

**THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
UNITY AND PLURALITY IN EUROPE  
(ICUPE)**

31<sup>st</sup> July– 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016  
Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Sarajevo, October 9<sup>th</sup> 2015

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## **A. International Forum Bosnia**

*International Forum Bosnia (IFB) is a non-governmental organisation that brings together individuals and institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad. Our mission is to support the creation of a harmonious and united society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on dialogue, trust, respect, and best practice in the fields of human rights protection, the rule of law, and democracy.*

*IFB members believe in*

- *Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sustainable plural society within a unified polity,*
- *With a rich political and cultural heritage that exemplifies the best aspects of the European spirit.*

*We believe that preservation and development of our common Bosnian heritage requires*

- *The restoration of trust across society, based on*
- *The development of a new intellectual community and new perspectives, through social and political analysis, and an exploration of the diversity all our traditions.*

*IFB approaches these goals in two ways:*

- *Deconstructing divisive ideologies based on the abuse of ethnicity, religion, and other identity and belief systems to generate mistrust, intolerance, social tension, social exclusion, and conflict in the region.*
- *Developing and promoting a new synthesis for Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on a vision of social development free from fear, hostility and intolerance and a political model that mediates rather than exacerbates antagonisms.*

*Just as Bosnia and Herzegovina must be sustained as a whole, IFB believes that any progressive understanding of the country's present condition and future prospects requires an comprehensive and holistic approach, seeking a new understanding of Bosnian unity in diversity that incorporates all aspects of society, but especially geopolitical aspects, education, cultural and religious traditions and dialogue, environmental and ecological perspectives, advanced and information technologies, energy policy and responsible use of natural and renewable resources, gender issues, regional co-operation, distributive justice, sustainable development, the rule of law, human rights, social inclusion, and other issues related to the efficient transition of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards harmonious membership in the community of European countries.*

*One major way in which IFB pursues its objectives is through the organisation of intellectual gatherings and undertakings (workshops, panels, symposia, conferences, public lectures, exhibitions, the advancement of knowledge about Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.), and the presentation of significant perspectives on culture, society, scholarship, and politics related to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its place in the world through its journal Forum Bosnae, working documents, and the IFB web page: <http://www.ifbosna.org.ba>.*

*IFB was founded in Sarajevo in 1997. It operates through its members, projects, and associated ventures. Its headquarters are in Sarajevo and there are regional centres in Banja Luka, Mostar, and Tuzla. There are thirteen thematic-research centres: the Centres for Strategic Studies, Education, Language Studies, Media, Protection of Natural Heritage, Students Programs, Historical Studies, Regional Cooperation, Gender Issues, Cultural Heritage, Interreligious Dialogue, and Technology and Economic Development (with two sections: entrepreneurship and public/private partnership and advanced and information technology), and the Centre of Interdisciplinary Research for Visual Culture.*



## Abstract

International Forum Bosnia is pleased to announce the Eleventh International Conference on Unity and Plurality in Europe, to be held in Mostar from the 31<sup>st</sup> of July to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2016. The main theme of the conference will be “The Spectre of Migration in Europe”. The conference will take the form of a dynamic exchange between researchers, activists, and media around three plenary sessions:

1. Religion, identity and society;
2. War and Migration: The Economic, Political and Religious Aspects; and
3. Europe’s external and internal others.

Each session will involve a number of individual presentations followed by general discussion. Time will be allocated for up to 18 speakers, with a pool of up to 50 participants overall.

As in previous years, there will be an Inaugural Lecture on Religion and Public Life, to be given by a guest lecturer chosen for their expertise and leadership in the field. There will also be a complementary series of public lectures or panel discussions on related themes.

The plenary sessions and the public discussions will take place at the Hotel Bristol in Mostar, where all official participants will be provided with accommodation. Papers presented during the sessions and the inaugural and special lectures will be published in the proceedings of the conference, as in previous years. Those interested in participating are invited to apply using the registration form included with the conference documentation, available on the International Forum Bosnia website, [www.ifbosna.org.ba](http://www.ifbosna.org.ba)

## **1. Project Description**

IFB is pleased to announce the **Eleventh International Conference on Unity and Plurality in Europe** to be held in Mostar in July-August 2016, on the theme of *The Spectre of Migration in Europe*.

