

EDITORIAL

Faculty of Mass Media Communication as a leader and host of the world's experts in Slovakia

The Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (UCM) in Trnava has enjoyed many years of success in creating new dimensions for scientific and practical discourse. We endeavour to deliver topics that represent advancement, invention and innovation and present these topics in the international plenary. The *Megatrends and Media* conference has become one such opportunity to present our faculty's activities. We organised the eleventh annual edition in April 2016 subtitled *Critique in Media, Critique of Media* at Smolenice Castle. We attempted to create a conference that would once again be different from those that came before, striving for memorability and specific genius loci, but at the same time we stick to our best practices, which we continue to refine and push forward. Our objective is to present and exchange the latest knowledge and experience reflecting on media and related trends. Focus was on the theme of critical thinking because the problem of the modern age is not locating information; rather it is selecting that information which is relevant. The influence of opinion leaders continues to grow together with the strength and quantity of communication channels. We live in an age of uncertainty that is multiplied by tremendous freedom. It reveals itself across the entire spectrum of our lives, including in the selection of information, of which there is an ample amount, if not an overload. The question of critical thinking is strongly manifested in media education, which has long since ceased to be the exclusive domain of 'teenagers'.

The world's experts met this year at the *Megatrends and Media* conference. Among them was Professor David Buckingham from London University, who focused on studying the interaction of children and youth with electronic media, and Professor Alexander Fedorov from Russia, President of the Russian Association for Film and Media Education. We were also honoured by the attendance of a social communication expert, Professor Friedrich Krotz from Germany and, last but not least, Associate Professor Andrei Taranu from the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration in Romania, specialised in political theory and socio-political psychology. Given they are all world-class scientists and experts, getting them all here at the same time and in the same place was the result of long-term and intensive talks that were successfully conducted by the Dean of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM, Associate Professor PhDr. Dana Petranová, PhD.

A part of the opening ceremony has traditionally involved announcing the winners of the Brilliantt award. This competition involves primary and secondary schools and universities and seeks to motivate, support and reward the unique activities of educational institutions focused on innovations in providing education. Likewise, the winners of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM 'Marián Matyáš Pomegranate' cornerstone award for students and graduates who made a significant contribution to the development of the faculty or who performed a significant media act were announced. We also presented another year of the MUUZA creative almanac, together with new editions of the EJMAP and Communication Today journals. The primary scientific partners of the conference were, as is tradition, the Czech Academy of Sciences (Czech Republic), the Polish Academy of Sciences (Branch in Katowice), the Institute of Political Science of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Centre for Innovation, Technology Transfer and Development Foundation of the University of Silesia (Poland), the Polish PR Association and the European Journal of Science and Theology (Romania). The willingness of these institutions to participate in our conference is evidence of its prestige in Central Europe.

Cooperation with European Journal of Science and Theology is the key part of our long-time efforts. The conference *Megatrends and Media*, most of all, functions as a discussion space aiming to achieve mutual knowledge transfer. Renowned scholars and professionals, who attend the conference, always articulate new topics and issues; subsequent discussions and polemics allow us to create a team of people who will later offer the results of their research activities to European Journal of Science and Theology. The problem of critical thinking (and its development) stretches far beyond the boundaries of Media Education; it is very much present also in the spheres of Journalism, Media Studies, Digital Games Studies, as well as in the contemporary Theology. This necessary interdisciplinarity leads to a synergy that goes both ways – Media Studies benefit from the knowledge articulated by Theology and Theology gains new insights through considering many theories and postulates formulated by Media Studies. The issue you are holding in your hands therefore includes studies that reflect on the theological questions explicitly; however, other authors prefer to emphasise the above-mentioned interdisciplinary connections implicitly. Some texts may even not seem to make such impression at a first sight, but still attempt to react to various problems related to faith, spirituality, and/or humanism. One of these texts is the study by Jana Hubinová titled *HYZA vs Immigrants* that reflects on a controversial case which took place in Slovakia. This unfortunate affair holds a mirror against the values of European humanism, which may be widely discussed and articulated but, nevertheless, the current political and social situation in Europe still suggests that these values are in deepening crisis. Slavomír Gálik's study *Being and Time in Online Communication* adopts a different approach, referring to deeper philosophical roots of the contemporary communication discourse. Božidara Turzonovová and Ján Pekarík's perspective is quite different too – their study focuses on the topic of *Identity and the Ways of Identification in Media Reality*. On the contrary,

Marián Gavenda's text titled *Diseases of Media Civilization and Possibilities of Spiritual Way of Integral Healing* quite clearly embraces the theological basis of the discussed issues. The cooperation between the Faculty of Mass Media Communication and the European Journal of Science and Theology (via the conference *Megatrends and Media* and its outcomes) thus offers a new and quite varied spectrum of new approaches, theoretical postulates and research results, taking decisive steps towards enrichment of both scientific progress and international academic discourse.

We at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication believe that it is our mission to craft a high quality event and this is the reason we continue to move forward. We believe in simplicity, into which we integrate the complexity of relationships. Our focus is on innovation and quality. We know that we have to recognise the direction that we want to go and so we stake out our objectives several years in advance. We haven't wavered in our efforts and we know that we must continuously reformulate and refine our objectives. The variety of important participants sets our conference apart from others organised in the academic environment. While the conference primarily involves the transfer of scientific knowledge, our goal was and will continue to be keeping this knowledge alive in direct contact with practice and the experts who actively participate in it.

Dr. Martin Solík