ECPD

**Evropski centar
za mir i razvoj**
Terazije 41
11000 Beograd, Serbia

ECPD Headquarters

**European Center
for Peace and Development
Centre Européen
pour la Paix et le Développement
Centro Europeo
para la Paz y el Desarrollo
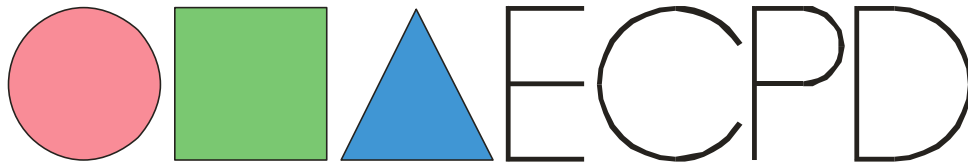Европейский центр
мира и развития**

University for Peace

XV ECPD International Conference
THE UN AGENDA 2030
TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD
(Belgrade City Hall, 25 October 2019)

REPORT

The European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD), established by the United Nations University for Peace, organized its fifteenth annual international conferences in a new thematic framework on the Future of the World between Globalization and Regionalization. The theme this year was "The UN Agenda 2030: To Transform the World", building on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at a General Assembly summit in 2015, which mapped out the fundamental transformations required by 2030 to address the many interrelated problems that the world is facing. The conference assembled many partners and friends both from the region and around the world, across many fields and the political, religious, academic and development domains. It aimed to achieve a deeper and wider understanding of the next essential directions to transform the region in order to build a more sustainable future.

At the heart of Agenda 2030 are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that integrate the economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world, and that put humans back at the centre, with the aim to leave no one behind. These were explored in the conference from various perspectives.

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)
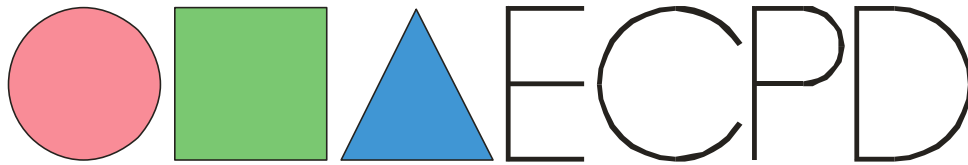
Chair's Opening Address and Keynote Speeches

The opening session reflected a balance of realistic appraisals of the present situation in the world, while acknowledging glimmers of hope and optimism in constructive efforts to respond.

H.E. Professor Dr. Federico Mayor, President of the EDPC Council, who was unable to attend the conference at the last minute, sent a video of his opening remarks and welcome speech. He briefly reviewed past moments in the last hundred years when nations came together in hope for the future, and noted that the adoption of the UN Agenda 2030 in 2015 was again a time when we had hope that respect for human rights, social objectives for the economy, and responding to climate change would again have priority. Unfortunately the rising rejection of multilateralism is clouding these prospects. "We the Peoples..." of the UN Charter need all nations to address our common destiny together. With modern science and technology, we know what is happening on our planet and what lies ahead. The youth see this and are calling for action. ECPD is working for peace, and must help to change present negative trends. If we postpone action, we shall lack in our intergenerational duty, which will be a great mistake. We hold the reins of a unified future in our hands, and should work on guidelines for reinventing the future.

H.E. Professor Dr. Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic, Minister in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, highlighted that the UN Agenda 2030 belongs to all of us and responds to all the world challenges. Serbia has had an active role since the beginning, setting up a group across many ministries for implementation and adopting a Serbian Agenda 2030. In 2018 it prepared a report on implementation, and hosted a subregional conference on the promotion of Agenda 2030. It presented its first Voluntary National Review to the UN High Level Political Forum in 2019. Most recently it has promoted a vision of Sustainable Serbia for youth and children, and is encouraging action at the municipal level. The government appreciated ECPD's three and a half decades as an educational organization, improving the demographic future including for vulnerable populations.

Professor Dr. Francisco Rojas Aravena, Rector of the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica, appreciated the work of the ECPD for peace and democracy. Today, humanity is entitled to peace, but we see rising atomic threats, climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental damage, terrorism and migration. Some countries will disappear. Multilateralism is weakening, the geopolitical view is changing with power relationships involving many actors beyond governments. There are fewer wars but more violence and insecurity. No actor or superpower can resolve the issues of the global agenda on its own. Capitalism has globalized, but elections and governance are still national, leading to mistrust in leaders and political institutions. Only cooperation makes it possible to confront the transnational agenda and provide governance to globalization. The world economy is declining, and there are commercial wars, with greater global uncertainty. Trust decreases and fear increases. We need to take steps towards global decisions for all nations, but no viable proposal has emerged to address these transformations of the international system or to democratize the global power structure.. Agenda 2030 provides the main framework to solve our problems, especially SDG 16. Without peace, there is no development. We need new concept maps, knowledge and cooperation to overcome fragmentation, as well as a dialogue for multilateralism, more accountability, and education for peace.

