

Guest Author Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik

An Arena of Programs in Advanced Studies

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Abstract

Inter University Centre Dubrovnik (IUC) is an independent centre for advanced study, grounded in and sustained by its international network of partner universities. Building upon its location and its history, the IUC serves as a bridge between regions within Europe and between the European region and the world by connecting scientific communities and connecting communities through science. From its establishment in 1972, the IUC brought together scholars and students from different countries, cultures and academic disciplines to advanced research and higher education programmes. IUC's programs are mostly interdisciplinary and they tackle current social and academic concerns. Numerous publications, formation of new networks and formal recognitions for academic achievements at home universities are results of IUC activities. Governing bodies today emphasize and support inter-disciplinary and cross-national collaboration on global challenges such as human universal values and rights, health, education, poverty and climate, encouraging, in addition to east-west also new north-south collaboration.

Keywords: Inter-University Centre, Autonomy, Academic Programme, Internationalization, Inter-cultural Cooperation

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Introduction

Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik (IUC) is a specific organization. It is an autonomous, international institution for advanced studies. Established in 1972, it is structured as consortium of universities from all corners of the world. Currently approximately 170 member institutions form an IUC network.¹ The mission of the institution is promotion, organization and implementation of international cooperation in the academic community as well as network building for peaceful co-existence and pluralism regionally as well as worldwide. The mission is being implemented by organizing international graduate, post-graduate and doctoral courses, workshops and conferences in variety of academic fields. The IUC provides an open space for critical thinking and innovation, while its programmes are inter and transdisciplinary, tackling current social and academic issues. Building upon the location of its home town of Dubrovnik, Croatia, the IUC serves as a bridge between regions within Europe, European Region and the World.



Figure 1. Building at Don Frana Bulica 4, Dubrovnik, Croatia, home of IUC.

History and Organizational Model

The initiator of IUC was Professor Ivan Supek (1915 – 2007), at that time Rector of the University of Zagreb. Although being a physicist Supek was also a philosopher, novelist and playwright, a true *homo universalis*.² He launched the idea to establish Inter-University Centre for Advanced Studies in 1970 at the meeting of the International Association of Universities, in Montreal. Since the idea received a wide support from his colleagues, he invited a group of scholars and university leaders to Dubrovnik for the inauguration meeting in 1972. In the IUC booklet upon establishment of the institution, he wrote:

“Through their long history, universities have always been torchbearers of scientific progress and leaders in international cooperation. Universality is deeply ingrained in all human exploration and creative effort. Preparing the ground for the present-day scientific revolution, the university community has also prepared the ground for

a better world, the world of human understanding and peace. The need for cooperation among universities has never been so acute as it is today when scientific research has become so complex and when so many different methods of teaching have been developed; more importantly, perhaps, when problems facing the world have become so urgent.” (Supek, 1971:1)

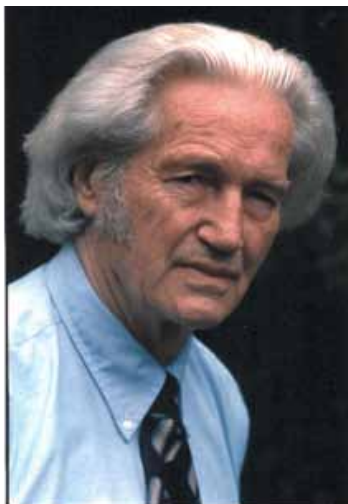


Figure 2. Professor Ivan Supek, founder of the IUC.

His initial concept was to offer a centre for humanities and social sciences since the need for academic cooperation was crucial for these fields, often more deeply rooted in their national and regional environments and cultures, while natural, technical and medical sciences „spoke“ with the more universal language. This centre had to be autonomous and free from government control, governed only by academic and scientific institutions. That is why the IUC has a clear organizational structure, where each participating university takes the responsibility for the implementation of the IUC’s mandate, policies and objectives through the IUC Council. Council, as the highest governing body, consists of representatives of all member universities and is responsible for the Constitution, admission of new Members, establishment and developments of fields of study and academic cooperation, budgetary matters and appointment of other governing bodies. Those are Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the Council between Council meetings and Director General who is responsible for the daily functioning of the IUC.³ All members of the IUC governing bodies are volunteers, contributing to the mission of the Centre without any financial compensation. Although Supek envisioned the IUC as a centre for humanities and social sciences, it was soon realized that in order to understand all social processes correctly it was crucial to include also natural and technical sciences as well as medicine. Therefore, from the very beginning, the IUC is offering programmes in all academic fields.

