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International Cooperation of the Ethnographic Institute of SASA

One of the important activities of each contemporary Institute of humanist studies is international cooperation. This kind of exchange and joint work appears to be an important criterion in the process of evaluating scientific institutions. The number and the intensity of cooperation with similar institutes from other developed countries, also reflects the competence and quality of work of certain institution. That is why the international cooperation is a strategic choice of the Ethnographic Institute of Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SASA).

Aims of international cooperation of the Ethnographic Institute of SASA.

- Knowledge improvement of the researchers
- Creation of scientific programs
- Intensifying the participation in international projects
- Organizing researcher exchange
- Publishing joint publications

The strategy of international cooperation has to take into considerations several factors: previous level of readiness for cooperation, available resources (human and financial), existing contacts and common interests. Since the 1990ies, the international cooperation of Ethnographic institute SASA has been conditioned, above all, by the political circumstances in the country. The changes within that period brought to an end all arranged and successfully realized projects by that time (with Slovakia, Poland, Germany etc.). The isolation of our country and the financial helplessness of the Institute made any kind of cooperation with the institutions from abroad more difficult. At the same time, the political changes from the end of the last century appeared to be beneficial for establishing the contacts with the research institutions in the countries with which the Ethnographic institute SASA used to have long-standing break in the organized international cooperation that was caused by the political conditions, but also by the circumstances before 1990ies (e.g. because of the difference in the socialistic systems in Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia there was no institutional cooperation between the Museum of Bulgarian Academy of Science and Ethnographic institute all up to 1996).

The bigger move in the cooperation with the scientific institutions of European countries was done after the year of 2000. Stabilization of political circumstances in our country made possible for Ethnographic Institute SASA to establish new international connections, above all due to personal contacts of the Institute employees. Namely, personal contacts with the colleagues from Hungary, Romania,

Greece, Slovenia, Poland etc. brought an end to the mentioned break from the last decade of the twentieth century, and new, institutionalized professional connections have been established.

Of course, the renewal of international bounds was not always easy. Namely, ethnological/anthropological institutions in the countries of European union are, after all, directed to the mutual collaboration, in frame of their well financially and legally organized projects. Furthermore, the institutions in the field that are not yet the members of EU are eager to come closer to the Union as soon as possible, since this might help them in the quicker integration. Contrary to these problems that are making slower new international integration among similar institutions, there are also those ethnological/anthropological institutions that have very strong interest in the establishing scientific relations with the Ethnographic institute SASA. Geographic proximity and civilizational connection appeared to be of a great importance for the successful scientific relations. Since the year of 2000, Ethnographic institute participated several international projects with the excellent results. Mostly, it is a bilateral cooperation according to the Protocol on international cooperation of Serbian Academy of Science and Arts and Academies of other countries. The protocols on scientific cooperation are made in the frame of inter-academic contracts based on the parallel/comparative work on the same subject, on the principle of the researcher non-currency exchange, on the scientific publications and literature exchange, as well as on the alternating organization of bilateral scientific meetings and publishing of bilingual collections of papers. Since the year of 2000, Ethnographic institute SASA participated international projects with following institutions:

- With Ethnographic institute and museum of Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAN) the protocol on scientific cooperation was signed in the year of 2000.

The cooperation between the two institutes started with the traditional ethnological theme *Comparative Research of Life-cycle Rituals in Serbia and Bulgaria*. The topic of scientific collaboration – the research of life-cycle rituals – is one of the basic issues in the ethnological researches. Due to the fact that it includes all customs, rituals and socially regulated acts that follow human life – from birth, baptizing, growing up, wedding, establishing a family, getting old, dying and funeral ritual- it enables very wide field of researches. The conference was organized already in June, 2000. For this occasion the topic of bilateral work was actualized in a following way: *Rituals of Life-Cycle in the Period of Crisis*. Fourteen employees from the Ethnographic institute SASA participated in it. The papers of the Conference showed that the economic crisis is reflected in the life of individuals. The majority of researches revealed close compatibility of Serbian and Bulgarian material, but also they addressed the differences resulting from heterogeneous life conditions, as well as the different position of Church in Bulgaria and Serbia. During the next year, 2001, the second Serbian-Bulgarian conference was held in Belgrade. The theme was *The Rituals of Life-cycle in the Urban Area in the Period of Crisis*. Ten colleagues from Sophia participated in it. The issues that were treated are following: birth rituals; baptizing – especially among adults, parents and children at the same time, or even whole families to-

gether; orphanage as the example of deregulation of life-cycle rituals; rituals related to the growing up, e.g. student exam as ritual act; young people and mass gatherings, i. e. growing up in the period of street demonstrations; kinship and the way of perception similarity among kin; the wedding rituals, Church weddings, e.g. Church marriage in Bulgaria – tradition or fashion; marriage as indicator of identity; social aspect of women's growing old and way in which women face the end of biological functions in the cultural area that has very negative attitude to such a change; women in small Bulgarian city and the changes in the kinship system; neighboring relations – everyday rhythm and rules of behavior; the rituals in the case of personal failure (not having children, unemployment); obituaries and remembering of the dead, funeral customs and rituals.