Dr. Ouidad Bouchamaoui of Tunisia, Vice-president of the ECPD Council and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, underlined the critical challenges to all the world from conflicts and wars everywhere. We must cope with the consequences including migration with all its risks and suffering. There is a lack of vision in our leaders. We need to be optimistic and work together for one future for all of us. If we are to inspire future generations, who are our last hope, we need to bring together our actions and reflections to be more practical. The solutions are there, and if we combine all our efforts we can build a better future. Tunisia is

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

now changing, and with free elections is on the right path. The need now is to motivate people, to provide more jobs and a better business environment, and to support the youth so that our dreams will become reality.
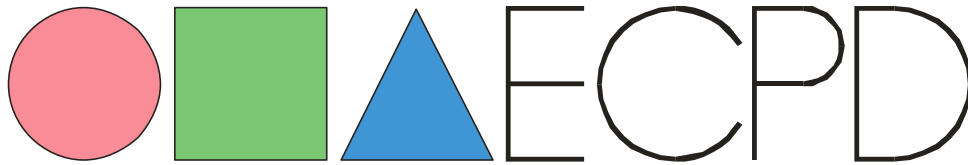
H.E. Professor Dr. Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria and President of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, raised many questions about our present situation. The UN Agenda 2030 is to transform the world, or is the world transforming us? We are behind the reality of climate change and the environmental crisis, leaving a gap. Research has warned us for many years, but what has happened? What does ECPD stand for? Europe is no closer to a common Europe, with Brexit and the refusal of enlargement despite the efforts of North Macedonia. There are bigger problems in the Middle East, with 3.5 million refugees in Turkey, and Europe struggling faced with 250 migrants. We are not transforming the world. Only 20 countries qualify as true democracies, and the number is shrinking. What are the real results of all our meetings? We do not need think tanks but do tanks. Greta Thunberg has lead the youth, but will something happen? We need integrated solutions addressing many issues together, not going in different directions. We are raising borders, not putting them down. Politics is created out of conflicts, and the UN has become weaker, with consistent failure to reform the Security Council. We have new media, but have they helped us or spread hate speech? Education is still a national responsibility in Europe, and not devoted to real problems. We need a reality check, as everything is going faster and time is running out.

Professor Dr. Arthur Lyon Dahl, President of the International Environment Forum, asked where are we now with Agenda 2030? We are behind in reaching the goals by 2030. We have been warned for decades that continuing our present trajectory beyond planetary limits could bring about a major crisis in this century. Many governments, organizations and individuals are trying to implement Agenda 2030, but this would be ambitious even if everyone was cooperating. There is an "elephant in the room" in the form of the many forces working against the SDGs and multilateralism. Climate change has been driven by the fossil fuel industry, which knew already in 1965 the damage that its greenhouse gas emissions would do to the environment. They denied the science, spent billions blocking action on climate change, and plan for major increases in production in the decade ahead. It is no wonder that youth are striking and marching in the streets. For global sustainability we need global governance, and a recent project with two colleagues has prepared proposals for *Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century* to reform the United Nations. Humanity is gripped by a crisis of identity and needs to find a common human purpose in its unity in diversity. The pathway to sustainability will be one of empowerment, collaboration, learning and action revealing the human capacities for justice, reciprocity and happiness.

Academician Professor Dr. Ljubiša Rakić, President of the Board on Biomedical Investigation of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, asked how to transform the world? The ECPD could help in collaboration with other educational and cultural institutions engaging step by step to implement the goals. We must speed up now to transform civilization for the next millennium, studying the consequences and the changes in human beings as they adjust to the new civilization. An Inter-Academy Council for Southeast Europe has been established to help.

Economic Growth (Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 9)

The economic challenges to Agenda 2030 are particularly acute. Everyone wants development, first to rise out of poverty and then to achieve a better life. Yet our economic and political systems focus on the short term, aiming to achieve immediate profits or to satisfy voters and win the next election. In doing this, it is too easy to go into debt, borrowing to keep growing, or living off capital rather that relying only on the
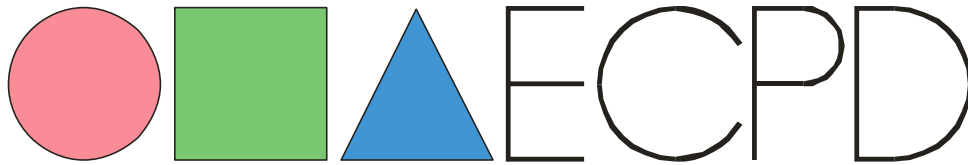
interest. But at some point, debts have to be repaid, and once the capital is gone, so is the potential for interest. The result is bankruptcy and poverty. What is true in finance, is equally true for natural resource capital and social capital. Sustainable development means to maintain the productivity and wealth of our society within the limits of our resources into the distant future. No past civilization has done this successfully; all reached environmental or social limits and collapsed.

Agenda 2030 is ambitious, but it really defines what a successful society should achieve in the 21st century, and with modern technology this is possible. However, while the present economic system has generated great wealth, it has concentrated it at the top, leaving half the world population behind. What is lacking is the political will for change, linked to the powerful vested interests in the present economic and political systems that resist change. Despite the promise in this agenda, many countries seem to be sliding backwards if not disintegrating. The resulting stress is fragmenting societies everywhere. Now, with the rapid evolution of science and technology, humanity has run up against planetary limits from which there is no escape, and we have little time left to change course before catastrophic events from climate change and famine to mass migrations and wanton corruption, and the resulting political instability, become unbearable. A number of presentations addressed this issue.

