

Call for papers

*2nd year of the conference Our Common Present,
23rd March 2012, Prague, Czech Republic*

Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague,

Faculty of Economics, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

and

Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Hradec
Králové

are proud to invite you to the second year of a scientific conference

Our Common Present

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Changing society?

The second year of the conference reflects the tension which has been present in Western society in past decades, but has not been clearly labelled yet. Is the shift towards environmental society actually happening? Regarding some indicators, the shift could be seen as obvious, for example the topic of sustainable development and environmental conservation in public discussion and media, environmental legislation, lowering of relative energy demand of economies, increasing activities of environmental NGOs, new scientific projects, etc.

Is this shift real or just illusory? And what about the social, economic and cultural context of the changing society from a regional as well as global point of view? The conference aims to open the discussion about the true nature of present changes and the role of various actors from the standpoint of a sustainable society.

There are two possible perspectives:

- 1) Do the changes really take place in society/culture? Case studies and original research studies are welcome.

This perspective focuses on **the actual shifts in the society** from the viewpoint of social, economic and natural sciences. Some examples of possible questions (topics) are: Are people changing their behaviour? How do the topics of public debate and their presentation in the media evolve? Does public opinion transform (how)? How do politicians and decision makers respond? What happens on different levels (local, national, global)? What is the future of rural areas? Who are the new stakeholders? Which traditional stakeholders are disappearing? Where is the biggest potential for future changes? What is the most important threat for future? Are we measuring appropriate data? etc.

- 2) Does science reflect on this issue? Theoretical papers examining the approach of contemporary science towards changes in the society are welcome.

This perspective focuses on **the academic dimension of the problem**. Some examples of possible questions are: Does science reflect on changing paradigms? Which disciplines reflect on these changes more and which less? How does science work with the changes? Is there any conflict between science and “the real world” which is studied? What is the nature of this conflict? Could science foster the environmental shift or hinder it (how)? Or should science only observe the shifts and not interfere? etc.

The conference is opened mainly to humanities (including arts), social and economic sciences, but natural sciences are also welcome. So are non-academic participants. Papers may be presented in Czech and English.

Speakers could register into two different conference sessions. Two types of papers may be presented:

- 1) **Long paper (15-20 minutes)**, including short discussion after the presentation. The papers should deal with one of the topics mentioned above (real changes in the society / their academic reflection) but they do not need to address any of the questions suggested. Please send your abstracts (200 – 400 words) to jan.vavra@prirodou.cz until **10th January 2012**.

OR

- 2) **Short paper for panel discussion (max. 5 minutes)**. The aim of the panel discussion is to invite non-academic experts (NGOs, public administration, government, business, etc.) to the dialogue. Bachelor and masters students are also welcome to the discussion. Participants should clearly and briefly express their opinion on this question:

Is there actually any social will to the change towards environmental sustainability?

Participants are expected to present a positive or negative answer supported with their argumentation. Please send your abstracts (max. 100 words) until **10th January 2012** to zdenka.sokolka@gmail.com.

Authors of selected papers will have an opportunity to publish their work after the conference, type of the publication will be specified later.

Three international guests will hold a keynote speech:

James Sandy Rikoon is a director of Community Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture Program and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of College of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Missouri, USA. He focuses on rural sociology, environmentally sustainable agriculture, food security and political aspects of environmental conflicts.

Fritz Reuswig works as a sociologist in Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and teaches sociology at several German universities (Potsdam University, Offenbach University of Art and Design and Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus). He deals with the topic of consumption, lifestyles and their relationship to global environmental problems. Social construction of nature and the problem of sustainable cities also belong to the area of his interest.

Hannes Palang is a director of Centre for Landscape and Culture at Estonian Institute of Humanities, Tallinn University and the president of Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape. Graduated in geography, he deals with cultural landscape and its changes, landscape assessment and management, and public participation in these processes.

For more information about the previous conference and the upcoming event see www.ecoology.org.

The conference takes place in Prague on 23rd March 2012 in the building of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Celetná Street 20. There is no entry fee. We are looking forward to meeting you at the conference.

Your organisation team

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