After the number of consultations in the year of 2002, the scientific cooperation was continued between Ethnographic Institute SASA and Ethnographic institute and museum BAN. New protocols upon the cooperation and the new theme were agreed and signed: *Everyday Culture in the Post-Socialist Period in Serbia and Bulgaria*. That is how scientific cooperation changed its thematic course from the traditional issues to the problems of everyday social reality. In the frame of this new topic, third, fourth and fifth Serbian-Bulgarian Conferences were held: Third Conference *Everyday Culture in the Post-socialist Period in Serbia and Bulgaria* was held in Sophia in 2004. Papers on the Conference were dealing with up-to-date problems of rapid transformation of culture, followed by big demographic, social, political and economic turbulences in the Balkan countries. The Fourth Conference named *Everyday Culture in the Post-socialist Period in Serbia and Bulgaria – Balkan Transformation and European Integration* was held in Zrenjanin in 2005 (seven participants from Bulgaria were present). Displaying comparative results of the research of everyday culture in Serbia and Bulgaria – but also in the countries that went through similar social processes, which are trying now to join successfully European course – revealed which is the direction of the cultural processes, and which are the specificities and differences among them. It turned out at this conference, that the issue of everyday culture was interesting also to the ethnologists from other ex socialists countries – from Russia, Slovakia, Macedonia. In order make a space also for their participation, the title of the conference was not reduced to Serbia and Bulgaria. The fifth Serbian-Bulgarian Conference *Everyday Culture in Post-socialist Period* was organized in 2007 in Kruševac (five ethnologists from Bulgaria took part in it). It was mainly focused on the problems of the Balkan countries (those that are members of EU, and those in the process of adjoining, alike) through the reading of everyday culture of their own, complex societies.

During the seven years of cooperation between Ethnographic Institute SASA and Ethnographic institute and museum BAN, four bilingual collection of papers were published: *The Life-Cycle*, Ethnographic institute and museum BAN, Sophia 2000; *Customs of Life-Cycle in Urban Surrounding*, Special Editions Volume 48, Institute of Ethnography of SASA, Belgrade 2002; *Everyday Culture in Post-Socialist Period*, Ethnographic institute and museum BAN, Sophia 2005;

Everyday Culture in Post-Socialist Period Collection of Papers of the Ethnographic Institute, SASA Volume 22, Belgrade 2006.

Serbian-Bulgarian scientific cooperation was carried out also through the research stays of the researchers from the Institute (during 2002, J. Djordjević spent ten days in the field-research in Čustendil where she collected data about regulating hereditary relations in the family), as well as participation in the congresses organized by one of the sides in project (three researchers from the Institute: D. Radojičić, M. Malešević and J. Djordjević) took part in the International conference *Socialism – Reality or Illusions* in Sophia in 2002. R. Ivanova took part in the conference *Ethnology and Anthropology: Contemporary Standings and Perspectives* organized by Ethnographic institute SASA in Belgrade in 2004.

- In the frame of the Protocol upon international scientific cooperation of SASA and RAN, Ethnographic Institute SASA has cooperated with the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology “N. N. Mikluho-Maklaj“ of The Russian Academy of Science RAN, with two topics:
 1. *Ethnic Processes in the Slavic World after 1991*– according to the contract (reaffirmed in 2003), following forms of scientific cooperation are planned: research exchange through the research staying according to the principal of non-currency reciprocity; the exchange of publications and scientific information; mutual publishing of research results; publishing of the results on the conferences and organizing scientific conferences devoted to the topics of joint projects.
 2. *Everyday Culture in Post-socialist Period* – contract about cooperation was made in 2006 with the aim of including researchers of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology RAN in already existing Serbian-Bulgarian cooperation. Already in the year of 2007, in the frame of Seventh Congress of Ethnographers and Anthropologists of Russia, the section *Everyday Culture in the Post-socialist Period* was organized. Five researchers from the Ethnographic institute in Belgrade participated. On the Russian side, Marina Martinov, researcher from the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology from Moscow, participated all conferences that Ethnographic Institute SASA organized since 2000 all up to nowadays.
- The cooperation with Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts – SRC/SASA with the topic Serbs in Slovenia – Slovenians in Serbia; Ethnological researches of Identity and Anthropological Research of Identity and a View on the Situation in our Profession. Work on this project started in the year of 2006. The team of researchers from the Ethnographic Institute SASA works on following topics: Rituals of Serbs from Bela Krajina (Milina Ivanović-Barišić), Institutions of Serbs in Ljubljana /Slovenia (Mirjana Pavlović), New Immigrant Wave from Serbia to Slovenia (Jadranka Djordjević) and Identity of the Second Generation of Serbs in Slovenia (Mladena Prelić). The team from Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts deals with the following themes: The Relations between Internees from the WWII and the Families that Received them in Bačka (Mojca Ravnik), Compar-

