

EDITORIAL

XIth European Conference on Science and Theology

From 5th to 10th of April 2006, the city of Iași was the host of a prestigious international meeting, the XIth ESSSAT conference, which debated the theme *Sustaining diversity. Science, Theology and the futures of Creation*. The conference works were held at the Technical University 'Gheorghe Asachi' and 'Al. I. Cuza' University, the local organisers being the Faculty of Chemical Engineering, the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and the Metropoly of Moldavia and Bucovina.

The opening ceremony was held on Wednesday 5th of April, in the King's Hall of the Palace of Culture from Iași. At the ceremony, were present among others His Excellency Adrian Lemeni - Ministry State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture and Cults of Romania, His Holiness Petru Gherghel – Catholic Bishop of the Iași diocese, professors Dumitru Oprea and Henry Luchian – the Rector and the Vice-rector of 'Al. I. Cuza' University, professor Willem Drees – President of ESSSAT, dr. Iulian Rusu – Vice-president of ESSSAT, professor Viorel Sava – Dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Iași. In his opening speech the State Secretary Lemeni has underlined several times that the relation between Science and Theology constitutes a chance for the generation and development of a culture and a conscience of the dialogue with results in gaining the necessary discerning in our days.

More than 130 persons, almost one hundred coming from five continents, attended the conference. The communications were organised on five plenary lectures and on eight parallel sessions, among them one was the Romanian section chaired by the academician Basarab Nicolescu.

The participants were honoured by the presence, during the entire conference, of His Holiness the Metropolitan Daniel, who has given the plenary lecture '*Sacramentality of Creation. Dialogue between Science and Theology*'. This remarkable contribution helps to the understanding of the Orthodox perspective on the relation between the two domains that are dealing with the reality, performing subtle and creative distinctions from the prospective of dialogue and avoidance of any confusion, fact also synthesised at the round table organised at the end of the conference with the participation of professors Marios Bezgos (Greece) and Alexei Nesteruk (England).

Plenary lectures were also given by professors Sam Berry from University College (London), Anne Primavesi from Birkbeck College (London), Jan Boersema from Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam) and Regina Kather from Freiburg University (Germany).

We also must to mention the presence at ECST XI of Dr. Charles Harper Jr., the Vice-president of the Templeton Foundation (USA) - the main sponsor of the conference.

The local and national newspapers, radio and TV stations largely mediated the conference by interviews or even broadcasting some parts of the plenary lectures. The national television has prepared a special material on ECST XI, which was broadcasted all around the country in the Easter Sunday.

After ten previous conferences held at renowned universities from the Catholic and Protestant European world, ESSSAT has decided to organise the eleventh one into a country with an Orthodox Christian majority in order to allow on one hand a direct contact of the participants with the Romanian Science-Religion context but also to promote the interdisciplinary research in this field, which is much common in the Anglo-Saxon world.

The guests had the occasion to discover major marks of the Romanian cultural patrimony, by the visit made at the monasteries Sucevița and Voroneț, but also by the ethos and the Romanian hospitality, less visible at international level, fact that created a much realistic image of the country.

We may conclude that the event was a success characterised by a high scientific level, the pertinence of speeches, the consolidation of new relations between the two approaches of the reality, scientific and theological, by the engagement in dialogue of new persons interested by the Religion-Science problematic.

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