The selection of Dubrovnik as a seat of the institution was not incidental. This small European town on the Adriatic coast, until the beginning of 19th century when occupied by Napoleon, was an independent city-state, Republic of Ragusa. Its sage governance with strong diplomatic activities ensured Ragusa kept the

neutral posture among big forces. Due to skills of its people, nominally under the protection of Ottoman Empire, the town prospered politically and economically, cooperating successfully with North and South, East and West, within Christianity and Islam. In the same time, it governed its territory wisely, always putting public needs above private ones, tending to infrastructural projects such as sewage systems and running water, integrating within its society Jewish religious minority. As the town that cherished its freedom in the past and still lived on the bases of its tradition, Dubrovnik was considered to be the ideal ambient for contemporary scholars to exchange ideas, promote dialogue, intercultural understanding and share knowledge. Current political situation also helped. Former Yugoslavia was a non-aligned country, which allowed scientists and professors from both East and West, to meet in Dubrovnik to learn about each other and from each other. IUC served as a “breathing hole” through the Iron curtain.



Figure 3. Dubrovnik, Croatia.

It was very fortunate that the City of Dubrovnik offered a building, originally a school, close to the historical centre to University of Zagreb to host the IUC.⁴ During the 70s, at that time in the socialist country, it was impossible for an international let alone independent institution to govern any public property. That is why University of Zagreb, with Ivan Supek as its rector, took upon itself to offer the logistical infrastructure for the IUC programmes: facilities and small secretariat. University of Zagreb has generously been supporting the IUC ever since, hosting the IUC as autonomous and independent international entity. In the same time, the IUC has been offering its international, scientific and academic contacts to professors and students of University of Zagreb. Through almost five decades of ambiguous relationship, these two entities understood each other to greater or smaller extent, but the overall cooperation was and still is beneficial for both of them. However, one must admit that *genius loci* of Dubrovnik itself is contributing largely to the atmosphere, created during IUC events.

Today, in the new democratic political setting of Republic of Croatia, the legal

basis of the IUC as consortium of international universities is offered by the IUC Association, which practically means that the IUC is functioning as a non-profit NGO with international members.

Academic Programme

Organizational structure, location and facilities would remain just an empty shell if there were no dedicated organizers who are the biggest strength of the institution. They are the force that enables the implementation of the IUC mission, through fulfilment of academic programmes.

Course and conference organizers from at least two different countries suggest the programme while lecturers should come from at least three different countries.⁵ With this basic rule, the international dimension of the IUC programmes is guaranteed. IUC governing bodies need to approve all suggested programmes.

Academic events started in 1974. First programmes were on *Peace studies*, organized by the first IUC Director General, sociologist and international peace builder Johan Galtung, and *Philosophy of Science and Humanism*, organized by IUC founder Ivan Supek.⁶ Some of the other programmes of the 70s include *Future studies*, *Future of Education*, *Future of Religion*, *Feminist programmes*, *Man and Environment* and many others. In the 80s, established courses continued, while new entries such as *Victimology and Criminal Justice course*, *Social Gerontology*, *Tourism Planning for Future*, *Historic City as a Museum Object and Intellectual Property Rights* enriched the intellectual atmosphere of the IUC. It is ungrateful to mention only some courses, omitting the others. In first two decades of IUC's existence, almost 800 programmes with almost 39000 participants were held.

But, mere numbers cannot picture the substance of the IUC, the value that lies within each academic encounter. This atmosphere has been well described in the article of Prof. Gottfried Künzlen, co-director of the course *Future of Religion*, in the book *Fragments of Memories* published on the occasion of the IUC's 35th anniversary.