Academician Ljubisa Adamovic, Professor at ECPD, discussed sustainable development and the crisis of the global economic system, which is broken. In the United States unemployment is low and there is no inflation, but only a small part of the population is really benefiting and there is no cultural adjustment or redistribution, raising the question of the role of central banks and the government. Technological progress may help. Much of the world wonders what values to import, those of the Western system, or more local.

Professor Dr. Jožef Kunič, Honorary President, Slovenian Association for International Relations, reflected on the role of Slovenia in the Western Balkans. Slovenia made great efforts to join the European Union and the Euro zone, but the 2008 crisis imposed demands not in favor of the country. The European Union is losing its geopolitical importance. We do not need institutionalized groupings of states so much as informal groupings of countries with a common history like Scandinavia. The Balkan states should see future closer cooperation as a long-term solution.

Professor Dr. Tihomir Domazet, University of Zagreb, Croatia, provided an important perspective on the new economics needed for small open economies. He warned of the danger of globalization with neoliberalism, with four collisions facing the world economy: the USA-China dispute, the possible conflict between the USA and Iran, Brexit and its consequences for UK and EU, and the risk of failure in Argentina. The world is facing industrial slowdown, uncertainties in trade policy, low interest rates and higher debt. The global elites are playing with fire. The neoliberal ideology is disruptive for small open economies, with GDP per capita much lower in Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia than 30 years ago. Will global debt, now at 3 times global GDP, lead to a huge crisis, to which small open economies, two thirds of world countries, would be particularly vulnerable? The collapse could come from failures of economics, markets and politics. Small open economies are subject to exogenous economic variables including business cycles, interest rates, investment, and as price takers. They are also subject to libertarian paternalism, manipulation and network power. Small economies need a new economics with common goals, a new growth theory and closer interactions. This system should recognize common goods as a new type of ownership, with new economics more socialist than capitalist, new public policy caring for the environment and climate change, and new business models focused on external interactions and ecosystem value, leading to a liberal and peaceful world.

Professor Dr. Marjan Svetličič, Professor Emeritus, University of Ljubljana, raised issues about the role of academics in the Sustainable Development Goals. They did not see the economic crisis coming in 2008, and are co-responsible for what is going on in the world today with unregulated markets and not enough attention to policy. Since they cannot address some big issues, they only focus on small issues, and have difficulty in escaping from old ideas. They need interdisciplinary approaches and "out of the box" thinking, leaving their ivory towers and improving their ability to communicate to their audiences.

Dr. Farhang Tahzib, Director of Public Health, West Sussex Primary Care Trust, UK, considered the core values needed for delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. There are forces of disintegration and integration at work in the world today, requiring new values and ethics. Economic self-interest fails to motivate stakeholders to incorporate the social and environmental dimensions in their planning. We need to consider the ethical dimensions for delivery of the SDGs. Can we strive for prosperity while damaging the planet and harming people? Is it morally justified to change the climate with devastating consequences? There is no Plan B, because there is no planet B. What is our understanding of justice when most wealth goes to 1% of the population? Equity means social justice or fairness; it is an ethical concept, grounded in principles of distributive justice. Equity in health can be defined as the absence of socially unjust or unfair health disparities. Social injustice is still killing on a grand scale. Solidarity is an active concept, being willing to act on behalf of other persons derived from recognition of similarity with them, what people share in common and not what sets them apart. We need more solidarity and a global health ethic. Isolated national policies are no longer enough when the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.
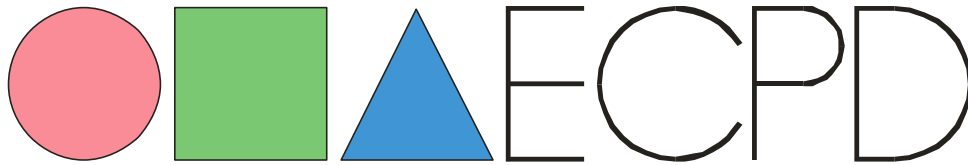
Professor Dr. Blagoje Spirkovski, FON University, Skopje, North Macedonia, described the challenges of economic democracy and democratic firms. The changing nature of our institutions raises questions about the rules of ownership of the means of production. Capital rents are more important than labor. We need to recognise the human right to ownership of the means of production in a legal democratic partnership.

Human Resources Development (Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10)

The social dimension of sustainability also attracted considerable attention, since the Western Balkans have been particularly affected by everything from war and economic collapse to mass emigration.

