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STUDIA ECOLOGIAE ET BIOETHICAE



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Report on the 20th International Scientific Conference in the "Humanistic Ecology" Series, "Ecological Challenges in the 21st Century: Between Nature and Society – Interdisciplinary Reflections on Environmental Crisis" (Chișinău, 11–12 September 2026)

Sprawozdanie z XX Międzynarodowej Konferencji Naukowej z cyklu *Ekologia Humanistyczna* pt. *Wyzwania ekologiczne w XXI wieku: między naturą a społeczeństwem – interdyscyplinarna refleksja nad kryzysem środowiskowym* (Kiszyniów, 11–12 września 2026)

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Abstract: On 11–12 September 2026, the 20th International Scientific Conference in the "Humanistic Ecology" series, entitled *Ecological Challenges in the 21st Century: Between Nature and Society – Interdisciplinary Reflections on Environmental Crisis*, was held in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova. The anniversary edition was hosted by the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, while the Department of Ecophilosophy at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw served as the academic coordinator. The programme included 82 papers prepared by 102 authors and co-authors representing 46 institutions and affiliated units from 18 countries. The presentations addressed environmental philosophy and ethics, environmental education, sustainable development, natural sciences, environmental security, the social and cultural dimensions of the ecological crisis, and the use of new technologies. The first day included plenary and parallel thematic sessions. The second day took the form of a field programme, providing an opportunity to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova and to engage in less formal academic discussions that fostered the development of international cooperation. The high organisational standard of the event, the involvement of the authorities, staff and students of the host university, and the exceptional hospitality of the hosts deserve particular recognition.

Keywords: humanistic ecology, ecological crisis, human–nature relationship, environmental philosophy, environmental ethics, environmental education, sustainable development

Streszczenie: W dniach 11–12 września 2026 r. w Kiszyniowie w Republice Mołdawii odbyła się XX Międzynarodowa Konferencja Naukowa z cyklu *Ekologia Humanistyczna* pt. *Ecological Challenges in the 21st Century: Between Nature and Society – Interdisciplinary Reflections on Environmental Crisis*. Jubileuszową edycję konferencji gościł Państwowy Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Iona Creangă w Kiszyniowie, natomiast jej koordynatorem naukowym była Katedra Ekofilozofii Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie. Program obejmował 82 referaty przygotowane przez 102 autorów i współautorów reprezentujących 46 instytucji i jednostek afiliacyjnych z 18 państw. Tematyka wystąpień obejmowała m.in. filozofię i etykę środowiskową, edukację ekologiczną, zrównoważony rozwój, nauki przyrodnicze, bezpieczeństwo środowiskowe, społeczne i kulturowe wymiary kryzysu ekologicznego oraz zastosowanie nowych technologii.

Pierwszy dzień poświęcono sesjom plenarnym i równoległym sesjom tematycznym, natomiast drugi miał charakter terenowy, umożliwiając poznanie przyrodniczego i kulturowego dziedzictwa Republiki Mołdawii oraz prowadzenie mniej formalnych dyskusji naukowych sprzyjających rozwijaniu międzynarodowej współpracy. Na szczególne podkreślenie zasługują wysoki poziom organizacyjny wydarzenia, zaangażowanie władz, pracowników i studentów uczelni goszczącej oraz wyjątkowa gościnność gospodarzy.

Słowa kluczowe: ekologia humanistyczna, kryzys ekologiczny, relacja człowiek–przyroda, filozofia środowiskowa, etyka środowiskowa, edukacja ekologiczna, zrównoważony rozwój

On 11–12 September 2026, the 20th International Scientific Conference in the "Humanistic Ecology" series, entitled *Ecological Challenges in the 21st Century: Between Nature and Society – Interdisciplinary Reflections on Environmental Crisis*, was held in Chișinău. The anniversary edition continued the approach developed during previous editions of the conference. Its main aim has been to examine contemporary environmental problems from the perspectives of different academic disciplines and to create opportunities for international research cooperation (Klimska 2025; Klimski 2026).

The conference was hosted by the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, while the Department of Ecophilosophy at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw served as the academic coordinator. A broad network of partners from Europe, Asia, Africa and North America was involved in organising the event. These included Comenius University Bratislava, the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, the Francis de Sales Scientific Society, the State University of New York at Cortland, Complutense University of Madrid, the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Bragança Polytechnic University, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, and "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați.

