRIEL, Department of Systematic Theology and Ethics, Faculty for Catholic Theology, University of Vienna
"United or divided? Religious and international actors in the Balkans – remarks from the OSCE experience"

- Prof Dr **Martin HAUSER**, Fribourg (Switzerland)
“Working in Southeast Europe: experience in Bucharest, Romania, on behalf of UNESCO”
- **Veton SURROI**, Author and Publisher, Prishtina
“The Kosovo experience with international intervention”

Discussant: Dr **Silke LECHNER**, Deputy Head of Division “Religion and Foreign Policy” at the German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

12.00 Lunch (Kardinal-Koenig-Haus)

5th Panel 5 (14.00-17.00)

Religions and politics in Southeast Europe

Notwithstanding international neglect, the linkage between state politics and dominant religious groups in some countries of the region is evident. Some other countries aim at pursuing stricter secular strategies of non-discrimination between communities. The panel will discuss the variety of legal arrangements more generally, alongside divergent political and ideological developments within Islamic communities.

Chair: Prof Dr **Florian BIEBER**, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

Speakers:

- Dr Dr h.c. mult. **Erhard BUSEK**, Former Vice Chancellor of the Republic of Austria and Former Head of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, Vienna
“International interventions and religious policies' strategies in Southeast Europe”
- Dr **Gregor LESJAK**, Director, Office for Religious Communities, Slovene Ministry of Culture, Ljubljana
“What is Religion?”
- Prof Dr **Andreas MÜLLER**, Institute for Church History, Faculty for Theology, University of Kiel:
“Southeast European nations and their competence for religious pluralism”

Discussant: Dr **Konrad CLEWING**, Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg

Additional Participants of the conference

Members of the PRO ORIENTE-Commission for Southeast European History

Dr **Mihai IORDACHE**, Bucharest
Prof Dr **Valery STOJANOV**, Sofia
Dr **Anja ZALTA**, Ljubljana

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Mag. **Gudrun KAISER** (PRO ORIENTE Conference Organisation), Vienna
Prof **Erich LEITENBERGER** (PRO ORIENTE Spokesperson), Vienna
Dipl.-Theol. **Bernd A. MUSSINGHOFF** (PRO ORIENTE Secretary General), Vienna
Prof Dr **Thomas NEMETH** (PRO ORIENTE consultant), University of Wuerzburg

Institut für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa

Dr. **Silvia NADJIVAN**, Vienna