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**Universities and Societal Change in  
Central and South-Eastern European  
Countries – Yesterday – Today –  
Tomorrow**

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The International Symposium “The Role of Education and Universities in Modernization and Europeanization Processes in Central and South-Eastern European Countries in 18th and 20th Century” organized by Institute of Contemporary History (INZ) Ljubljana in cooperation with Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office (ASO) Ljubljana has been an important scientific meeting which shed light on many interesting links and intellectual foundations of present day societies in Central and Southeastern Europe connected with the development of educational systems and universities in the region over the last one and a half centuries.

Prof. Peter Vodopivec succeeded to invite many outstanding historians from the region to look in a systemic way into the role of education and especially higher education as the central element of structured societal transformation and universities as important places where visions of desirable futures (although often not accommodating interests of all segments of society) are being developed.

Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office (ASO) Ljubljana has been delighted to be partner of this event and publication initiative as we share the conviction that knowledge generation, dissemination and application are at the heart of any socio-economic development and that educational systems that respond to changing societal needs and universities that function as some kind of windows to the world are needed today more than ever before and not only in Southeast Europe but all over the world.

Publication of the proceedings of the symposium comes at a time when Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research decided to close ASO Ljubljana after more than 21 years of work in the field of promotion of international scientific cooperation in the triangle Austria-Slovenia and Southeast European countries.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to prof. Peter Vodopivec and the many outstanding scientists in Slovenia, Austria

and SEE countries for inspiring cooperation with ASO Ljubljana in the past 21 years.

At the same time I can announce that “International Association for the Advancement of Innovative Approaches to Global Challenges (IAAI)” is planning to establish a network of ‘Global Challenges centers’ in all Southeast European countries which will serve as points of crystallization for knowledge based sustainable development and which will build on the networks and expertise of ASO Ljubljana.

Thus the cooperation of Austria, Slovenia and Southeast European countries on the subject of ‘universities and societal change’ can be expected to find its continuation in a different institutional setting, soon.

I wish the proceedings many interested readers and look forward to continuation of fruitful cooperation under new institutional settings.