Professor Dr. Yoji Koyama, Niigata University, *Japan,* discussed the massive outflow of people from the EU periphery and Its depopulation, with its implications for European integration. Between 2000 and 2017, the population decreased in Lithuania (-19.1%), Latvia (-17.8%), Bulgaria (-13.4%) and Romania (-12.4%), mostly due to emigration to advanced EU member states. The driver was the big economic gap between post-socialist countries and the rest of the EU, with high unemployment after the collapse of the soviet economy. In Bulgaria, GDP per capita actually declined from 1989 to 2015. Continuing emigration has been driven by the expansion of income inequality within countries. In the Baltic states, the 2008 financial crisis caused a double-digit decline in GDP, severely affecting peoples' quality of life, so those countries gave priority to joining the Eurozone. The peripheral sending states lost highly qualified workers, while the premature imposition of austerity measures prevented them from adopting effective policies. EU investment in those states has largely been for infrastructure, failing to create sufficient jobs to stem the outflow of people. More attention is needed to the challenges of developing human capital in peripheral member states and to a more polycentric model of development.

Professor Dr. Boris Shmelev, Russian Academy for Sciences and Arts, Russian Federation, reviewed the problems of strengthening the stability of the post-soviet area. The rapid changes and complications in international relations created a new reality. An emerging new world economic order and the technological

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

revolution gave the largest international corporations a competitive advantage in global markets. Inequality is growing, undermining the values of society. With rising economic nationalism, restrictions on trade are leading to trade wars and a renewal of aggressive relations, with a realpolitic framed by violence, strength and power. In this global context, the newly independent states with no long history face internal tensions, mistrust, suspicion and social explosions with a risk of interstate conflict, particularly with respect to the historical borders of Russian populations.
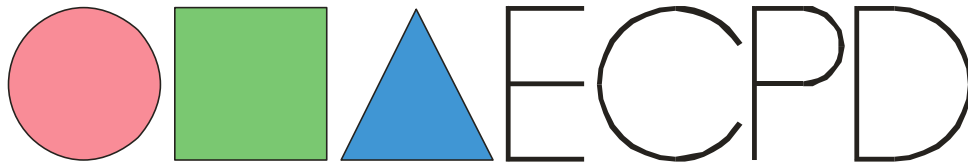
Professor Dr. Darko Tanasković, Former Ambassador of Serbia to UNESCO, explored Agenda 2030 and the New Humanism, responding to the search for values and concrete programmes with tangible results. He defined humanism as an attitude towards the world based on man and his destiny in relation to all things, responsible for his relationships, as opposed to instrumental nationalism. Its values are all through the 2030 Agenda, and even churches and religions can find themselves in its values. Meeting the goals is a condition for achieving the new humanism.

Dr. Richard Pagett, Future States, Wiltshire, United Kingdom, Professor ECPD, described the emergencies, dilemmas and decisions involved in global transformation. We are facing a climate, ecological and ocean emergency, yet the world is nowhere near achieving the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions required to prevent catastrophic climate change, with even the reductions committed under the Paris Agreement largely insufficient. Never before has the world faced transformation on such an unprecedented scale. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions while bringing the poor out of poverty. We have degraded 60 percent of the world's resources, yet a growing Chinese middle class of 600 million is demanding more, beyond the planet's capacity. The dilemma is that countries must be reconfigured like never before, while meeting the needs of a population projected to reach 10.9 billion by 2100. We must rely on governments and global institutions to take decisions on a global scale. All human activities, from resource extraction and synthetic substances to economic activity need to be brought back within planet's capacity, while biodiversity is protected and human skills, knowledge and health are developed with social progress, justice, and equity for future generations. We cannot manage this now, but not doing it could lead to extinction.

Prof. Dr. Mila Goldner Vukov, PhD, FRANZCP Cairns Integrated Mental Health and ATODS, Queensland, Australia, explored the meaning of war violence against women and children from individual, family and social perspectives. To change the world, we must start with the children, we must respect mothers, and Mother Earth. There were ancient civilizations without war, and a few countries have not experienced war for many years, but in most places the wheel of history repeats itself. Violence is a cultural, not an ethnic trait. In recent wars, 80 percent of victims were civilians, including many children. War is an expression of male dominance over women and children, often including sexual violence. Child abuse in war has affected 2 million children in the last 10 years. War results in dehumanization, degradation and despoliation.

Environment and Climate (Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 15)

The transformative change required by the climate crisis is an example of what is now required for many other sustainability targets. The climate is changing much faster that scientists had predicted, bringing the world close to tipping points where positive feedbacks could make it impossible to go backwards. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has now determined that we must limit global warming to 1.5°C to have a chance of avoiding irreversible and dangerous climate change. We have to do everything, and we have to do it immediately. This is not impossible, since we have the necessary technologies, but it will require unprecedented rates of transformation as net greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to zero by mid-century. If everyone adopts a low-carbon lifestyle immediately, we can

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
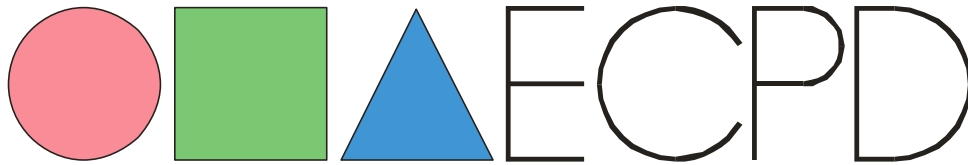AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

avoid overshooting the limit. Otherwise we shall need to use expensive carbon capture and storage and unproven carbon dioxide removal technologies to come back down to a safe level by 2100. Various presentations explored the implications of climate change and other environmental issues, both globally and in the region.