The scale of the event confirmed its international character. The programme included 82 papers, prepared by 102 authors and co-authors, representing 46 institutions and affiliated units. The participants' affiliations covered 18 countries. The largest group represented institutions in Moldova, with 29 participants, followed by Romania with 20, Poland with 18, and Slovakia with 9. India, Ukraine, Portugal and Algeria were each represented by 3 participants, while Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Sri Lanka were each represented by 2. The United States, Thailand, Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary and Switzerland were each represented by 1 participant. China was represented by 2 participants, one of whom was affiliated with Hong Kong Metropolitan University. This broad geographical diversity encouraged the exchange of different academic and cultural perspectives on the relationships between humans, society and the environment.

The first day of the conference was organised under the theme *Humanistic Ecology: Conceptual Foundations, Ethical Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Dialogue*. The opening ceremony was followed by two plenary sessions and a series of parallel thematic sessions. The conference was held in a hybrid format, and its working languages were English, Romanian and Polish.

During the opening ceremony, participants were welcomed by representatives of the "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University. Ryszard F. Sadowski, the academic coordinator of the "Humanistic Ecology" conference series, then delivered an anniversary address on the history and development of the series.

The first plenary session, entitled *Understanding the Ecological Crisis: Philosophical, Ethical and Educational Perspectives*, focused on different approaches

to understanding the contemporary ecological crisis. Jeremy David Jiménez from the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department at SUNY Cortland in the United States presented a paper titled *There Is No Sustainability Without Ecology: Teaching During Modernity's End Game*. Anthony Le Duc from Saengtham College in Thailand discussed religious environmental humanism and the concept of ecological civilisation in the Anthropocene. Jozef Masárik from Comenius University Bratislava discussed the use of radionuclides in dating environmental, astrophysical and geophysical processes. Valentin Vasilev from New Bulgarian University examined the relationship between human-centred organisational models and ecological responsibility.

The second plenary session, *Interdisciplinary Responses to Contemporary Environmental Challenges*, brought together an even wider range of perspectives. Renata Bilbokaitė and Ieva Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė from Vilnius University presented a comparative analysis of practices in education for sustainable development in Lithuania. Rosaura Navajas Seco from Complutense University of Madrid focused on human relationships and artistic languages of emotion in teacher education. Ryszard F. Sadowski from Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw and Zlatica Plašienková from Comenius University Bratislava discussed dominant and non-dominant forms of anthropocentrism in the context of sustainable development. Mihai Roca from "Petre Andrei" University of Iași presented learning contracting as a relational and transformative process. The session ended with the cultural reflection *Nature–Culture–Humanity*, performed by the "Ciuleandra" Folk Dance Ensemble. The plenary programme brought together philosophical, scientific, educational and social perspectives.

The afternoon programme of the first day consisted of several parallel thematic sessions, held both on-site and online. Some papers focused on the philosophical and ethical foundations of the human relationship with nature, ecological responsibility, the Anthropocene, the social consequences of the environmental crisis, and climate fatigue, powerlessness and responsibility. Other topics included noetic ecology and care for creation, historical forms of harmony between humans and the environment, the concept of the Cosmoanthropocene, and environmental marginalisation.

Education, human development and ecological awareness also formed an important part of the programme. The participants discussed care for the environment in religious education, inclusive education as a response to contemporary challenges, interdisciplinary approaches to developing awareness of sustainable development, and the development of ecological thinking among students of natural sciences.

Other papers focused on the social and political determinants of environmental change, governance, environmental and food security, social resilience, and the relationship between economic processes and the environment. Research in the natural and technological sciences was also presented, including studies on biotechnology, natural resources, agriculture, and methods of environmental protection and sustainable use. The programme therefore combined normative reflection with empirical research and practical approaches to environmental problems.

Cultural and religious interpretations of the human relationship with nature

were another important area of discussion. The presentations addressed the common good, moral responsibility, religious views of the environment, cultural heritage and literature, as well as the role of tradition in shaping contemporary ecological awareness. A separate group of papers examined new technologies, artificial intelligence, STEAM approaches, and innovative models for developing the competences needed to respond responsibly to the challenges of sustainable development.

Despite this broad thematic range, the different areas of discussion were connected by the view that the ecological crisis has not only natural and technological dimensions, but also social, ethical, cultural and educational ones. In this respect, the 20th conference continued an approach already adopted at earlier meetings in the "Humanistic Ecology" series. The report on the 18th edition stressed the need to consider factual, axiological and normative aspects of environmental issues simultaneously, and to seek ways of developing a more harmonious relationship between civilisation and nature (Klimska 2025). The anniversary conference in Chișinău confirmed the continued relevance of this interdisciplinary approach.