The three main panels will be on *Religion, Identity, and Society: Europe and the Plurality of Public Life; War and Migration: The Economic, Political and Religious Aspects*, and *Europe's Internal and External Others*.

International Forum Bosnia has hosted ten annual **International Conferences on Unity and Plurality in Europe** (ICUPE) since 2006 in the town of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Previous conferences have been on: *the Muslim Question in Europe; the Roma Question; Cultural Diversity; Religion and Public Life; Diversity, Religion, and the University; Globalization, European Universalism, and the Other Europe; Peripheral Perspectives on European Identities; Bosnian Religious Plurality in a Global Context; Economic Recovery, Social Reconstruction and Environmental Stewardship; and .....*

The conferences have attracted participants from leading universities in the Balkans, Europe more widely, the Near East, North America, and Japan and China, as well as from relevant non-governmental and civil society organisations.

Since 2009, the conferences have been opened by an inaugural lecture. The keynote speakers for 2009 and 2010 were Prof. Miroslav Volf of Yale and Prof. David F. Ford of Cambridge, respectively, the speakers for 2011 were the noted American author and public intellectual, Jim Carroll, and Prof. Olivier Thomas Vernard of the *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem, and in 2012 the inaugural speakers were H. E. Prof. Aref Ali Nayef and Prof. Gil Anidjar of Columbia University. In 2013, the inaugural speakers were Prof. Fikret Caušević of Sarajevo University and Prof. Ian Almond of Georgetown University in Qatar. In 2014, the speakers were Prof. Gareth Jones of Ming Hua Hong Kong, and Prof. Kadrija Hodžić of Tuzla University. The speakers in 2015 were Professor Hasan Muratović of Sarajevo University and Dr. Mile Babić of the Franciscan Theological College in Sarajevo.

Since 2009, the conference has also included a number of public lectures on topics of plural heritage, plural traditions, and human rights, as well as an annual public panel on nationalism in the Balkans, in which leading experts, Prof. Ivo Banac of Yale and Zagreb Universities, Sonja Biserko of the Serbian Helsinki Committee and Prof. Rusmir

Mahmutćehajić of the International Forum Bosnia, present their report on developments over the preceding year and their assessment of the outlook for the coming year.

## ***2. Introduction***

The Conference is a unique global initiative. It combines pluralist perspectives on religious thought with social scientific research on tolerance, civil society, cultural heritage, and identities and the interpretation and application of modern and traditional understandings of the relationship between religion and public life. The entire conference is conceived as a long-term exercise in developing international networks for this type of exchange of knowledge, views, and approaches. The organizers believe that this will contribute to the interpretation of religion as an active factor of peace and act as a barrier to its abuse by ethno-national, ethno-religious, and other ideologies and sources of tension and conflict.

## ***3. Situation analysis***

For Europe, the major events of 2015 have all fed into a growing sense of crisis over the stability of the European project. The major challenges included settling the problem of the Greek debt crisis, dealing with the impact of continued war and instability on Europe's borders, from the Ukraine to Turkey and Syria and along the Southern shores of the Mediterranean, and facing the prospect of the exit of long-standing EU members, whether voluntary or not. Lesser challenges included the threat of far-right and potentially anti-democratic governments in a number of member states and the exacerbation of separatist tensions in others. The problems thus highlighted include the democratic deficit in European Union institutions, the imbalance of interests and influence especially between smaller and larger member states (the rebirth of the German question in economic rather than military terms), the consequent fragility of European monetary union, the failure to address economic imbalances across the area and the resultant economic stagnation, and the migrant crisis affecting the Schengen arrangements for freedom of movement and the very idea of Europe as a common space.

Of all these, perhaps the most threatening for the European project is the question of migration, since the current mishandling of it strikes at the very rationale behind the creation of the Union in the first place. The European Union was born out of two experiences. One was the need to bind Germany and France in ties of mutual interest, rather than the competition that had caused multiple wars over the period of the preceding 150

years. The other was the experience of civilian suffering that had accompanied those wars, with the resultant levels of physical devastation and the displacement and expulsion and extermination of mass populations. The solidarity of those who had suffered through the Second World War was to be the guarantee of a new order of prosperity and peace.

