

Report on the 18th International Scientific Conference in the Series “Humanistic Ecology” “Contemporary Environmental Dilemmas: Interdisciplinary Approaches” (Bratislava, 26-27 September 2024)

Sprawozdanie z XVIII Międzynarodowej Konferencji Naukowej z cyklu „Ekologia Humanistyczna” pt. „Współczesne dylematy środowiskowe: podejścia interdyscyplinarne” (Bratysława, 26-27 września 2024)

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On September 26-27, 2024, the 18th International Scientific Conference in the Series “Humanistic Ecology” titled “Contemporary Environmental Dilemmas: Interdisciplinary Approaches” was held at Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia. This event was a scientific initiative that resulted from the collaboration of the following entities: Department of Ecophilosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Department of Philosophy and History of Philosophy, Comenius University Bratislava, Francis de Sales Scientific Society.

The conference provided space for an international discussion on the crisis of contemporary civilization—a crisis that affects and impacts many areas of social life. Hence, the organizers proposed to examine the global crisis, which pertains to the complex relationship between humans and nature, using an interdisciplinary approach. The conference provided an opportunity to showcase, compare, and discuss various positions regarding the dilemmas of the socio-natural environment and ecological issues, including climate problems, from the perspectives of natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences. In the light of the aforementioned crisis of civilization, each of these fields plays a significant role in striving for sustainable development and counteracting adverse phenomena threatening our planet. The scientific response to the named environmental dilemmas encompassed a range of topics presented in geological-evolutionary, ecological, biological, economic, legal, educational, sociological, philosophical, and theological contexts. As emphasized by Peter Fedor, Zlatica

Plašienková, Ryszard F. Sadowski, and Tatiana Sedová, the aim of the conference was: “(...) to present an interdisciplinary comprehensive view of the environmental issue, to indicate factual, value, and normative aspects of the subject under investigation, as well as possible diverse approaches to its solution. Related to this are basic argumentative strategies and visions of a turnaround in eliminating the causes of the current crisis and establishing a more harmonious relationship between our civilization and nature” (Fedor, Plašienková, Sadowski and Sedová 2024, 4).

The Scientific Committee of the conference positively evaluated and accepted thirty-eight papers for presentation. The papers were delivered by fifty-five speakers representing nineteen institutions: Pontifical University of John II in Krakow (Poland), Comenius University Bratislava (Slovakia), Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia), Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (Poland), Masaryk University (Brno, Slovakia), Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (Poland), University of Žilina (Slovakia), Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia), Maltepe University (Turkey), Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (Poland), Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (Slovakia), London School of Economics and Political Science (Great Britain), St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work in Bratislava (Slovakia), BROZ – Conservation Association (Slovakia), Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Slovakia), University of Windsor (Canada), Pre Prirodu o. z. (Trenčín, Slovakia), Grüne Liga Thüringen e. V. (Weimar, Germany), OIKOS – Institut für angewandte Ökologie & Grundlagenforschung (Gleisdorf, Austria).

The scientific meeting was opened by Peter Fedor – Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. The two days of the conference began with plenary sessions. On the first day, the session was moderated by Ryszard F. Sadowski, and the introductory paper was presented by Martin Sabol, representing Comenius University Bratislava in Slovakia. The professor addressed the topic: “Climatic Changes During the Last Glacial: A Case Study Based on the Ursid Fossil Record.” The following day of the conference commenced with a presentation by Rudolf Masarovič titled “Conservation of European Biodiversity in the Anthropocene.”

The remaining papers were organized into thematic blocks and assigned to one of six sections. In the section on *Environmental Law and Dilemmas of the Consumer Society*, moderated by Andrea Klimková, the following topics were presented:

- Jakub Bokes, “More-Than-Human? Problematising the Post-Humanist Turn in Critical Environmental Law”
- Eva Smolková, “Is It Possible to Prefer Environmental Objectives over Humane Ones?”

- Peter Mlynarčík, “Some Dilemmas of Ecological Social Work Practice”
- Eva Pechočiaková Svitačová, “Consumption in the Developed Society and the Need to Change the Business Philosophy of Marketing”
- Barbara Panciszko-Szweda, “Short Food Supply Chains as a Key Element of the Policy of Sustainable Development of Agriculture and the Concept of Smart Villages”
- Veronika Gežík, Bojan Jorgič, Paulína Mihaľová, “Cooperative Transformation of Waste Management in the Territory of the City of Bratislava”

In the section *Environmental Problems and Democracy in the Context of Climate Change*, chaired by Jakub Švec, the following papers were presented:

- Richard Sťahel, “Towards the Two Possibilities of Formulating the Principles of the New Climatic Regime’s Political System: Environmental Democracy and Environmental Authoritarianism”
- Agnieszka Klimska, “Climate Impasse and Generations’ Responsibility for the Environment”
- Güncel Önkal, “Ecology With/Out Humanity: from “Nature” to “Environment” and to the Crisis of “Climate Change”
- Agata Kosieradzka-Federczyk, “NDC as a Legal Tool in International Climate Change Policy”
- Wojciech Trempała, “On Environmental Loneliness – an Attempt at a Definition in the Context of Green Social Practice and Democracy”
- Anna Mravcová, “Assessing the Effectiveness of International Climate Agreements in Mitigating Global Warming”
- Katarína Podušelová, “The Anthropocene and the Dilemma of the End of Nature”

The section on Biodiversity and Agriculture in Changing Landscapes, moderated by Eva Paudišová, included presentations on the following topics:

- Janusz Uchmański, Karolina Kowalczyk, “Biodiversity Gradients. Are Tropics More Diverse?”
- Mirko Bohuš, “Causes of Local Extinction – Myths, First-Glance Perceptions and Consequential Real Facts (The Case of the European Roller)”
- Marta Nevřelová, Viktor Szabo, “Different Perspectives on Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) Management in Slovakia”
- Viktoria Vanerková, Ervin Hapl, Adrián Purkart, “Conservation of the European Ground Squirrel – Challenges in the Context of Tourism”
- Hubert Žarnovičan, Andrea Miklošová, Björn Burmeister, Bruno Jakubec, Claudia Schneider, Alois Wilfling, “Traditional Orchards – A Thing of the Past or a Foundation for the Future?”
- Krassimira Ilieva-Makulec, “Strip Tillage or Conventional Tillage: Can Soil Nematodes Help Beet Farmers Select the Better Solution?”
- Anna Augustyniuk-Kram, “The Role of Industrial Hemp (*Cannabis sativa* L.) and Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.) in the Agricultural Reclamation of Post-Mining Areas - Effects on Soil Physicochemical Parameters and Microbial Activity”

In the next section, *Landscape Elements – Tools for Biodiversity Support?*, chaired by Katarína Pavlíčková, the following papers were presented:

- Eva Pauditšová, Barbora Dubovská, Marta Nevřelová, Martin Šalkovič, “The Humanities-Natural Science Dilemma of Planning Landscape Connectivity Restoration”
- Marta Nevřelová, Eva Pauditšová, Barbora Dubovská, Blanka Lehotská, Jana Ružičková, “Evaluation of Functionality of Wildlife Migratory Objects Designed According to Modern Anthropogenic Approaches to Landscape Planning”
- Jana Ružičková, Blanka Lehotská, “Is Colonization of Road Edges Habitats a Successful Strategy for Spreading Threatened Salt-Tolerant Plant Species?”
- Eva Pauditšová, Martin Šalkovič, Ema Škurlová, “The Effects of Green Infrastructure and Types of Surfaces on the Thermal Regime in Urban Environment”
- Jozef Balcerčík, Martina Zvaríková, Rudolf Masarovič, Nikola Potroková, Péter Ruman, Peter Fedor, “Road Verges as An Analogues of Semi-Natural Grassland Habitats for Insects in Fragmented Landscape”
- Juraj Litavský, Oto Majzlan, “Harmony with Nature: Finding Balance Between Human and Biodiversity in Man-Made Ecosystem”

The section on *Environmental Discourse and Forms of Argumentation*, led by Tatiana Sedová, included presentations on the following topics:

- Vladimír Marko, “Climate Change and Promises without Obligations”
- Andrea Klimková, “Environmental Dilemmas and the Wide Reflective Equilibrium”
- Marcin Leźnicki, “How Do Mass Media Manipulate Environmental Crises – A Review of Selected Techniques and Mechanisms Used in Shaping Public Opinion”
- Petr Jemelka, “Redundant Words in Environmentalism. Some Notes on the Vocabulary of Environmental Discourse”
- Jakub Švec, “The Question of the Legitimacy of the Public Interest Argument in John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Liberalism”

During the section on *Philosophical Aspects of the Ecological Dimension of Christianity*, moderated by Peter Fedor, the following papers were presented:

- Jozef Jančovič, “Humans Created in the Image of God (cf. Gen 1:26-27) – Theological Axiom for an Ecological Conversion in Discussion with Lynn White's Cause of Ecological Crisis”
- Andrea Gogova, Nathalie Dubois Calero, “Water Enviro-Mythologies Artsci Water Based Sympoietic Life Communication”
- Ryszard F. Sadowski, “Christian Inspirations for Ecological Awakening”

The substantive part of the conference was concluded with a closing speech by Peter Fedor and Ryszard F. Sadowski – the chair and vice-chair of the Scientific Committee of the Conference, along with representatives from both universities co-organizing this event. A summary was

made, and thanks were extended to all those involved in organizing, ensuring the smooth running of the conference, and providing additional attractions for the participants.

Despite the many hours spent in sessions and engaging discussions, it seems that the problems raised at the conference were not fully addressed and they still require further consideration. This stems, on one hand, from the richness of topics and the multitude of disciplinary approaches, and on the other hand, from the ever-evolving contexts of the civilization crisis that necessitate updating strategies to counteract it. In addition to posing a threat, every crisis involves the need to make decisions, choices, and grapple with a specific situation under time pressure. Undoubtedly, changes in the socio-natural environment are so multidimensional and dangerous that they will give rise to further dilemmas requiring immediate resolutions. In both cases—issues that involve difficult choices between two equally important reasons and problems that require crisis response—scientific argumentation can prove helpful, and at times even essential.

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References

- Fedor, Peter, Zlatica Plašienková, Ryszard F. Sadowski, and Tatiana Sedová. 2024. "Introduction to the 18th International Scientific Conference in the Series 'Humanistic Ecology' 'Contemporary Environmental Dilemmas: Interdisciplinary Approaches' (September 26-27, 2024, Bratislava, Slovakia)." In *Book of Abstracts. 18th International Scientific Conference in the Series "Humanistic Ecology" "Contemporary Environmental Dilemmas: Interdisciplinary Approaches"*, edited by Zlatica Plašienková, Tatiana Sedová, Martina Zvaríková, 3-4. Bratislava: Comenius University Bratislava. Accessed December 20, 2024. https://stella.uniba.sk/texty/PriF_PSZ_humanistic_ecology_18conf_abs.pdf.