



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIÉTÉS DE PHILOSOPHIE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES
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THE PRESIDENT

25th WORLD CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY

SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Sapienza University of Rome
Apr 26th 2021

Dear Rectress of the Sapienza University of Rome
Professor Antonella Polimeni,

Dear President of the Italian Philosophical Society
Professor Emidio Spinelli,

Dear Colleagues,

the hardship that many of us are experiencing across the world calls for a preliminary explanation as to the relevance and commitment of inviting the 25th World Congress of Philosophy.

We are all increasingly aware that the ongoing pandemic emergency is not merely a sanitary crisis; instead, it represents the onset of a spiral that could, potentially yet dramatically, intensify the existing economic and social inequalities, and precipitate the ongoing process of polarization on a global scale.

For a long time already we have witnessed the actual effects of this polarization – although in many cases we often prefer to not see

them. We notice forms of desperate exclusion in the suburbs of many megalopolis, in rural areas, in countless slums across the world – and, let us not be afraid to mention it here, in the Mediterranean sea that has now become an underwater cemetery of migrant women, men, and children. While the Western world has largely considered itself as immune from this destiny, it might be time for us to take into account the actual possibility that is now staring into the faces of these very societies, whether in the forms of an economic crisis, or even to a direr, systemic risk of civil subalternity, political subjection, and economic servitude.

Inviting a World Congress of Philosophy in a time of pandemic means questioning the social, economic, political, technological, and cultural destiny of our common world. Unlike specific conferences of other disciplines, a WCP is not just an academic meeting. Philosophy is certainly its soul, not its one topic. The Congress involves the public sphere at large, from representatives of the sciences, economy, information, business, to medicine and public health, technology, and institutions. It brings together ideas, traditions, and people from all continents and regions. It dismantles rigid disciplinary boundaries by shifting its gaze to the complex tangle of human civilizations from the antiquity to today. Through its global reach, through the international dynamics it engages from beginning to end, it has an inherent and very sensitive political dimension.

Academically, the World Congress amounts to a platform for international cooperation. Its scope ranges far beyond the field of philosophical studies. Its predictable effects in terms of international partnerships, of joint programmes of education and research, and of resources that it may mobilize, can potentially change the face of the overall academic and scholarly geography. We have witnessed this in the years that preceded the last Congress in Beijing. Today, it is Italy's turn to be at the center of a global network of thousands of scholars from all over the world. We can only do our best to fulfill this task. Yet, we shall not forget that the Congress

finds its deeper *raison d'être* in the fact that it utilizes philosophy as a springboard to enter into the diverse cultures that it finds itself surrounded by to foster a shared reflection on the future of our societies, and on the models that we would like them to be inspired by.

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Dear Rectress Polimeni, dear President Spinelli – thank you. By hosting the Congress in 2024, the Italian Philosophical Society and Sapienza University provide scholars from all over the world with an actual hope and with a drive to start preparing this new occasion for a shared reflection. The Congress is already stirring up an extraordinary expectation. The symbolic importance of Rome should never be overlooked. This city largely embodies a cosmopolitan ideal, the spirit of a defiant society that chose a refugee drifting on a raft in the Mediterranean, seeking asylum on the coasts of Latium, as its founding myth.

Thinking across national and political divides, across cultural delimitations, thinking “across boundaries” is the theme that we chose for this 25th World Congress of Philosophy. Let us take some firm commitment to this theme at this early stage.

The designs, themes, and programme of the Congress shall be inspired by an active research of all sorts of diversities, beginning with gender and cultural diversity. The focus on diversity and the active search for it is an unconditional priority for Fisp. We shall consider it as a critical criterion of decision at any stage and for all aspects of the Congress.

Secondly, we shall embed theoretical reflection into the actual reality of our time, addressing its main social, ethical, spiritual, religious, and political concerns. In this endeavor as well, plurality of perspectives will represent a key asset of the Congress.

Last, and certainly not least, attracting students and young scholars will be of fundamental importance. As in the past, student

sessions shall occupy an entire section of the Congress. Students will find opportunities to exchange with prominent scholars from all over the world; they shall also be able to foster long-lasting friendships, scholarly as well as personal, in ways that will hopefully make the Congress the seed of a web of personal and academic networks for decades to come. For many of these young scholars, the Congress will be an opportunity to familiarize themselves with a more global perspective. Hopefully, it will enable them to consider the whole world as their own home, to live in it with a deep sensitivity for the others' reasons, points of views, traditions, and habits. Today, more than ever, the combination of technical knowledge and humanistic education is critical to ensure full freedom of choice, full citizenship, to the next generations. For providing this prospect, philosophers from all over the world are grateful to you.

Luca Maria Scarantino

President

25th World Congress of Philosophy