Now this peaceful and prosperous Union has become a beacon of hope, the desired destination of the wretched and the persecuted from across the earth, and it stands appalled at the prospect. Having universalised itself through imperialism and colonialism and trade, Europe cannot now simply retreat into a gated community of privilege. It is caught between the rock of its aspirations and the hard place of its fears and interests. It still wishes to position itself as the birth place of democracy and of rights, as the home of the just. It sees, however, the virtues that underwrite democracy as so especially its own that it cannot trust the human beings clamouring at its gates to behave in ways that make it safe to open them wide and accord those migrants and refugees their rights as human beings, except under conditions that qualify that humanity as worthy. Europe is descending not just into crisis, but into fundamental contradiction. It is slouching towards an extended state of exception and the establishment of a policy of the camp, the very policies its creators hoped to ensure would never return. The concept of the refugee has broken down, as the migrant is converted from a victim into a threat and risk management becomes the only principle. Soon it may be that fear of what lies outside is the only thing keeping Europe together.

The consequences for the countries of South-Eastern Europe are particularly severe. In what has come to be viewed as the periphery of Europe, these countries are outside the Union looking in. They represent a transitional zone over which the migrant populations coming from south and east must pass to reach their destinations. In addition to the implications for their own populations and their own economic prospects, they also face the prospect of becoming the camp on Europe's doorstep.

Even once the current Middle East crisis subsides, it is likely to result in the production of new camp-nations, to join the existing horde of the homeless and stateless who are to be found along the faultline of the former Ottoman lands. Nor is the problem the immiseration of these masses, but the creation of an ever more visible global contrast between the haves and the have nots, between those who enjoy political stability and basic rights and those who do not, between those who expect a future for themselves and their



families and those who do not. What Communism once was, migration now is: a spectre haunting Europe in the name of a universal class of the dispossessed.

#### **4. Objectives**

The Conference objective is to investigate both theoretical models and concrete practices through which religious orientations and secular models of politics and society engage with one another in the European space, with a particular stress on minority perspectives. Its guiding principle is that if relations of tolerance and understanding between groups are to be built and a civil society shaped, the perceived barrier between secular modern and more traditional religious values must be broken down. Political orientations and social practices must be developed that will draw on both religious traditions and the insights of secular modernity in new and creative ways.

#### **5. Partnerships**

As this is a regional project, it is supposed to enhance regional cooperation and collaboration by creating stronger cross-border cooperation between citizen and other groups to address common challenges, sharing best practice throughout the region, establishing regional networks, building networks among governments, NGOs, civic initiatives, or other institutions working to improve understanding and cooperation throughout the region.

#### **6. Programme**

The conference programme has two separate but related components.

1. The core activity is the three plenary sessions, at which academics and activists from Bosnia, the wider Balkan region, the near East, Europe, and further afield will present individual papers, to be followed by open discussion. The three sessions are thematically linked with a view to developing new understandings of the intersection of value systems with public life, particularly with regard to social coexistence and plural communities. The topics proposed are:
  1. Religion, identity and society;
  2. War and Migration: The Economic, Political and Religious Aspects; and
  3. Europe's external and internal others.

These sessions will be introduced by an Inaugural Lecture on Religion and Public Life, to be given by a guest lecturer chosen for their expertise and leadership in the field.

2. The second activity is a series of three public lectures and discussions.

The three plenary sessions will be on:

**a. *Panel 1: Religion, identity and society***

As in previous years, the first panel will be on “Religion, Identity, and Society,” a problematic of increasing relevance and urgency in today’s world. There are no forms of society or of identity which are not informed by values. Such values need not be monolithic or shared by everyone in a given society, but they must include at least the possibility of coexistence and mutual acceptance as a framework. Religion is a term for one of the major channels through which such values have traditionally been passed on and forms of identity reinforced. A free society will respect the role of religious and traditional identity systems in the creation of its constitutive diversity. It will allow them a public voice and a role in public discussion of policy, rather than insist on a reduction of the terms of debate to the level of the supposedly objective or technocratic. The converse is that religious viewpoints must not be accorded cognitive or emotional privilege in argument and debate. Nor do they provide grounds for exemption from fundamental moral or legal obligations. If a religion cannot stand up to critique based upon the transcendental conditions of liberal, that is free, community, then it has excluded itself from the public sphere, which is simply this: the common area guaranteed by the transcendental conditions of free discourse. It is imperative that the public sphere be constituted so as to allow the fullest possible range of views to be expressed that do not violate the sovereign principles of coexistence and mutual toleration as expressed in this concept of the conditions of liberty.