Professor Dr. Geoffrey Lipman, Creative Disruption Architect, described the SUNˣ Program on Climate Friendly Travel, addressing tomorrow's imperative today. He reviewed the existential risk that is climate change, saying our grandchildren will either freeze or fry. We must bend the curve of greenhouse gas emissions to carbon neutrality by 2050, thinking strategically and acting tactically. The climate crisis is volatile, extreme and disruptive, as illustrated by the recent destruction of the Bahamas. It is permanent and will get worse. Sunˣ is a climate friendly travel programme that is 2050-proof, aiming for 100,000 climate champions by 2030. A sustainable ambitions register has been established in Malta. We should plan for our kids, and do it, not just talk about it.

Dr. Nigel Carter, President En-Venture, UK, Senior Lecturer ECPD, reviewed the impact of climate change, desertification and land degradation in the Western Balkans region. There are particular threats to agriculture, which is already faced by land abandonment, poor economic returns, low yields on poor soils, the high cost of inputs, and capital costs, as well as urbanization and fragmentation. Climate change is bringing rising temperatures, decreasing rainfall and desertification, extreme events and loss of biodiversity and environmental integrity. It will be necessary to increase irrigation, reduce animal husbandry, and readjust crops towards more subtropical varieties. There will be water conflicts requiring improved water catchment and retention, aquifer management, controls on river extraction, and negotiations to share transboundary resources. The governments will need to help agriculture to make the necessary modifications.

Professor Dr. Georges Prévélakis, Université Paris 1 – Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris, France, shared lessons learnt from the Greek crisis as a case of unsustainable growth. There were benefits after joining the European Union in 1981, but ten years of suffering resulted from a mismanagement of relationships due to the misunderstanding of different cultures. In Greece, with its history as part of the Ottoman Empire with a logic of rents and rent-seeking, joining the EU meant free money. For the EU, it was investing to reduce differences and promote convergence. This was unsustainable and led to the 2004 collapse. Rent ruins the competitiveness of the economy, and when the rent stops, the economy is uncompetitive. It took ten years of austerity to restore Greek competitiveness. This shows the importance of understanding differences and being aware of misunderstandings.

Professor Dr. Merle Lefkoff, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Emergent Diplomacy, spoke on the SDGs, the Anthropocene, and paradigm shifts. She is an expert in the science of chaos and complexity. Just as Arthur Dahl had referred to the need for a paradigm shift in the United Nations, we cannot continue diplomatic processes as in the past. The global banking system, like traffic jams in Beijing, is out of control. The violent reactions against migrants, and the closing of borders affecting mostly women and children, even the difficulties in Sweden integrating migrants, show that we do not know what to do about it. The declaration of the Anthropocene shows the global scale of human impact. In a doomsday scenario, we cannot stop our use of fossil fuels to reach zero emissions and will face collapse. To promote prosperity by protecting the planet, our concept of prosperity has to change. The national security apparatus in the USA considers climate change as a threat multiplier. Even the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) was mostly men. We need to follow the example of the indigenous peoples and become Earth-centered, looking to nature for guidance. What would nature do? Where is the adjacent possible?

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

Professor Dr. Christo Kaftandjiev, Kazakhstan Humanitarian Juridical Innovative University (KazHJIU), explored making cities inclusive, safe and sustainable using the Creative Intertextual Communicative Approach. He noted the importance of cultural values and efficient communications, when life imitates art.
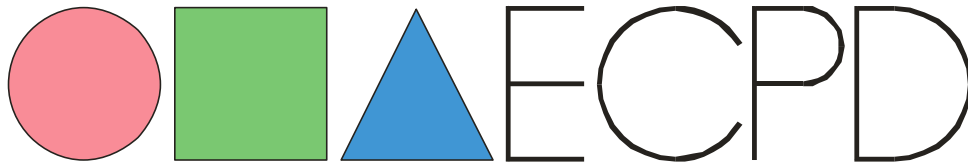
Professor Dr. Boris Cizelj, DOBA Business School, Alma Mater Europaea, Maribor, President KEN, discussed how to reach sustainable development through an improved innovation ecosystem. Sustainable development is undermined by socio-economic differentiation at all levels, with major disparities in more than half of countries. The United States has seen unsustainable wealth concentration since the 1970s, with the top 10% of the population holding 78% of the wealth. The negative implications of disparities are now recognized as destroying demand and creating political instability, as well as being morally unacceptable. In the post-industrial era, knowledge economies sustain economic and social progress, and the pace of innovation is accelerating. They change from a linear to an open innovation system. Such economies require education and training to build human capital, science and research to develop new knowledge, innovation to develop new products and services and bring them to market, and entrepreneurship implementing personal initiatives through market acceptance. The average age of companies is important, with 18% of young companies in the European Union versus 54% in the USA. In the Global Innovation Index, Switzerland, Sweden, USA and the Netherlands come out on top, showing the importance of human capital over physical capital stocks. An innovation ecosystem covers the totality of traditions and values, legislation, strategies, innovation actors, government institutions, policy instruments, modus operandi and patterns of interaction – with particular reference to education, R&D, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Professor Dr. Miodrag Vuković, Chair, Committee on International Relations, Parliament of Montenegro, described the success of Montenegro as an Ecological State, declared in its constitution in 1991. After 28 years, they are maintaining the pace with a state policy for sustainable development. The whole population is convinced of the effort necessary to enter the European Union. There is an innovative framework for ecosystems, with a long tradition going back to 1868 when the king set aside a rainforest preserve. Now 30% of the country is in protected areas, with 5 national parks, 40 protected areas, 15% of the coastal area mapped, and a Natura 2000 framework is in place. 70 laws have been harmonized, with 300 acts and15 strategies meeting international and EU standards. There was great disappointment at the recent EU Council decision to postpone or halt integration. Today the whole world is addressing environmental protection, and the urgency of responding to the climate crisis is a new EU priority.