“At my first attendance at the ‘Future of Religion’ course, I marvelled at the special ‘IUC culture’, that peculiarly fascinating melange with its mix of scholarly seriousness and sobriety, scholarly criticism of the subject matter, and steadfast tolerance for those who differ: The profound connoisseur of Hegel from Germany would sit next to the Buddhist guru from Denmark and his disciples; the Franciscan monk from Sarajevo would be seated next to the young “Praxis”- philosopher from Zadar, while the Born-Again Evangelical missionary from the USA would wind up sitting next to the God-is-dead theologian from France. And the miracle came to pass: They were able to listen to each other, and they would even possibly begin to understand each other” (Künzlen, 2007:67),

This kind of tolerant interaction tends to happen in most IUC programmes. It is hard to say what is stimulating this atmosphere at the IUC, but it could be the mixture of the academic freedom already indicated in the organisational structure

of the institution and set-up with open-mindedness of its initiator and the tradition of Dubrovnik as an open and tolerant city.

In the IUC's history, there were a number of highly specialised seminars, but majority of courses and conferences from the very beginning tended to be interdisciplinary. Among hundreds of world-known scientists who contributed to the academic rating of the Centre were the Nobel price winners Werner Heisenberg, Linus Carl Pauling, Hannes Alfven, Joseph Rotblat, Harold Kroto; philosophers Hans Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas, Hans Küng, Gayatri Spivak and many others. The structure of courses is mainly round table set-up. In a relaxed atmosphere of the IUC, away from sometimes rigid or formal structures of home institutions, differences are overcome. Specialists, coming from different academic backgrounds from all corners of the world find a common language, while students and professors engage in a more open dialogue, bypassing the hierarchical structures of their every-day communication. So, the IUC becomes a place where horizons are widened and new paths are revealed.



Figure 4. A typical IUC course round table.

However, the war in which former Yugoslavia dissolved brutally effected the hometown of the IUC. In fall of 1991 Dubrovnik was under siege and heavily shelled by Yugoslav National Army and Montenegrin para-military forces. Many lives were lost, and the city, an UNESCO's cultural heritage, was bombarded for months. On December 6, 1991 the building housing the IUC was hit with incendiary shells and burned down together with its rich library. Only the ground floor with its Secretariat office and the archives was saved from flames.

Despite brutality of the war, IUC course directors did not give up. Some of them defied war and destruction the best way they could: by having courses in a city under siege, working under curfew in a hotel instead of the IUC building, sending a message that the intellect should not surrender to madness of destruction.⁷ Also, the Chair of the Executive Committee, Kathy Wilkes, philosophy professor from University of Oxford, remained in the city and sent many appeals to her colleagues of the academic world, but also to politicians to stop attacks on Dubrovnik. Numerous friends also sent humanitarian aid, but also later gathered

support for the rebuilding and refurbishing of the burned building. Academic programmes needed to return to its home. Rather soon, in 1993, University of Zagreb through Croatian government ended with the reconstruction of the building and partial refurbishing. A group of German universities, HESP office in Budapest and USAID also contributed and the IUC returned to its home.



Figure 5. Burned out IUC building, December 1991.

After the tragic break-up of former Yugoslavia, wounds needed to be healed and communication within the region needed to be re-established. That is why the IUC took the role to re-connect the region, organizing number of programmes that dealt with recent past, such as *The Transformation of War*, *Destructive Aggression in and after the War in former Yugoslavia* or *War Crimes, Genocide and Memories*. On the other hand, different set of programmes tackled the same issues from a different corner which best show programmes *On Divided Societies: Ethnicity, Racism, Nationalism and Future of New Policies*, *Living and Growing in Multicultural Society* or *Interculturality, Identity and Social Prejudice*.

Unfortunately, academic community did not manage to solve numerous issues that are oppressing our society. Number of IUC's programmes initiated long time ago, still go on.⁸ On the other hand, current times bring new subjects. IUC programmes today tackle following issues: human rights, democracy, international law, European identities, victimology and crime prevention, philosophy of sciences, arts, cultural policies, politics, feminism, social work and current reaches in medical sciences. Today, in the new social and political setting, where still North-West-East-South borders exist in the economical, ideological and political sense, the IUC Governing bodies are repositioning the Centre to continue with its mission: creating connections between scholars and overcoming barriers through the work of the academic community.

