

## **Opening Remarks**

### **Professor Miszlivetz (Director General iASK)**

#### **The 25th**

1996: The New Central Europe

1997: Exploring Central Europe

1998: Hannibal ante Portas

1999: Central Europe and the EU: Reconsidering Civil Society

2000: Europe at the Millenium

2001: Eastern Enlargement and the New Social Cohesion

2002: Europe and the Balkans

2003: Possible and Impossible Futures for Europe

2004: The Future of Transatlantic Relations

2005: The European Dream and Divided Societies

2006: The New Europe: Te-invented? Re-enchanted?

2007: Europe's new Neighbourhood: Enlargement and Beyond

2008: Global Shift and the Return of Cenral Europe

2009: 20 Years After: What happend to our Ideals?

2010: Diversity Management in Politics, Culture and Society

2011: Reinventing the Future: New Strategies and the Role of Europe

2012: Reinventing the Future (II.): responses tot he Crises

2013: Citizenship in Europe and Beyond

2014: Navigating Europe's Future: a New Odyssey

2015: Wither Europe?

2016: To be or Not to Be? Europe at Crossroads

2017: Surviving Crises

2018: Europe in the Vortex of Change

2019: 1989 – 2019: 30 Years after - Central Europe in Global Context

## 2020: **Dancing with Uncertainty – Who is the Kapellmeister?**

### *Looking for a Europe House – inventing the Summer University*

The city of Kőszeg offered the Sigray Palace for the purposes of a Europe House in 1994. Writers, scholars, journalists, set together here for the first time on a September evening were enchanted.

We knew that the place obliges. Conferences, seminars, are relatively easy to organize, the place in Kőszeg was determined for more.

We wanted to talk to the world, to introduce Central Europe in a quintessential way. One could hardly find a better place for this than the Europe House in Kőszeg. Having a strong intellectual support from enthusiasm from friends and senior colleagues, especially Elemér Hankiss, we embarked this journey to unknown in 1996. Financial support came from different resources: Miklós Vásárhelyi, head of the Hungarian Soros Foundation, had a lifelong enthusiasm for Central European cooperation; the Hungarian Foreign Ministry and the Academy of Sciences also sponsored the initiative. For many years participants had difficulties obtaining their visas. I'll never forget the first arrival at the very first summer university: a seemingly tired young man, a philosophy student with a huge backpack from Belorussia and was eager to come to Kőszeg to find out about the new Central Europe.

### *Place – People – Thoughts*

This belongs together: Kőszeg is enchanting, a perfect place for contemplation, deliberation and deepening friendships...also for listening to music composed and played by creative iASK musicians.

The old or restored buildings attached to the old city wall tell their stories to those who pay attention - and become „Talking Houses” ...

People – summer school participants - a blended group of recurring ISU veterans and new faces, students or young fellows of iASK, applicants from all over the world. People who are curious and serious enough to learn from each other and to share their knowledge and views...

So that thoughts never become boring even if some are repeated, they always resonate with new insights and add to what was supposed to be understood already...

The amalgamation of place, people and thoughts, the slow build up of an increasingly complex view of complex issues, is a sort of permanent mystery, a quasi secret and a guarantee of continuity: part of the Kőszeg – ISES - iASK flow.

### *Café Bloom*

Was born one year prior to ISU. The imagined main character of James Joyce's Ulysses (Odysseus) started his journey from the nearby bigger city of Szombathely (earlier in Roman times Savaria, later auf deutsch Steinamanger or Sumbotel in Croatian) inspired local poets who initiated Bloomsday (after Dublin and A'dam). Already 25 years ago, I found political science and conferences altogether extremely boaring and wished to learn more about the real stories and thoughts of our guests and friends – so I turned to the city and asked for space for a café for wandering intellectuals. In the lack of available physical places, we opened a virtual café. It has worked ever since and moved to Kőszeg with the summer school.

### *Europe House Rules*

These are rather habits of the heart than rules. In fact we don't have any written regulations of behaviour.

The unwritten rules, however, are rather clearly chrystallized.

As some of our recurring friends and colleagues noticed, Kőszeg is a 'third place', - indeed, we try to keep distance from the machinery of mutual exclusion, hate speech, agitation and political campaign.

Disagreements are encouraged, but any kind of discrimination, or exclusion is strongly discouraged.

Attempts at dialogue and openness between academic fields (disciplines) religions, world views are more than welcome.

### *Dancing with Uncertainty*

Of course all historic epochs can be characterized by uncertainty - but during the past decades uncertainty became unavoidable in our daily existence. With the appaerance of COVID 19 (whose date is less and less certain the more we know about it, that means the more we know the less we understand) – we cannot even plan a simple family holiday not to speak of gatherings like a summer university. After a few weeks of guessing, we decided to skip ISU 2020 – the 25th. Without the initiative of our non-Hungarian young researchers with whom we had regular online seminars – we wouldn't be here today (where exactly? – the answer is uncertain...) we wouldn't share cyber space together for the next coming week.

The bon mot says you need two to tango - even if we cannot dictate, we have to learn to keep the rhythm, try to invent a new tune - who will conduct the orchestra remains an open question. If we knew, we wouldn't be doomed to dancing with Uncertainty...

I wish I could shake your hands at least.