Institutions, Finance and Cooperation (Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17)

Since peace and development are a central focus of ECPD, and the Western Balkans are in the midst of challenges concerning their integration into the European Union, it was appropriate that many papers addressed issues of institutional arrangements and partnerships in the last two SDGs.

Academician Professor Dr. Vlado Kambovski, Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Skopje, discussed the rule of law as a fundamental Sustainable Development Goal and the challenge this represents for the Balkan Countries. There was surprise at the EU delay in entry negotiations despite all their conditions being met. The reason given was the need to rethink the negotiating process, and in particular the establishment of the rule of law. The result is a vicious circle of the poor rule of law. States are continually undermined by political and ideological disputes, with capture of the state, a lack of democracy, and mass manipulation of citizens. There should be monitoring during the negotiation process to get out of this vicious circle. The rule of law is the main challenge in the western Balkans, with a struggle for human rights and justice. The people of the western Balkans need preparation for the

Sustainable Development Goals, and the best way to do this would be to open negotiations without delay for all Balkan countries.
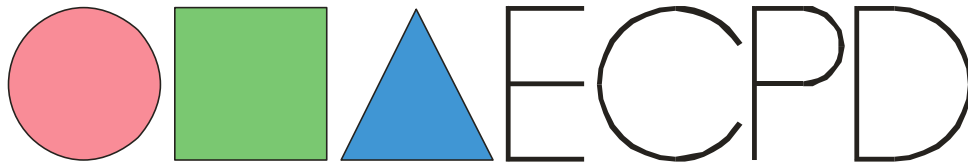
Professor Dr. Horst Mahr, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Association, Munich, Germany, warned about the new world disorder and the urgent need for leadership. After seven decades of the European Union and global institution building, President Trump has cynically and actively destroyed the Pax Americana. After the aristocracy to the end of the 19th century, and then the products of elite schools, today there is no real elite left. Now the topic is immigrants. Germany invited migrants to Europe in 2015 at a cost of 6 billion Euros. Now Turkey is threatening to send over 3.5 million more. The traditional parties are unable to solve these problems, leading to the rise of populism on the right.

Professor Dr. Manuela Mesa, Director, Center for Education and Research for Peace, Culture for Peace Foundation, Madrid, addressed the challenges and opportunities to implement SDG 16: Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies. She noted the importance of this goal for all the other goals, calling for good governance, participation and the fight against corruption. Conflict and violence are a major development challenge. A comprehensive global audit of all SDG16 indicators will be important for all countries. There are two main challenges: peace and its conceptualization faced with present violence, and security, which is a main factor for peace. It is necessary to solve disagreements without violence through constructive dialogue and conflict resolution, requiring institutions, structures and positive attitudes. Another problem is the ability to collect data for these indicators. An effort is needed to progress on this, with the help of academia and think tanks. Governments often forget this in reporting to the UN.

Dr. Roberto Savio, Director of ECPD International Relations, addressed the crisis of multilateralism in the face of rising xenophobia, nationalism and populism. During the Cold War, UN action was often blocked by the ideological conflict of US capitalism versus USSR communism. After the fall of the USSR, Reagan and Thatcher agreed to a new US-driven hegemony around the Washington Consensus that markets would solve all problems and everything that did not produce money was not useful. After 20 years of the market system leading to the financial crisis of 2008, the people left out of globalization have been rising up and moving, creating a fear of immigrants, while wealth concentration at the top continues to increase and countries are blowing up. If we look to our future, it cannot be a function of what we have now, with each country trying to be first. We need a totally different capitalism. All countries must work through the multilateral system of cooperation to keep the peace.

Professor Dr. Nano Ružin, Rector, FON University, Macedonia, discussed the French-German partnership and its impact on the enlargement of the EU in the Western Balkans. Over the years, the relationship between France and Germany has been unpredictable, coming closer from 1963. More recently over Brexit, France wants a rapid departure and a strengthening of its role in Europe, while Germany worries about losing a market for its exports and a counterbalance to France in the EU. There are differences over EU integration. With respect to the enlargement of the EU in the Western Balkans, their view of the region is negative, with symptoms of captured state, organized crime and corruption, as well as the absence of the rule of law. Serbia and Montenegro have begun negotiations, and the EU Council decided in 2018 to open negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania in 2019, but President Macron, concerned that enlargement could threaten functions of the EU, is now insisting that the EU be reformed before any enlargement. This threatens to increase the influence of external actors in the region, and amounts to changing the rules during the match. North Macedonia and Albania may be collateral victims in the dispute between big countries of the EU.