ing Serbian and Slovenian Contemporary Ethnology (Ingrid Slavec i Jurij Fikfak), Visual Anthropology in Serbia (Naško Križnar), Life-stories of Slovenians in Belgrade (Monika Krupej) i Following the Destiny of a Woman Interned to Šid (Marija Stanonik). The concept of the work on common projects enables researchers of both sides to do a field-work, to participate conferences and to have free access to archives and libraries. This bilateral project is financed by Ministries of Science of Serbia and Slovenia.

Some researchers from the Ethnographic Institute SASA work together with the scientific institution in Slovenia, but out of the frame of joint teams and official cooperation. That kind of work is done by Lada Stevanović and Marta Stojić, who have close relations with anthropologists and philologists from Slovenia. Marta Stojić is doing a research about erased people. Since the year of 2007 she does her MA thesis at the Faculty for Social Sciences in Ljubljana, with the theme *Erased in Slovenia as Discursive Phenomenon*. Lada Stevanović is the PhD student at the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis in Ljubljana, at the department for anthropology of antiquity, finishing her thesis with the subject *Laughing at the Funeral: Ancient Greek Funerary Ritual from the Perspective of Anthropology and Gender*. She also cooperates with the translators from Slovene and in the September 2006 she conducted South-Slavic Literary Translation Workshop from Slovene to Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian organized by City of Women festival in Ljubljana.

- The cooperation exists also with Serbian minority organizations in Hungary. The topic of this joint work is *Serbs in Hungary*. In the frame of this theme, Mladena Prelić wrote and defended her PhD thesis: *Ethnic Identities: The Serbs in Budapest and its Surroundings* (in 2003). Researchers of the Ethnographic Institute SASA, Mirjana Pavlović and Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović also work with the Self-Management of Serbs in Hungary and with the Community Self-Management of Serbs in Batanja on the topic: *Serbs in Batanja*. Ethnographic Institute SASA cooperated with publishers of Ethnography of Serbs in Hungary and supported organization of the promotion of all published Ethnographies of Serbs in Hungary in SASA, in the Museum of Ethnography and in the University Library.
- The cooperation in the frame of the Thematic plan of scientific international cooperation of Serbian Academy of Science and Arts and Romanian Academy of Science (RuAN) was established with the Institute of Ethnography RuAN and with the Institute of Sociological Research in Temisoara. The theme of this cooperation is *Ethnological Research of Serbs in Svinjica (30 years later) / Research of Romanians in the Serbian Part of Banat*. Field-research of the minorities is going to be done by the researchers from home-institutes according to the principal of non-currency exchange. Due to these international agreements and bilateral projects, Mirjana Pavlović researched Serbs in Romania during the years of 2002, 2003 and 2006. The researchers of Ethnographic Institute SASA participated several scientific gatherings in Romania. Mirjana Pavlović (in 2005), Dušan Drljača (in 2007) and Ivica Todorović (2007) participated conferences at the Department for Serbian Language at the Faculty of Literature, History and Theology

at the Western University in Temisoara. Mirjana Pavlović (in 2002, 2003 and 2006), Mladena Prelić (in 2006 and 2007) and Aleksandar Krel (in 2007) participated the conferences about minorities, organized by the Museum Complex in Arad.

