



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Second Annual Conference of the Balkan Sociological Forum

Close but Unknown Neighbors : Balkan Sociological Perspectives

9-10 November 2012

Sofia, Bulgaria

The Conference is organized by the Balkan Sociological Forum and Bulgarian Sociological Association and supported by the International Sociological Association. It will be held parallel with the XIII Congress of the Bulgarian Sociological Association on November 9-10, 2012 in Sofia.

A. Place of the topic in relation to state-of-the-art in sociology

The Balkans have been systematically studied by historians, anthropologists, cultural studies experts, art historians, but have rarely been placed in a general sociological perspective. Comparative studies on separate social problems have rarely included more than three or four countries. In fact, from a sociological perspective, Balkan countries pose a double challenge: social and cognitive.

There is the social aspect, for even though they have a shared past of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in different periods of the 20th century, their social and political development in post WW2 Europe has not been the same for all countries. Their common present situation of transition to a market economy and democratic structures like those of Western Europe, does not cancel the specific ordeals of economic, political, and social development that each national society of the Balkans is going through. Engrossed as we are in the supra-national structures of the EU and of Transatlantic cooperation, we hardly notice our neighbours; moreover, we fail to realize

that the position of each country on the international scene depends on its relations with, and the support of, its closest environment. In competing for international recognition, our interest in neighbouring countries is all too often limited to what can be advantageous though detrimental to them. Thus we miss the chance of working together to overcome our common weaknesses and achieve mutual consolidation of our separate advantages. In scrutinizing our own problems, we fail to look around us and see that, within the proximate region – so close to us by its historical destiny and present state of civilization, some country may have already found a solution to some of our own problems. *What are our Balkan neighbours like as economic and political players, as stratified societies and united communities, as educational and cultural structures, as ways of living together and recognizing the other? What is happening here and now in each Balkan country? How does the past impact on the present in each country and in the relations between them? What part of the contemporary experience of each country could be useful for its neighbours, so that our presence in united Europe and in the world might be constructive, mutually enriching, and stimulating?* These are all questions to which sociology, with its rich variety of paradigms and approaches, can provide well-argued and thoughtful answers.

As concerns the Balkans as a cognitive challenge, this aspect consists foremost in the problems that the current processes of internationalization and interdisciplinary scientific knowledge pose for sociology. The national communities of sociologists in Balkan countries compete to win a place in the European production of interdisciplinary and policy-oriented knowledge, but we are also partners playing non-hegemonic roles in the international research area. These combined features provide a suitable starting point for analysis, and our integration in the European Research Area clarifies a number of problems, such as:

- the marginalization of national sociological traditions;
- the neutralization of local issues by presenting them as Eastern equivalents of problems formulated with reference to the West European social and research context;
- the irrelevance of applying a theoretical framework to social situations in separate national contexts;
- the replacement of scientific argumentation as to the validity of knowledge by imperatives of immediate applicability;

- the tension between local vocation vs. international involvement; the growing dependence of the research structure and the type of knowledge produced relative to the forms of funding and the supra-national management of scientific production, etc.

B. Objectives and topics

The main objective of the Second Annual Conference of BSF is **by identifying the common and specific problems in the contemporary development of Balkan countries, to contribute to a better understanding of our own society, and to the development of sociology as a cognitive solution to the contextual problems, a solution based on adequate theoretical and methodological tools.**

The discussions will be organized around the following thematic centers:

- The Contemporary Economic Crisis: Political Solutions, Technological Answers, Individual Strategies;
- Mobility and Social Inequalities;
- Global Social Order, States, Citizens;
- Transformations of Identities and Social Relationships in the Balkans;
- National Sociological Traditions and the Sociologist's Vocation Today.

C. Organization and deadlines

Balkan Sociological Forum and Bulgarian Sociological Association invite scholars and students of sociology and other social sciences from all Balkan countries and colleagues outside the Balkans working jointly with sociologists from this region to take part in the Second Conference of BSF. Please, send your proposals **until June 30th 2012** to the following addresses: bsa@sociology.bas.bg and diana@sociology.bas.bg.

Conference languages: Bulgarian and English

Deadlines:

- 30th of June 2012: Abstract submission
- 15th of July 2012: Confirmation of abstract acceptance
- 30th of September 2012: Participants registration
- 25th of October 2012: Conference programme

Abstracts should be contained the following items:

- Name
- Professional status (student, Ph.D. student, professor, research fellow, experts, etc.)
- Institution
- Title and abstract up to 20 lines/or 200 words/or 1500 signs in English

Accommodation and other details will be announced before 10th of October 2012.

Organizers and Organizing Committee

Bulgarian Sociological Association (www.bsa-bg.org)

Balkan Sociological Forum

Organizing Committee

Lekë SOKOLI – president of the Balkan Sociological Forum, University Martin Barleti, Tirana, Albania

Svetla KOLEVA – vice-president of the Balkan Sociological Forum, president of the Bulgarian Sociological Association, Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria

Gjon BORIÇI - Albanian University, Tirana, Albania

Ognjen ČALDAROVIĆ - president of Croatian Sociological Association

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Ali PAJAZITI - South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia

Miroslava RADEVA - Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski and MBMD Ltd., Bulgaria

Sunai RAIMI - State University of Tetovo, Macedonia

Rumiana STOILOVA - Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria

Gorgi TONOVSKI - FON University, Skopje, Macedonia