The second day of the conference had a different character and focused on field-based education, cultural and natural heritage, and sustainable development. The full-day field programme gave participants an opportunity to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova. An important part of the programme was a visit to the Orheiul Vechi Cultural-Natural Reserve, where the connections between landscape, history, culture and the life of local communities are particularly visible. The official programme included guided visits, meetings with local experts, and interdisciplinary discussions on cultural and natural heritage and environmental sustainability (Conference Programme 2026).

Another important part of the programme was a visit to the Pivnițele Brănești winery. This provided a valuable opportunity to learn about another aspect of Moldova's cultural heritage. It allowed participants to view local traditions not as an isolated tourist attraction, but as part of a cultural landscape shaped by the relationships between people, the environment, history and local forms of economic activity. The inclusion of these experiences in the programme was well suited to the humanistic and ecological character of the conference.

The importance of the second day went beyond its educational value. The shared field programme, which lasted several hours, created very favourable conditions for less formal academic discussions. Conversations outside the formal setting of short conference presentations allowed participants to develop topics raised during the first day, exchange experiences and discuss opportunities for further cooperation. The field programme therefore served educational, academic and integrative purposes.

A similar approach was adopted during the 19th edition of the conference, when participants took part in a study visit to Kampinos National Park and learned about the natural and cultural heritage of this part of Mazovia (Klimski 2026). In Moldova, the field programme was particularly well suited to the principles of humanistic ecology, which regards the relationships between humans, culture and the environment as closely interconnected.

The high organisational standard of the conference deserves particular recognition. The "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University was not merely the formal host institution. The university authorities, numerous members of the academic and administrative staff, and students were actively involved in preparing and running the event. The work of this broad team made it possible to deliver an extensive programme efficiently. It included plenary sessions, parallel on-site and online sessions, activities connected with the anniversary edition of the conference, and the full-day field programme.

Professor Eduard Coropceanu, Chair of the Scientific Committee, and Professor Victoria Stratan, Chair of the Organising Committee, made a particularly important contribution to the preparation and successful organisation of the 20th edition. Their involvement went beyond their formal roles within the conference structure and was clearly visible both during the preparations and throughout the event itself. Their work, together with the support of the staff and students of the host university, created favourable conditions for the smooth running of the sessions, the integration of participants and open academic exchange.

The exceptional hospitality of the hosts also deserves particular recognition. It was evident both during the official parts of the conference and during informal meetings and the field programme. The care shown to the participants, the welcoming atmosphere and the direct involvement of representatives of the host university encouraged open discussion and the development of relationships between researchers from different countries and academic traditions. The organisational and social dimensions of the meeting therefore provided a natural complement to its academic programme.

The 20th edition confirmed the importance of the "Humanistic Ecology" series as a forum for interdisciplinary dialogue on contemporary environmental problems. Its value lay not only in the presentation of research findings, but also in the opportunity to bring together different research traditions and experiences from many parts of the world. The number of academic communities represented, and the thematic diversity of the papers demonstrate that the relationship between humans, society and nature remains an important, shared area of research across many disciplines.

The conference also contributed to strengthening the international network of cooperation developed within the series. The report on the previous edition noted the importance of such meetings for establishing new contacts and initiating joint research projects (Klimski 2026). In Chișinău, the combination of formal sessions, accompanying events and the field programme was particularly important because it allowed academic dialogue to continue beyond the formal conference sessions.

The academic discussion initiated during the conference can also be continued through the publication of its research results. The programme identified *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae*, *Pedagogical Forum* and *Seminare. Studies in Youth and Society* as journals in which selected papers may be published following the standard editorial and peer-review process. This approach, also used during previous editions of the series, allows the results of conference discussions to become part of a wider international academic debate.

The 20th anniversary edition of the International Scientific Conference in the "Humanistic Ecology" series therefore provided both an opportunity to review the development of this initiative and another step towards strengthening international academic cooperation. The combination of theoretical reflection and empirical research, disciplinary diversity, direct academic exchange, and opportunities to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of Moldova reflected the central idea of humanistic ecology: environmental problems need to be considered in close relation to humans, culture and the functioning of society.

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