Professor Dr. Silvo Devetak, University of *Maribor*, Slovenia, called for reconciliation of values and development patterns as a prerequisite for integration of the Western Balkans into the EU. The EU needs

ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

a new structure with fresh policies, an updated action plan and financial resources. It needs to be flexible in its regional cooperation, combining common criteria with respect for the traditions of each country. The EU legislative process needs revision, not just with political elites but with local communities, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, etc. For stability, there should be more cooperation with the UN, the World Bank and the IMF. NATO is concerned with the common interests of Europe and the USA, not the interests of the EU. There is a need to ensure step-by-step integration of the Western Balkans into European values, with support to conciliation processes.
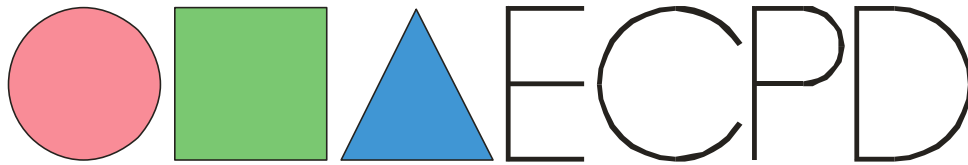
Professor Dr. Zahari Zahariev, President, Slavyani Foundation, Bulgaria, reviewed the global challenges facing Agenda 2030 and the need for a social revolution. Climate change will be driving mass migration. Citizens see increasing inequality. The world sees a rapid increase in services, not production. With technological innovation, robots will produce most goods, increasing unemployment rather than providing services to human beings, feeding populism and conflict. The moral imperative for social justice requires a new social contract. The 2030 Agenda provides good targets, but these are a dream. We must work for change today.

Professor Dr. Nikolai Tomov, Director, Slavyani Foundation, Bulgaria, described a specific Chinese vision for Agenda 2030 as a collective vision leaving no one behind. What was the place of China, with what foreign policy and vision of the future? There is a great revival of Chinese action centered around the Belt and Road initiative.

Professor Dr. Boško Bojović, School of Higher Education for Social Sciences, Paris, France, raised questions about the West and terrorism. While the United Nations has build partnerships for peace and development, it has not found any accepted definition for terrorism, Without such harmonization, the human rights of millions can be affected. Countries define terrorism in totally different way, as for example the way the USA and Turkey treat the Kurds.

Professor Dr. Vern Redekop, Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, explored the role of public-spirited leadership and administrative blessing in achieving the UN 2030 Goals. Among the factors that help some systems to work well, leadership that is motivated by the public good, justice, inclusiveness, creativity, the environment or transcendence is more effective than that centered on ego, violence, ethnonational groups or the interests of billionaires. Such public-spirited leadership can empower other leaders and young people. Spirit refers to something intangible yet real, reflecting values and orientation and manifested in behavior, allowing for deep connections between people. Publics are ever more inclusive and complex up to the level of the universe. An ethical vision can support the Sustainable Development Goals, cut corruption and foster freedom, making it possible to admit mistakes. ECPD could help to define public-spirited leadership, find examples, assess leaders and perhaps give an annual award. Administrators always have a certain level of discretion when they make decisions that affect the lives of people. Administrative violence occurs when discretionary powers are used to diminish, harm, or negatively affect people, particularly those belonging to particular groups, by choosing the most extreme option or imposing unreasonable technicalities. The opposite, administrative blessing, uses discretion to advance the goals of human well-being for all. ECPD should encourage administrators to advance the SDGs and share good examples.

Academician Professor Dr. Paskal Milo, Albanian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Tirana, described some of the challenges in Albania's path towards achieving the UN Agenda 2030. He noted the gap between declarations and realities, asking how can we realize all those SDG projects? There is no unity at the global level, with rising isolationism in the USA and UK, while Russia and China have different visions
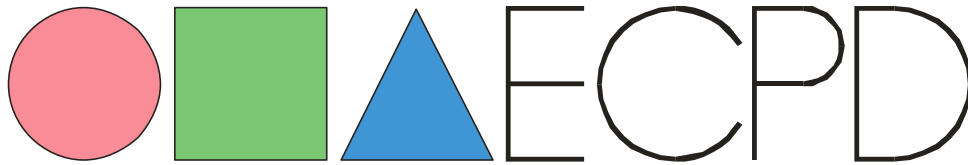
ECPD DANUBIAN CENTER FOR
CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (DCCBC)

VAMK
VAASAN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

CITY OF BELGRADE

ECPD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

and projects. He asked who are the decision-makers, and are they conscious of the problem? The perception is that even the EU is going down hill.

