

Engaging Eastern Europe – Eastern Orthodox Christianity in an Integrating Europe (dossier nr. 236-25-001)
Final academic report

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Project leader: dr. Evert van der Zweerde, IVOC

Titel: Engaging Eastern Europe – Eastern Orthodox Christianity in an Integrating Europe

Looptijd: 01/11/2006 – 31/05/2009

2. Cooperation Partners:

a. Tsentr Izuchenija Religii [Centre for the Study of Religions], Russian State University for the Humanities [RSUH/RGGU], Moscow, Russia; represented by prof.dr. Aleksandr Agadjanian.

b. Religious Studies Program, Department of History, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary; represented by dr. Nadia al-Bagdadi.

c. Research Group “Orthodox and Latin Europe: Byzantine and Western Christian Legacy in Shaping Cultural Identities in Europe”; represented by prof.dr. Mikhail Dmitriev, Montpellier-III, France, CEU Budapest, Hungary, and Moscow State University [MGU], Moscow, Russia.

3. Concrete results:

a. International workshops / expert meetings:

i. ‘Eastern Orthodox Christianity and European Integration: Questions and Hypotheses,’ 18-20 January 2007, Soeterbeeck / Nijmegen [IVOC / IECS].

ii. ‘Eastern Orthodoxy and European Integration: Russian Perspectives,’ 22-23 May 2007, Moscow, RGGU.

iii. ‘Christianity and Images of National Identity in Russia, France, Europe, 17th – 20th Century,’ 4-6 September 2008 Moscow, MGU.

iv. ‘Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Human Rights,’ 9-11 February 2009, Soeterbeeck / Nijmegen [IVOC / IECS].

v. ‘Eastern Christianity in Post-Imperial Societies,’ 27-28 March 2009, Budapest, CEU.

b. Publications (all containing contributions by IVOC-staff):

i. [as planned in the application]: volume *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Human Rights*, with selected proceedings of expert meeting 3.a.iv. To appear in the series Eastern Christian Studies (Leuven: Peeters) [editorial work already in progress; for this, a capable editorial assistant has been engaged].

- ii. volume *Christianity and Images of National Identity in Russia, France, Europe, 17th – 20th Century*, with selected proceedings of expert meeting 3.a.iii, edited by prof. M. Dmitriev, to appear in Moscow [editorial work in progress]
- iii. a volume *Eastern Christianity in Post-Imperial Societies*, with selected proceedings of expert meeting 3.a.v, to be edited by dr. Anca Sincan *et al.* [planned]

c. Project applications:

- i. Project application ‘Alte Grenzen – Neue Fronten’, prepared by dr. Alfons Brüning and dr. Evert van der Zweerde [both IVOC], and applied for at Volkswagen-Stiftung by prof.dr. Thomas Bremer [Münster, Germany]. This 3-year project, consisting of 3 PhD projects and 3 post-doc projects, has been granted by Volkswagen-Stiftung and is executed by dr. Brüning. Cooperation partners: IVOC with universities of Münster, Moscow [RGGU], and Cluj-Napoca (Romania).
- ii. Project application ‘Laboratory Ukraine’, prepared and to be led by dr. Alfons Brüning and dr. Evert van der Zweerde, and to consist of 3 post-doc projects. Has been applied for at the Thyssen-Stiftung, but not granted.

d. Researcher exchanges. Out of 6 planned exchanges, 5 have been realized, 3 going out from IVOC, 2 coming in.

4. The cooperation has been executed according to plan and expectation, but it has proved to be a lot more work, and there have been some delays. Also, the order of the five planned expert meetings has been changed, without serious consequences (apart from the delay). Coordinating the activities of the partners in Russia, Hungary, and France has not always been easy, despite the fact that all partners concerned have been very actively and constructively engaged.

The “French connection” has been largely absent in spite of the considerable efforts made by prof. M. Dmitriev. Practical problems, including language, and differences in research agenda are the main causes of this negative result. It has not been possible to realize IVOC-participation in the French workshops at Montpellier-III. In terms of outcome, it has been compensated by the expert meeting in Moscow, September 2008.

5. On the whole, the organization of the cooperation has been fruitful and effective. A more strict coordination from the organizing institution might seem desirable, but for this kind of project, it cannot possibly be effectuated for lack of “direct control”. There seem to be two reasons for this. One is that research in humanities is highly specialized and individualized and that, therefore, cooperation is more likely to exist on a personal than on an institutional basis, as

envisaged in this project. Still, such cooperation can be very fruitful [see par. 3 above]. Collective research projects in the humanities have more potential to the extent to which they respect individual expertise and orientation, this however inevitably leads to rather “loose” structures. A strict division of labor, such as is possible in natural or social sciences, is counter-effective. Secondly, it appears from this project that international humanities cooperation needs to take into account local research agendas and dynamics. Looking back, the most productive elements of the project have been those in which already existing research activities were brought together and offered the opportunity to interact and to generate surplus value – this is much more effective than attempts (as were made by the project leader in the beginning of the project) to set up a shared research agenda.

6. Contribution by partner institutions:

a. Tsentr Izuchenija Religii, RGGU, Moscow:	6.000,--
b. Religious Studies Program, CEU, Budapest:	6.270,--
c. “Orthodox and Latin Europe” (Montpellier/Moscow/Budapest):	6.108,--

7. Presently, two of the participating institutions (IVOC and RGGU) participate in the international research project “Alte Grenzen – Neue Fronten”, financed by Volkswagen-Stiftung (see under 3). More generally, the project has generated a Europe-wide network of institutions and individuals [see elaborate Final Report] that will be used for further cooperation, including project applications. Three network partners, including IVOC, have participated in a Swiss FP7 application that was rejected in 2009, but will be reapplied. IVOC, at the centre of this network, has greatly increased its visibility and, hence, the visibility of Dutch research in the field concerned.

8. The project as a whole has, in our own perception, been highly fruitful and rewarding. The means provided by NWO have been very well spent.

23 July 2009, Evert van der Zweerde, IVOC