



**UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREBU  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
OF THE FACULTY OF CROATIAN STUDIES**

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## **INVITATION LETTER**

### **International Research Conference: The Importance of European Memory for European Future: Communist Crimes 3**

Dear Sir/Madam,

In June 2020 and 2022, the Faculty of Croatian Studies at the University of Zagreb organized research conferences titled "The Importance of European Memory for European Future: Communist Crimes." As a result of the first conference, the proceedings titled "Communist Crimes 1" were published in 2023. The proceedings for "Communist Crimes 2" are currently in preparation, and its release is expected in 2024.

Our intention is to continue with scientific-research-presentational activities, and in June 2024, to organize the now traditional 3rd International Scientific Conference titled: "The Importance of European Memory for European Future: Communist Crimes 3," which will build upon the foundation laid by the previous two conferences.

The aim of the research conference is to examine and analyze the historical memory of the tragedy of the Croatian people caused by the mass repression organized by the Yugoslav communist regime during the period of World War II, as well as the need to scientifically valorize elements of this tragedy. The approach to the topic is defined with an emphasis on comparative and transnational models of contemporary historiography, implying a research orientation towards reconstructing broader features of communist seizure of power and wartime and post-war crimes of "people's democracies" against "people's enemies."

After 1945 and the establishment of peace on the continent, the post-war period brought only an apparent peace, along with the communist takeover of power mechanisms that directed societies towards a path of violent reassessment of many features of modern civil society that did not have a chance for post-war revitalization. Personal and collective crimes of the communist system, expropriation, nationalization, violent suppression of civil and democratic rights, the creation of a new archipelago of camps and enslaved states, defined the strength of destruction towards European society, values, and individuals. A large number of individuals (ordinary citizens) according to various criteria (ideology, property status, political stance, religiosity, etc.) were permanently undesirable to the communist order, leading to open manifestations of force and the commission of crimes. On the global political stage, entering the Soviet sphere of influence behind the "Iron Curtain" mostly meant adopting the Soviet state structure with the Communist Party as the leading force of social organization.

As many important episodes of communist crimes have not yet been thoroughly explored in archival research, let alone in terms of knowledge or presentation, and remain completely unknown, a systematic approach is necessary in dealing with all these topics, with the organization of this scientific conference being one contribution. For this reason, we invite you and your institution to collaborate by participating in this conference, in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific knowledge about the indicated issues. The future of Europe must be built on the foundation of confronting historical communist crimes and political repression during and after World War II, as mandated by documents such as the European Parliament Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism of April 2, 2009.

The aim of this conference is to bring together relevant institutions and individuals and establish cooperation in a scientific form that connects researchers with similar profiles and interests.

Through your scholarly research, you have shown an interest in studying and understanding the crimes of the communist regime, and therefore, we hope that you will present one of your research topics at this scientific conference as a scientific and professional *novum*.

Today, it is possible to observe the systematic nature, immense scale, and comprehensiveness of the repression carried out by the Yugoslav communist regime, but creating a heritage foundation for confronting the repressive communist past requires ongoing historiographical work on these topics.

We look forward to your positive response.



Organizing Committee,

The Organizing Committee consists of:

- Assist. Prof. Dr. Vladimir Šumanović, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vlatka Vukelić, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
- Dr. Vlatko Smiljanić, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
- Dr. Danijel Jurković, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia,
- Ante Čuvalo (retired professor) PhD, Ohio State University, SAD,
- Dr. Bojan Dimitrijević, scientific advisor at the Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia,
- Prof. Dr. Šimun Novaković, Deputy Director of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Blanka Matković, PhD, University of Sheffield, UK,
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aurimas Švedas, Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Litva.

Organizational Details:

The scientific conference will take place on **June 20th and 21st, 2024** (Friday) at the Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb (Borongajska cesta 83d, Zagreb). The first day of the conference will focus on a roundtable dedicated to the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from 1996 titled "Measures to Dismantle the Heritage of Former Communist Totalitarian Systems."

The second day of the conference will be dedicated to scientific presentations and discussions. Those interested in participating in the first day of the conference are kindly requested to specify their interest.

Additionally, those interested in presenting at the conference are requested to send the title of their presentation accompanied by a brief summary (up to 700 characters) and keywords to the e-mail address: [znanstveni.zavod@fhs.hr](mailto:znanstveni.zavod@fhs.hr) **by May 15, 2024**.