

Project Report Intensifying institutional contacts with Eastern Europe and Turkey

Project number: 900.20132467 22287

Project duration: three years: September 2013- September 2016

Total sum received: Euro 44.000 in September 2013

- A General description of project and timetable (according to application)
- B Individual Reports on subprojects
- C Financial account per project

A

In recent years, IVOC was involved in several international research and theological exchange projects, such as *Prospekt* (1997-2005; introducing orthodox theologians to western theological developments, mainly in the field of ecumenism), *Engaging Europe Eastward* (on Orthodoxy and Attitudes to the “West”, funded by Dutch Council of Scientific research), *Alte Grenzen neue Fronten* (sponsored by VWS, in collaboration with University of München). The objective of the present project was to transmit the expertise acquired in previous projects to a selected number of sister institutes that like IVOC are committed to the cause of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The background of the present demarche was the lack of progress in ecumenical attitude in Eastern Europe.

The project consisted of four subprojects:

Two of the sub-projects aim at supporting two institutes of the Congregation of the Assumptionists, the recently re-founded Centre of St Peter and St Andrew in Bucarest and the Institute in Kadiköy-Istanbul. IVOC esteems that both institutes play an important role in ecumenical dialogue in Eastern Europe, but are in need of strong scientific support (including providing an academic network) in order to be able to take valuable initiatives.

For Bucarest, IVOC has committed itself to developing courses taught by IVOC staff on oriental Christianity aimed at Orthodox and Roman and Greek Catholic students in Bucarest. IVOC has already obtained that student can earn credits for this course at their respective institutes. In this way, the Assumptionist Centre will play a role in promoting inter-confessional dialogue on an academic level.

During the last years, the Istanbul Institute was mainly focused on internal ecclesiastical issues. In order to reach out to the Turkish academic world, IVOC has offered to organize a conference on the issue of Christian-Muslim interaction in collaboration with several Istanbul universities.

Two other subprojects aim at intensifying cooperation with a privileged partner institute of IVOC, St Tikhon Orthodox University in Moscow by organizing two conferences, one in the field of orthodoxy and human rights (to be held at Nijmegen), the other on a more neutral scholarly subject, spiritual anthologies, which however allows for a discussion how spirituality transcends confessional borders (to be held in Moscow)

The last project is the completion of two PhD's in the above mentioned fields: Dumitru Cotelea MA in human rights and Carmen Fotescu MA on oriental spirituality. Both students are already finalizing their research, but are in need of a supplementary stay in Nijmegen. The idea is also that after completion of their PhD these students will be appointed in theological institutes in Romania (in one case this step is already realized); both students will use their expertise acquired at IVOC to promote the study of inter-confessional dialogue.

B. Report on execution of subprojects

Project 1

- a. Conference *Concepts of “Human Dignity” in the Patristic Tradition, and their Traces in Eastern and Western Christianity*, **14-18 October 2014**, Nijmegen/Hotel ‘t Spijker, Beek, in cooperation with St. Tikhon Theological Institute in Moscow, VU Amsterdam and PThU Amsterdam.

16 scholars from EU, Russia and Eastern Europe participated in the conference. Papers will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* of IvOC (publisher Peeters in Louvain, Belgium). Edition of English is foreseen in budget.

Attachment 1.a.1. Program, 1.a.2. List of Participants, 1a.3. Report of Conference

- b. Conference *Een bijzondere visie op de Kerk – leven, theologie, poëzie en praktijk van vader Pavel Adelgeim* (An exceptional vision on the Church – life, poetry and practice of Father Pavel Adelgeim), in Nijmegen, **14 November 2014**, organized in cooperation with the Byzantine Chapel in Nijmegen

The afternoon program of the conference with 4 Russian guests and personal acquaintances of the late Pavel Adelgeim who lectured on his ideas on concrete Church life, theology and ecclesiology, society and his poetic preaching was well attended. The lectures were filmed. Part of the lectures were in Russian with a translation into Dutch.

Guest speakers: Lev Regelson; Maxim Regelson; Viktor Yakovlev, Elena Volkova

In the evening the film *A day in Father Pavel’s life* (in Russian) by director Maksim Iakubson was shown in the Byzantine Chapel.