In the whole, for many scholars the IUC in Dubrovnik has become a place where they could find possibilities to connect with institutions around the world and in many occasions, the IUC event focused their professional career.



Figure 6. Students at IUC.

Accountability

Today, perhaps more than ever, academic society is requested to justify their work with submission of countable measures, whether it is the number of publications in international scientific journals, percentage of graduates or number of incoming or outgoing Erasmus students. However, to submit such concrete figures for the institution such as IUC would be very difficult. Therefore, this is the overview of the few.

- The table in figure 7 shows the number of courses, conferences and participants since the first course until the end of 2017. Constant flow of participants as well as stable number of offerings can be noticed. The only period when IUC experienced significant drop of its activities was during the homeland war for Croatia's independence. Another minor drop of participants, not courses, is noticed in recent years, during the world economic crisis that affected the academic community as well. As far as geographical distribution is concerned, around 65% of participants are coming from EU countries.
- IUC is not a degree-giving institution. However, from the very beginning there were efforts to secure the recognition to students who have fulfilled the requirements of the course. American universities started that by providing credits through the authority of the home university while in the last decades, due to the Bologna process changes of European educational systems, European course directors are also encouraged to secure ECTS points to their students.⁹ IUC also issues "Certificates of attendance" to those participants that have fulfilled their requirements – upon the suggestion of the course director.
- There are a number of publications resulting from IUC activities. There are books containing the results of courses and conferences that had been published by well-known publishing houses and journals that regularly publish articles presented at the IUC. These publications greatly contribute to the visibility and credibility of the IUC in wide range of international networks.

- Establishment of international networks is one of the most significant features of IUC. However, one cannot document all the international links that have been created during almost 5 decades in the relaxed atmosphere of understanding, tolerance, exchange of views and ideas. On individual levels, a week or two of intense IUC programme may open to participants an array of contacts that in many cases result with the more formal cooperation among different faculties or departments.

| Academic Year | No. of Courses | No. of Conferences | No. of Participants |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1972/1991 | 598 | 266 | 38881 |
| 1991/2000 | 243 | 43 | 8770 |
| 2001/2010 | 525 | 93 | 18001 |
| 2011 | 45 | 11 | 1416 |
| 2012 | 54 | 15 | 1679 |
| 2013 | 45 | 13 | 1363 |
| 2014 | 52 | 14 | 1874 |
| 2015 | 45 | 15 | 1717 |
| 2016 | 61 | 11 | 1946 |
| 2017 | 47 | 16 | 1926 |
| TOTAL | 1715 | 497 | 77573 |

Figure 7. IUC programmes from 1972 to 2017.

Financing

IUC courses and conferences are self-managed. That means that the responsibility to secure necessary finances lies on the course and conference organizers. Therefore, the principal support for the Centre is secured by Member and organizing universities. They support their academic staff and students who participate in the IUC programmes. Member universities also contribute to the IUC budget with the moderate membership fee. Infrastructure and staff is from the very beginning provided by University of Zagreb while Croatian Ministry of Science and Education supports the IUC with scholarships for Croatian participants and for the operation. Additionally, the IUC receives payments from participants for course and conference fees that cover technical support and work material for their programmes.

It is also important to mention number of other foundations that secured support for the IUC. DAAD supports German participants from the very beginning. HESP programme of the Open Society Institute has been offering scholarships for PhD students from Southeast and East Europe for more than two decades, contributing to the transformation of former communist countries in the time of transition. IREX, NUFFIC, British Council, Ford Foundation, Volkswagen Stiftung, Thyssen Stiftung and many others have contributed with special grants or secured other kind of support for IUC programmes. Today, many programmes are held within Horizon 2020 or Erasmus + EU projects. On many occasions, participants secure funding for travel and accommodation on their own, assessing that the IUC event would significantly influence their career.

As it has been shown, support to the IUC has come from a number of different sources. The diversity of these sources also shows the strength of the institution since these different inputs contribute to the network building and strengthen the IUC mission. However, additional value, which cannot so easily be priced, is work hours of all the organizers, lecturers and members of IUC governing bodies who receive no compensation for their workload. Their enthusiasm and their intellectual contribution remains the heart of the Inter-University Centre.

