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Being is better than having

160 participants of the 7th international IRDO conference held on 08-10 March 2012 in Maribor passed several conclusions with a shared message that the search for a way out from the crisis demands humans to switch to a new mentality: 'it is better to be and live than to have and die'.

(Maribor, 10 March 2012) In the late afternoon today in Maribor, on the seat of the 'Maribor 2012 – European Capital of Culture' (ECC), the 7th international IRDO conference 'Social Responsibility in Current Challenges 2012' was finished under the title 'Innovation of culture toward more social responsibility – a way out from the socio-cultural crisis'. The conference was arranged by IRDO Institute for development of social responsibility and the public institution Maribor 2012 – European capital of culture, in cooperation with the International Academy for systems and cybernetic sciences, Vienna (IASCYS), Public Agency of Slovenia for research (ARRS), Public agency of Slovenia for the book, Institute of Slovenia for protection of nature, Municipality of Maribor, Styrian Chamber of Economy, Slovenian public relations association, and London school for public relations. The conference was held under honorary auspices of the President of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Türk. In the 3 days one could hear 52 presentations by 62 authors from 18 countries (Austria, China, Croatia, Germany, France, India, Israel, Malaysia, Peru, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, UK, and USA). Participants were scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, artists, other professionals, students, etc. About 160 participants passed several conclusions with a shared final idea that in these times of crisis one must find equilibrium in one's values toward 'it is better to be than to have'.

On its first day the conference was addressed by Franc Hočevar, M.A. (on behalf of the President of Slovenia Dr. Danilo Türk), ECC protocol head Nina Hojnik (on behalf of dr. Suzana Žilič Fišer, general manager of ECC), Tomaž Kancler, M.A., vice-mayor of Maribor, Slavko Pregl, head of the Public Agency of Slovenia for the book, Dr. Darij Krajčič, head of the Institute of Slovenia for protection of nature, and Prof. DDr. Matjaž Mulej, head of the Program committee of the conference. The interesting plenary talks included Prof. Dr. Danijel Rebolj, rector of the University of Maribor, presenting the Sustainable and socially responsibly University of Maribor, Dr. Darja Piciga, Office of the Government of Slovenia for climate change, presenting Slovenia as a model of integral, low-carbon economy and society, Dr. Timi Ečimović, head of the SEM Institute for climate change, talking about the world thinker panel on sustainable future of humankind, Mia Miše, M.A. from ECC, presenting the project Maribor 2012 – European Capital of Culture, and Bojan Radej, M.A., from the Slovenian evaluators association presenting Research of complex management problems on the case of evaluation of policies.

The second day of the conference was first addressed by Jos Douma, ambassador of Netherlands. Then Prof. Dr. Jožica Knez Riedl and Eva Kaučič talked about the attitude toward public goods as a mirror of the individual and collective culture. Prof. Dr. Zbigniew Klos presented making of organizational culture as a case of prevention of the socio-cultural crisis. Michael Winger addressed the march of innovation. Bistra Kumbaroska from Challenge Future, coauthoring with Andreja Kodrin, M.A. presented their encouragement of creativity and innovativeness in society.

The afternoon of both days was filled with many interesting talks in parallel session 'Law and social responsibility', 'Economics and culture of social responsibility', 'Contemporary science and culture in the light of social responsibility', and 'Development of organizational and societal cultural policies'.

On the third day several speakers presented experiences with books and festivals as influences on development of social responsibility by changing the culture, on generosity and geo-mantia. The conference finished with a workshop on geomantia and a story telling by Barbara Pia Jenič titled 'The trees planting man'.

The conference attracted scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, artists and other professionals, students, and others. In discussion they were searching for links between cultural innovations and social responsibility and passed the following conclusions:

1. **Culture influences humans' ways of problem-solving and using of knowledge and sources.**
2. **Humans need a critical re-evaluation of policies for the path to sustainable future; social responsibility is a non-technological innovation process of the society.**
3. **Ethics of interdependence is the basis for a holistic approach to social responsibility; the justice and justness make the essence of the individual and societal life that require bold innovation and open chances.**
4. **Culture influences directly the human thinking; hence one must enhance it in the spirit of social responsibility, in society and its enterprises, too.**
5. **The socio-economic crisis that results from the crisis of values and trust can be cured by establishment of a positive social climate.**
6. **Codices of ethical principles support social responsibility in both for-profit and non-profit organizations by influencing the organizational culture and working.**
7. **The feudal capitalism must be replaced by something more contemporary. Several models and initiatives have been created; this means that the society is waking up toward changing of attitudes and habits.**
8. **Nurturing and encouraging of empathy can belong to the best ways for humans to start practicing social responsibility and sustainable development and to attain well-being for the entire humankind.**
9. **Media should be less under impact of politics and capital and have the courage to report more on social responsibility.**
10. **Maintenance of healthy nature and one's being is better than having too much and die.**

Prof. Emeritus DDr. Matjaž Mulej, head of the Program committee of the conference and of the Expert board of IRDO Institute and the Research Council of the Research Unit of IRDO summarized the conference by exposing: » Interdependence between humans and with nature preconditions the existence; ethics of interdependence keeps alive the families, good business relations between organizations, being like friendships, because with complement each other by our differences. The exaggerated one-sidedness is the basic common denominator of troubles and current crises.«

Additional information:

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