Professor Jovan Manasijevski, Former Minister of Defence of Macedonia, provided a reassessment of the security-development nexus with respect to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and human security. He noted the absence of security as a focus in the SDGs, the closest reference being to preventing violence in SDG 16. There are two faces of security, supply and demand. On the supply side, security is a process of political and social ordering maintained through authoritative discourses and practices of power within a territory. It stabilises existing distributions of power and prosperity, with a tendency to inequality, including unequal security. Both states and the international community have a 'responsibility to protect'. On the demand side, security is an entitlement of citizens and more widely human beings to protection from violence, abuses of rights and social injustice, along with other existential risks. It is linked to freedom from hunger and disease, protection from environmental hazards, etc. It is tied to the construction of identities and of imagined communities. Rights, legitimacy and consent are central; the state is the problem as much as the solution. There is a demand to transform conditions creating insecurity, including bad governance and social exclusion. Security has been mainstreamed in development, as they are linked even if the relationship is unclear. The World Bank and UNDP speak of securitisation of development, with an effort to rebuild security and justice institutions for peace-building, but this is riddled with contradictions, and can lead to defending the security interests of global powers and local elites. Among the consequences are an unenforceable responsibility to protect, and double standards for human rights, with a risk of degeneration into poverty relief and riot control. Collective action is essential to minimise the insecurities facing all humankind in a world of rapid and interdependent changes, despite market forces and national interests that erode existing structures of international collaboration, state regulation and democratic accountability. The challenge is to create more democratic and inclusive societies in which people can claim greater control of their security - in a world in which the forces of power and profit continue to be stacked against them. There is still a long road to the desecuritization of development.

Danny Briottet, Project Manager, Music Producer & Broadcaster, London, UK, approached the UN 2030 Agenda from a UK urban perspective. While Goal 11 includes respect for cultural diversity, this is far from the case in the United Kingdom. There are murders every day in London, with 43,516 knife attacks last year. With government funding cuts to police forces, there is no prosecution. There is gunfire at night with gang wars between postcodes, and children coerced into working for gangs. Millions live in poverty in the UK, including many children, with a rise in populism. Brexit has been hijacked for other ends, such as a withdrawal from human rights and social cohesion, and abolishing development aid, replaced by rampant consumerism, a zero-sum mindset and increasing polarization.

Dr. Nicholas McLean, CMG, Council Member, Federal Trust for Education and Science, Chief Executive, MWM, UK, raised similar questions about the United Kingdom, and whether it was a reliable partner for global transformation. The debate over Brexit has seen millions marching in the streets. With a no-deal Brexit the worst of all possible options, another extension is likely. In these circumstances, will Britain be a reliable partner? Can it be trusted? The British are an island people, looking outward from their castle with a moat. Isolationism is strong. They cannot seem to get along with their closest neighbors, and have concluded few trade agreements. Yet anti-European language is largely rejected by the British people, and fundamental values are upheld, including by Conservative MPs and Lords. Most young people are in favor of remain. The main leave campaigners have been fined for electoral fraud. The British people need patience and understanding, in the hope that they will resume engagement.

Discussion

The discussion raised a number of interesting and relevant issues. We tend to look at the symptoms and do not diagnose the fundamental diseases. We are experiencing processes of disintegration and integration, the latter uniting the world in implementing the SDGs. We hope that public opinion will come on board, but that will require metaphors, stories and the arts to communicate at another more emotional level. The difficulty in dealing with approaching danger is to recognize that we are responsible, but that may only occur when we are in imminent danger, by which time it may be (almost?) too late. We have managed to avoid a nuclear holocaust for 80 years, by somehow drawing back at the last minute. How can we last for another 80 years? The problems we are facing are completely beyond our capacity to solve, unless we act collectively with a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation. There is a challenge in how to globalize the things we want to globalize without an effective global governance. The UN could be reformed, but it will require significant funding.

On the leadership role of Russia, its influence has been growing due to its strong military/party structure. It has been present in Syria since 1952, or could not have been so influential now. The nuclear agreement with Iran was largely prepared by Russia, and Iran is being careful not to provoke action. The nuclear danger may be bigger than the climate danger, both from a direct confrontation between the US and Russia, and from other nuclear states like Pakistan. Turkey is full of internal contradictions, and with its ideological basis weakening, it is returning to old risks of instability. A weak Turkey will impact the Balkans.

Closing Session

Nowhere in the world is on track to achieving all the SDGs by 2030. Many trends are still in the wrong direction, and for some such as eliminating hunger we are falling back after a period of improvement. If we want to transform the world, we must raise the level of ambition. Everyone must be involved in the effort that is necessary, requiring widespread public information about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through educational programmes in the schools and places of worship, in the media and in political discourses. The effort should be like going on a war footing, with all efforts focussed on the objectives. The challenge is too important to become the subject of partisan political wrangling. Everyone should unite against the common enemy, our own unsustainability. We have waited too long, and ignored too many warnings, to delay action any longer.

This ECPD conference with its series of outstanding papers raised many significant issues and stimulated wide discussion of both the global situation and the specific challenges facing the Western Balkans. The ECPD should try to communicate the results widely to increase their impact. They can contribute to the global transformation necessary to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

Belgrade, October 2019