

**Biennial Report 2017-2019 on RN36 activities**  
**RESEARCH NETWORK 36 “SOCIOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATIONS: EAST AND WEST”**

**RN36 Board 2019-2021**

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**Activities:**

The Midterm Conference of ESA RN36 titled „**The Social Transformations We Live in: Between Cohesion and Fragmentation**” was held in Nova Gorica, Slovenia September 20-22, 2018. *Host institution:* School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica, Slovenia. Together with Slovenian National Committee of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Program (MOST).

RN36 organized this conference together with the Slovenian National Committee of the MOST programme at the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica, Slovenia (SASS), and ISA Young Sociologists Network. The share of RN36 in conference organization: 50%.

The call for papers was widely spread using the mailing lists of RN36, ESA website, the conference website, SASS website, its general mailing lists, as well as faculty and staff mailing lists, Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO mailing lists, ISA Young Sociologists Network mailing lists. The local organisers also distributed the call for papers through mailing lists not associated with professional associations.

- applications for the conference: 64 people submitted 50 abstracts (some proposals had more than 1 author)
- accepted submissions: 50 papers
- participation in the conference: 47 regular participants + 3 keynote speakers

The conference has welcomed 39 presentations, and 4 presentations for special sessions, 3 keynote presentations.

Three keynote speakers were invited, namely: Prof. Frane Adam, IRSA, The Institute for Developmental and Strategic Analysis, Slovenia, Dr. Martin Mendelski, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, Germany and Dr. Petr Jehlicka, The Open University, UK. Their expenses (travel costs + accommodation) were paid from the conference budget.

The main aim of the conference was to enhance mutual knowledge and stimulate cooperation between the members of the RN36 and to develop conceptual frames for the analysis of social transformations in the Eastern part of Europe from the different perspectives. The feedback from the participants was very positive.

The conference was a clear success in terms of 1) Networking and bringing together researchers from a number of European and also non-European countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine, UK; Australia, China, India, Israel, USA); 2) Very high academic level of the papers that initiated inspiring discussions; 3) Effective organisation of the conference and interesting additional programme provided by hosting organisations; 4) Very positive feedback.

### **Actions to be taken to improve RN36 participation**

- Activities on promoting PhD students' participation in ESA initiatives, including summer schools, ESA conferences, RN midterm conferences, international research projects and publications (fee reduction, special sessions, university PhD student's involvement in the working of conferences on the basis of Universities).
- Improved scope of the mid-term conferences resulted in expanding membership. Cooperation with national sociological associations (lastly – Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, Hungary, China, Japan)
- Joint sessions within ESA conferences
- We promote publications of RN members and participants by putting together their contributions in special volumes.
  - “Multi-faced Transformations. Challenges and Studies”. Editor(s): Elena Danilova, Matej Makarovic, Alina Zubkovich. 2015 Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Volume of contributions from RN326 prepared by SASS (Slovenia)
  - Journal articles dedicated to transforming societies
  - The Routledge International Handbook of European Social Transformations. Edited by Peeter Vihalemm, Anu Masso, Signe Opermann. Series: Routledge International Handbooks. Routledge, Abingdon, New York, December 2017 (volume of contributions from RN36 prepared by Tartu University within Ashgate Research Companion to European Social Transformation.

#### *Reviews*

*"The epoch of neo-liberalism since the late 1970s has been a period of*

*fundamental social transformations leading to shifts in all areas of society. The editors of this path-breaking handbook have assembled a team of scholars, who examine the social, institutional, spatial and temporal dimensions of social transformation as experienced in Eastern Europe and the European Union, and link these both to social theory and to global processes of transformation. This is an important book that could help reframe the social sciences for the 21st century."*

Stephen Castles, University of Sydney, Australia.

*"A comprehensive and up-to-date coverage of transformation studies, reaching out from post-communist "transitology" to structural changes of the EU and global capitalism, including both macro, meso, and micro level research. A must-read for specialists and students as well as general readers interested in the epochal change the world is undergoing."*

Pekka Sulkunen, University of Helsinki, Finland.