**b. *Panel 2: War and Migration: The Economic, Political and Religious Aspects***

The European Union was born out of war. So was the international system more generally. Neither has proved capable of transcending war, however. The period of the Cold War was a period of proxy conflicts and the displacement of Western or

European conflicts (Russia is a European power and the USA is a post-European one) through the “developing” world. In at least one of its aspects, the current forms of globalisation represent a further stage of this process. One result has been the rise of migration for economic and political reasons and increasingly because of the spread of localised forms of this globalised conflict to form a chain of war zones and anarchies that runs from North to South and East to West throughout the Muslim and the post-Colonial world. Such migration is of the new dispossessed. In many cases, they are less poor and better educated than their ancestors ever were. But they are also deracinated and deterritorialised within societies that are being transfigured by the pressures of rapid modernisation and simultaneous post-modernisation. This powerful Molotov cocktail of combined aspiration and despair, of knowledge and radicalisation, of a simultaneous thirst for the West and a hatred of all it represents, is what generates both the push and the pull factors of global migration. If the West is to develop a morally adequate response to this situation, it must engage critically with the factors driving contemporary migration, whether voluntary or forced or falling somewhere in between. Receiving the poor and the wretched of the world and giving them temporary succour, while cherry-picking the best and the brightest is neither ethical nor practical long term. It will not work even as a form of recruitment of emergent elites to the requirements of the global system. The only solution is to ensure a globalisation of opportunity and prosperity, to replace both the aspiration to relocate to the West and the resentment of Western lifestyles with the real prospect of building the conditions of an acceptable life at home.

**c. Panel 3: Europe's External and Internal Others: Rethinking the Refugee**

The concept of the refugee is built up out of the ideas of persecution and refuge. Its roots lay in ethical considerations and a consciousness of the fragility of human societies. Due to the development of an international system for managing risk, however, it has become a term of Machiavellian art. It is a way of avoiding responsibility for and so the obligation to respond to evil in the world. Ensuring that the humanitarian moment outweighs any political one is increasingly a way of supporting and sustaining the exercise of power against the weak, while burnishing

one's own halo. Refugee has also become a term of distinction, allowing the "recipient" countries to differentiate between the various classes of migrant on the basis of their moral sanctity, their motivations for seeking sanctuary, the purest of which is the imputed desire to return home, a home they have left only because of unbearable threat to their lives. In other words, the refugee becomes the counterpart of extinction and of genocide, which alone justifies migration. So long as mere life remains possible, a better life is no longer a sufficient justification for not keeping to one's pre-ordained place. The refugee thus becomes the negation of or the vaccination against the migrant, genocidal conflict the limit point of sustainable misery. Perhaps the time has come to retire the concept of the refugee. At the very least it must be rethought for a globalising world in which the tendency is for all flows to become free and unrestricted, except the flows of people.

#### **8. Materials and interaction**

Chair speakers will be expected to prepare written contributions in advance. The complete agenda and accompanying materials (original contributions and selected readings) will be prepared for each panel and sent to participants in advance.

#### **9. Participants**

The conference programme includes researchers from all over the world, as well as participants in various enterprises focused on understanding and strengthening trust among the different collective identities in contemporary societies. Participants at the conference are leading researchers from all over the world. The panels are open to interested politicians and policy makers, researchers, third sector activists, and the media from the region and beyond. Scholars from organisations involved in the preparation and implementation of the program are invited to be introductory speakers.

#### **10. Publications**

Following each conference, the materials that were basis for the plenary sessions have been collected and conference proceedings prepared as issues of the journal *Forum Bosnae*: no. 38/07 and no. 39/07 with contributions from 2006; no. 44/08, covering topics from 2007, no.

46/08 and no. 48/09 with materials from 2008, and no. 49/10 and 51/10 with papers from 2009, 2010, 2011,2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.