- In the year of 2002, the contract about the joint project was signed between the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland) and Ethnographic Institute SASA. The project plan refers to the field-researches in the nationally-mixed areas. At the end of the year 2002, Andrzej Brenz visited Ethnographic Institute SASA in order to work on detail development and project planning.
- The cooperation with scientific institutions in Greece has been recently very vivid. First of all, in the form of the research staying – of Aleksandra Pavićević and Gordana Blagojević, the employees from the Ethnographic Institute SASA. They both researched Serbs in Greece. The topic of Aleksandra Pavićević was *Life of Serbian Emigration in Athens*, and the one by Gordana Blagojević was *Serbs in Greece during the Twentieth Century: Transformations of Identity* (PhD thesis defended during 2007). Gordana Blagojević cooperated with numerous institutions in Greece: the Center for the Research of Greek Laography of the Athenian Academy of Science, Greek Ethnological Society, Center for the Research of Southern-Eastern Europe in Athens and *Dora Stratu* Institution in Athens. The personal cooperation of the researchers from the Ethnographic Institute SASA with the colleagues from Greece (the publications exchange, publishing scientific papers of Greek colleagues in the Bulletin of Ethnographic Institute SASA (LIV, 2006. and LV, 2007.), participation of our researchers at the scientific gatherings in Greece and their appearing in Greek media) resulted with the institutionalization of the cooperation of the Ethnographic Institute SASA and *Dora Stratu* Institution from Athens, with the signing the official agreement on scientific cooperation on the joint project: *Folk Dances as a Reflection of Socio-cultural Relations in Serbia and Greece during the 20th Century*.
- In the year of 2001, the cooperation was re-established with the Institute of Saxon History and Folklore from Dresden. The cooperation at the project DEMOS was achieved through the work of the editing board, whose member was Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović. In the publication *European Ethnology in New Millennium* she published the paper *Ethnological Production in Serbia – Programs and Perspectives*.
- Ethnographic Institute SASA cooperated also with the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovakian Academy of Science (SIAN) in the frame of inter-academic cooperation of SASA and SIAN. The researcher of the Institute of Ethnology from Slovakia, Zuzana Profantova, was a guest of the Ethnographic Institute SASA in the year of 2005, when she had a paper on the conference *Everyday Culture in the Post-Socialist Period in Serbia and Bulgaria – Balkan Transformation and European Integration* in Zrenjanin. The head of the Slovakian institute Gabrijela Kilianova participated the congress *Images of Culture – History and Present*, which Ethnographic Institute SASA organized on the occasion of sixtieth anni-

versary in the October 2007 in Kruševac. Thus, the negotiations that began about the re-establishing cooperation (interrupted during the 1990-ies) have been finalized during the visit of Dragana Radojičić i Zorica Divac to Bratislava, in December 2007, when the contract was signed about parallel researches on the joint topic, that should be included into the Thematic plan of Protocol about cooperation of SASA and SIAN.

- In the frame of the project *Serbs in the Emigration*, the research was done about *Serbs in London: Notes about Parishioners of the Serbian Orthodox Church* in London 2001-2003 (Zorica Divac). There has been established cooperation with Serbian institutions and organizations in London: Serbian orthodox church “St Sava”, Serbian Informative Center, Serbian Society, but also with organizations, mostly NGO-s that deal with the problem of emigrants and minorities: Ealing Voluntary Service Council, Ethnic Minority Foundation – Centre for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organizations etc.
- It has been already mentioned that researchers from the Ethnographic Institute used many personal contacts in the cooperation with NGO-s dealing with Balkans. In the form of interactive lectures and mentorship Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović, Mladena Prelić, Jadranka Djordjević and Srdjan Radović (during 2005 and 2006) worked with American and Japanese students.
- As a part of the project *Serbs in the Emigration*, Gordana Blagojević traveled to California where she worked on the topic *Serbs in California*. She established contacts with the clubs of emigrants from Serbia and with the church organizations. The results of the research *Serbs in California* were published during 2005, in the Special edition of the Ethnographic Institute SASA, vol. 54.

The international cooperation of the Ethnographic Institute SASA is based on the personal and institutional contacts. Certainly, every personal contact of researchers from the Institute influenced cooperation of the institutions and work on the joint projects. The success of the projects, that are usually bilateral, is dependant on the interest of both institutions. It turned out that the neighbor cultures are particularly interesting, above all because of the opportunity to mutually research the minorities (e.g. *Ethnological Researches of Serbs in Svinjica (30 years later) / Research of Romanians in the Serbian parts of Banat*). It turned out that the interest for own compatriots in the neighboring country is the first motive for the initiation of joint projects. However, during the long-term cooperation, researchers are changing their interests from the minorities, ethnic and national identities, to the research of some other important phenomenon, crucial for the both sides (e. g. *Everyday Culture in Post-socialist Period*). Gathering of ethnologist/anthropologists in bilateral projects around the common topics that are not nationally oriented does not mean that the researchers on the project have neglected and abandoned ethnic aspect of their field. On the contrary, this aspect becomes integrated as a real content of the multiethnic and multicultural society, which is rich with cultural differences. Researching of life/culture shouldn't be limited to the narrow national frames. Instead, it should take into consideration the widest spectrum of multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural values/sensibilities. Personal and institutional scientific

cooperation of the Ethnographic Institute SASA contribute to the advancement of ethnologic/anthropologic science. It also reinforces the spirit of scientific and personal relations, empowers mutual confidence, brings about new ideas and makes possible establishing the universal dimension.