IUC Dubrovnik as an Independent Institution

It is difficult to assess the IUC in line with other institutions. There are other association of universities (International Association of Universities, European University Association) that deal with policymaking and discuss common concerns in the area of high education. IUC's primary goal is its academic programme, organized and implemented by members themselves. There are international institutions that are established by a state and linked to the specific university (International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam). IUC is a non-governmental institution in which all member universities have the same rights. There are international institutions that offer MA or PhD programmes (International School for Advanced Studies in Trieste). IUC has no permanent staff and students nor does it have degree offering programmes. There are institutions that specialize in specific field of study (European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization, International Institute for Environment and Development). IUC is offering programmes in all academic fields. There are independent organizations with similar mission as IUC (Salzburg Global Seminar), but with programmes for different profiles of participants and with different financial schemes.

However, there are no institution with similar structure and programme as Inter-University Centre. Never the less, this does not mean that there are no challenges ahead. The uniqueness of one institution does not guarantee its success especially in the times when universities have restricted funds. The IUC has become a place that serves for the diffusion of knowledge to overcome barriers and establishes understanding among different division lines. In the contemporary world, divisions have changed place but they still exist. Today we experience both political and economical divides within Europe, cultural and religious clashes in the Mediterranean and turbulent Middle East. University population of Asia is growing and becoming more mobile. Academic society consequently experiences different problems. IUC Dubrovnik, due to its geographical position may play a role in addressing these matters through its academic programmes. The Centre will offer to the academic community of the region access to the scholarly networks of Europe and the World.

Conclusion

The IUC should not change dramatically. The structure of the Centre that enables academic freedom is an assurance that contemporary issues will be tackled and that the IUC can continue with its mission of building international networks for the exchange of knowledge and development of understanding to overcome frontiers in the academic world. That is the road for the better society.

Endnotes

- 1 The complete list of IUC member institutions can be found on page <http://www.iuc.hr/member-institutions.php>.
- 2 Prof. Supek obtained his PhD degree in physics in 1940 with Werner Heisenberg. Arrested by Gestapo in 1941 due to political activism, he was pulled out of the prison by Heisenberg himself. After returning to his hometown in then occupied Zagreb, he continued with political activism as antifascist and sent many public appeals against the development and the use of nuclear weapons, advocating creation of society of free and unarmed nations. After the WW II, he served as professor of physics at University of Zagreb. Prior to establishing the IUC, Prof. Supek initiated in 1950 the most relevant institute for natural sciences in Croatia - "Institute Ruser Boškovic." From 1961 he took part in Pugwash peace conferences and brought the movement to the former Yugoslavia. He was also the President of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences from 1991 to 1997.
- 3 More information on the IUC structure and its constitution can be found on web pages www.iuc.hr/about.php.
- 4 This building comprises 1 larger conference hall, 12 classrooms of different sizes, cabinets, IT rooms, offices, inner courtyard with cafeteria and a dormitory in the attic space.
- 5 In a typical year, there are app. 350 organisers from more than 300 institutions forming and implementing the IUC academic programme
- 6 Philosophy of Science is the longest-standing programme at the IUC, regularly taking place until today with natural flow of course directors and resource persons. The programme studies the foundations, methods, and implications of the sciences from a philosophical perspective.
- 7 Courses held in the city under siege were *Philosophy of Science*, whose director at that time was Prof. Kathy Wilkes from University of Oxford and *Future of Religion* with director Prof. Rudolf Siebert from Western Michigan University.
- 8 Some of the longstanding IUC courses are *Philosophy of Science*, *Future of Religion*, *Diversity of Human Rights*, *Philosophy and Democracy*, *Politische Theorie*, *Identität Europas*, *Divided Societies*, *Victimology*, *Victim Assistance and Criminal Justice*, *Feminist Critical Analysis*, *MATH/CHEM/COMP*, *Regional Security and Cooperation in Southeast Europe*, *Social Work Theory and Practice*, *Petroleum Engineering Summer School*, *Social Structures and Institutions*, ...
- 9 Approximately 30% of IUC courses offer credits.

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