

Editorial

Uvodník / Úvodník

Identity and culture are the driving forces behind the survival of every community. Economic, intellectual, and cultural exchanges serve as a source of mutual enrichment for all participants. Croatia and Slovakia have long borne witness to the fact that their international ties run deep in history. The Slovak-Croatian Commission for the Humanities — hereafter SCHCH — provides a platform for the professional study and presentation of these connections. For the first time since the commission was founded, the seventh meeting of the SCHCH included presentations of ethnological research by specialists from both countries. The topic “Intercultural Encounters from an Ethnological Perspective” was agreed upon during the sixth meeting of the commission, which took place in Košice in June 2024. Holding the international scholarly conference in the Croatian coastal city of Rijeka further underscored the importance of these encounters, and several scholarly papers also reflected the importance of the locality itself. The objective of this year’s session was to direct attention toward cultural exchange between Croats and Slovaks. The significance of intercultural encounters, as well as the ties and relationships between our nations and countries, was emphasized through papers exploring several areas of cultural ex-

change, including language, minorities, and prominent figures.

Each session of the commission results in the organization of an international academic conference, culminating in the publication of the peer-reviewed scientific volume *Studia Carpathico-Adriatica*. The scholarly character of the event was further highlighted by the fact that the conference took place on the academic premises of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Rijeka between 11 and 14 June 2025.

Besides the commission members, the conference was attended by representatives of higher education institutions from both countries, together with representatives of the respective ministries: Ivana Fakac, representative of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth of the Republic of Croatia, and Martina Kľofáčová, representative of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic. The opening of the conference was also attended by the hosts of the scholarly meeting, Goran Hauser, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Rijeka, and Davor Vašiček, deputy Rector of the University of Rijeka. The introductory addresses were delivered by the chairs of the two partner branches of the commission, Prof. Željko Holjevac and Prof. Martin Homza. All participants

* ANDREJ SOLÁR, PhD, Slovak National Museum – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia (Bratislava, Slovak Republic).

were also addressed by Her Excellency Hana Kováčová, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Croatia.

The conference was organized into four sections with thematically grouped presentations. Scientific cooperation among experts and universities constitutes an important component of inter-cultural collaboration. National minorities constituted a prominent subject of the presentations and individual contributions. To this day, the Croatian national minority in Slovakia and the Slovak national minority in Croatia represent a distinctive element of the cultural interconnectedness of the two countries. The opening paper of the first section was presented by Zuzana Beňušková of the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences under the title *Croatia at the Ethnofilm International Festival in Čadca*. In the fourth section, Juraj Janto from the Department of Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology at Comenius University Bratislava presented the remarkable topic *Czechoslovakia's Maritime Transport and Its Croatian Contexts*. A presentation focused on the exchange of contacts in a medical context, entitled *Beyond Borders toward Infinitely Rich Connections: The History of Some Early Medical and Non-medical Contacts between Slovaks and Opatija*, was delivered by the trio of contributors Robert Doričić, Toni Buterin, and Amir Muzur, all from the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Health Studies at the University of Rijeka.

The topic of personalities who helped shape relations and cultural exchange between Croatia and Slovakia was explored in the first section by Ivan Grkeš from the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of

Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb. His presentation, *Encounters between Croatian and Slovak Ethnology through the Correspondence of the Ethnologists Milovan Gavazzi and Ján Podolák (1958–1978)*, focused on scholarly exchange between the two ethnologists. Another contribution was delivered by Nevena Škrbić Alempijević from the same department, entitled *Slovak Writer Martin Kukučín, a Figure of Memory on the Island of Brač*. The third section included the contribution *Vít Ušák and His Contribution to the Preservation of Slovak Ethnic Identity in Croatia*, presented by Sandra Kralj Vukšić of the Slovak Cultural Centre Našice. In the final fourth section, Marko Medved from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Rijeka presented the paper *Adam Muchtin – a Slovak Priest and the First Parish Priest of Podvežica in Rijeka*.

In the area of material culture, Marta Botíková from the Department of Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology at Comenius University Bratislava presented her paper *Observations on the Folk Attire of Croats in Slovakia*. Likewise, Mária Garanová Krišťáková of the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia presented the paper *Documentation of Religious Pilgrimages of Slovak Croats at the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia*. The second section featured the contribution by Ján Botík entitled *Language as the Key Attribute of the Collective Identity of Croats in Slovakia*. I devoted my own contribution to the linguistic aspect of cultural exchange in the paper *Rural Toponyms as Traces of Croatian Identity in Slovakia*.

As part of the theme of national minorities, Žarko Španiček from the De-

partment for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Požega at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia delivered a presentation in the third section entitled *Traces of Slovaks in the History and Culture of Slavonia*.

As the results of the seventh session of the Slovak-Croatian Commission for the Humanities show, the connections

between Slovak and Croatian cultures remain vibrant, and cultural exchange between the two countries is still ongoing. This is not only a historical phenomenon, but also a living and developing aspect of our culture today that clearly deserves our attention.