



## **Eurozine News Item**

### **The 16th European Meeting of Cultural Journals**

*Europe and the Balkans: Politics of Translation*

*Belgrade, October 24–27 2003*

The 16th European Meeting of Cultural journals took place during the Belgrade International Book Fair, October 24–27, and was organized by *Eurozine* and its Serbian partners *Belgrade Circle* and *Belgrade Women's Studies Center*. More than 70 editors and intellectuals from Europe's leading cultural journals have participated in this event and the programme includes seminars and debates as well as an exhibition displaying journals from more than 30 countries.

The theme of this year's meeting is *Europe and the Balkans: Politics of Translation*. It has become a commonplace that the dynamics of globalisation, while leading to a growing homogenisation are producing at the same time important dynamics of fragmentation and segmentation. In other words: borders are not disappearing, they are instead multiplying and being moved to different locations.

In this context, the question of translation has become a politically and culturally absolutely crucial question. Indeed, the notion of translation can be regarded as a central metaphor for some of the most pressing tasks confronting us at the beginning of the 21st century. It points at how different languages, different cultures, different political contexts, can be put together in such a way as to provide for mutual intelligibility but without having at the same time to sacrifice difference in the interest of a blind assimilation.

Translation, in this sense, is about the creation of new cultural and political maps, the establishment of shared territories and of points of articulation, the development of a border reason, as opposed to the simple acceptance of the reason of the borders. It is about the right to be different, whenever homogenisation would mean an offence, and the right to be equal, whenever the dwelling upon difference would be synonymous with oppression or with the prevalence of power politics.

The central topic of the 16th European Meeting of Cultural Journals – *Politics of Translation* – will thus provide the opportunity to conceptualise and discuss questions such as multiculturalism, the universality of human rights, the global rule of law, global governance and the cultures of democracy; issues that are of great importance also in the region where this year's meeting takes place: the Balkans.

## **Programme**

The invited participants have received a detailed programme for the conference. Three of the panel debates are open to the public.

**Balkan as Metaphor**

Saturday October 25

10.00–13.00

Hotel Metropol (Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra 69, Belgrade)

Panel discussion: Alexander Kiossev, Roger Conover, Milica Bakic–Hayden, Rastko Mocnik, Ugo Vlasisavljevic

Moderator: Dusan Bjelic

The need to demount the Western–centered stereotypical image of the Balkans, as well as the Eastern mechanism of self–orientalization, is urgent. Balkan. Somewhere between a tragedy and a myth, a place and a condition, the term is perhaps best understood as a metaphor. Drawing on the recent book *Balkan as Metaphor*, intellectuals from different fields focus on the way in which the concept of "the Balkans" is used to define attitudes towards issues such as nationalism and multiculturalism, and explore taboos related to ethnicity, religion and Europeaness.

**Politics of Translation**

Saturday October 25

15.00–17.00

Hotel Metropol (Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra 69, Belgrade)

Panel discussion: Joy Sisley, José Lambert, Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes

Moderator: António Sousa Ribeiro

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**Cultures of Democracy**

Sunday October 26

11.00–13.00

Hotel Metropol (Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra 69, Belgrade)

Panel discussion: Roger Conover, Ugo Vlasisavljevic, Rastko Mocnik

Moderators: Obrad Savic and Dasa Duhacek

With the collapse of communism the conception of democracy, or democratic culture, so fundamental to Western political discourse, suddenly lost its stable meanings. However, many Western intellectuals failed to notice this dramatic change and simply interpreted the collapse of communism as a confirmation of the universality of democratic culture. The panel "Cultures of Democracy" will try to explore the validity of the notion of international democratic cultures. Specifically in the context of the Balkans, the unilateral demand for an implementation of a transnational democracy runs the risk of producing a systematic democratic deficit inside the realm of the nation–state. The subordination of the 'nation–state' to the 'world market' has produced a specific political effect on the small Balkan nations: they still believe that the nation–state remains the primary location for a postponed democracy.