Attachment: 1.b.1. Program, 1.b.2. List of Participants, 1.b.3. Report of conference. 1.b.4 Photos and Film

- c. Co-organization of Conference in Louvain on Arabic Bible translations, 2015

Attachment: 1.c.1 Program and Participants

Project 2

Due to other occupations of partner institute St. Tikhon (Moscow) the conference on Spiritual Anthologies was not planned. Instead, IvOC co-organized:

- a. Conference “Political modernity and the responses of contemporary Orthodox theology”, Vienna 16-17 January 2014

Attachment: 2.a.1 Program, 2.a.2 List of Participants

- b. Guest-stay, guest lectures, by Dr. I. Zabaev in 2015 in Amsterdam and Nijmegen on the social doctrine of the ROC and on Orthodox work ethic. 50% of expenses covered by IvOC, 50% by VU/PThU

- c. Cooperation with InaSEC VU: organization of working group “Theology after Gulag” and meetings of the working group (2016)

Attachment: 2.c.1 Theology after Gulag project description and first meeting working group

Project 3

Due to reorganization of the Assumptionist Fathers in Europe, the attention was focused on the Assumptionist Institute in Bucarest.

The course/conference *Ecumenism in the Middle East: Past and Present. Conference on Christianity in the Middle East*, 9-12 December 2015, was organized in Vienna, in cooperation with Pro Oriente, with two experts from the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies. Participants: 4 Speakers, 4 Experts, and 13 advanced Master/PhD students from Romania, Russia, Greece, Austria, Ukraine.

Attachment: 3.a.1. Program, 3.a.2. List of participants, 3.a.3. Photos

This project is a follow up of the Prospekt academic exchange projects that generated an interest in the oriental Christian traditions in scholars of Orthodox theological institutes in Eastern Europe. IvOC is convinced that the transfer of knowledge of the oriental traditions in an acceptable way for Orthodox religious and lay scholars will contribute to an ecumenical attitude.

This project was combined with project 4. Staff building at the Assumptionist Institute in Bucarest. Both staff and students were invited to participate in this project.

Project 4

Staff building at the Assumptionist Institute in Bucarest. Consultations and courses during the years: 2013 and 2015.

In 2013, 5-13 December: Intensive course *Christianity in the Middle East*, Professor: H. Teule, director of the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, 15 students from AI and University of Bucarest. The students received credits for this course from their home faculty; During his stay Professor Teule also gave a public lecture at the Catholic Theological Faculty on Christians in the Middle East.

In 2015, 9-12 December, this course was combined with the Conference organized with Pro Oriente in Vienna. See project 3.

Project 5

2 Romanian external PhD-students' of the Institute received support to finalize their theses in the field of Eastern Christianity, in the framework of staff-building of partner institutes: Dmitru Cotolea on *Moldavian Orthodoxy in Geopolitical Context* and Carmen Fotescu on the Syriac spiritual writer Abu Ghalib. Both PhD-students stayed several months in Nijmegen for their projects: Cotolea from November 2013-May 2014, and Fotescu in January and May 2014 and Conference participation in September 2014. In 2016, Dmitru Cotolea received a scholarship to intensify the work on his PhD in Cluj, Romania by freeing him from his everyday job. In 2017, he will come to Nijmegen for a study stay of 3 months in order to finalize his PhD. The expenses of this future stay are included in the final account of this project.

C.	Proposed Budget:	
	Project 1:	3 days, Nijmegen, 15 participants
		Travel and conference costs € 10.000
		Edition of papers for publication in JECS € 2.000
	Project 2:	3 days, Moscow, 15-20 participants
		Travel and conference costs € 15.000
		Contribution of St. Tikhon - € 7.500
	Project 3:	3 days, Istanbul, 15 participants
		(Including contribution of Assumptionists) € 7.000
	Project 4:	3 x 1 month course/stay teacher € 7.500
	Project 5:	Study stay 2 PhD students in Nijmegen
		To finalize their PhD's € 10.000
	Overhead	10% € 4.400
<hr/>		
	Total Sum	€ 48.400
	Total sum received	€ 44.000

D. Realized budget: See attachments D