



International Philosophy Summit
“Conviviality and Dialogue among People”

**Declaration on
Philosophy and Interculturality**

Barletta, Italy
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Declaration on Philosophy and Interculturality

In a world of many rapidly-growing challenges and opportunities, philosophical perspectives and responses are urgently required. Growing poverty and insecurity, decreasing liberties, and spreading conflicts require us to look for new modes of mutual coexistence.

Philosophy

Philosophy offers unique resources in a rapidly globalizing world. It investigates the most fundamental assumptions and principles of our various practices and theories, and has always thrived and developed in dialogue – or better, polylogue – among different viewpoints. It is thus in a unique position to encourage thinking about and from different perspectives.

At times, philosophy has led to strong convictions and rigid ideologies. Philosophers have also sometimes failed to recognize diversity and differences of language and tradition. As a reflective discipline, however, philosophy is able to identify assumptions and presuppositions, and to engage issues that concern people and peoples beyond the academy. Its texts and traditions have migrated from one culture to others, and from one language to others, and it recognises the need to study and learn in the original languages of its authors.

Philosophizing encourages civic and democratic engagement and helps develop the knowledge and skills to listen, articulate, and communicate effectively. The intellectual and cultural exchange that continues to mark philosophy plays and continues to play a significant part in fostering polylogue and conviviality.

The state of philosophy today

Philosophy has played a key role in the academy right across the world, though this role has developed in a wide variety of ways over the centuries. Academic philosophy in Europe and the English-speaking world, however, has become highly Eurocentric, and this has been partly replicated in other parts of the world as a result of European expansion, colonialization, and globalization.

Universities have been gradually waking up to this, recognizing the need to broaden the canon and diversify the curriculum, but there are major cultural, structural and institutional obstacles to overcoming it, obstacles that result from imbalances and asymmetries in the university system as well as wider social, political, economic, and ideological constraints.

Universities play a powerful role in determining canons and curricula and in setting the pedagogical and research agendas. Universities do this in response to social or political needs, financial constraints, and cultural trends. This inevitably results in the inclusion of some topics, figures, narratives, and approaches at the exclusion of others. This marginalizes the contributions by women or from certain regions, for example. Even today, the work of women philosophers and feminist philosophies are often absent from curricula. Women remain underrepresented in many departments of philosophy. Racialized identities and nonbinary genders are even more invisible in the academy. Important issues and perspectives for philosophical thinking are thereby lost.

This loss is exacerbated by the increasing dominance of English as the international academic language. This has led to a devaluing of philosophizing in other languages, resulting in a narrowing of the discourse, in conceptual resources, content, methods, and perspectives. Taking the diversity of languages seriously is vital to achieve genuine philosophical polylogue.

Intercultural approaches

Our world today faces major environmental, social, political, and technological challenges that threaten the future of all forms of life. These challenges require a co-ordinated effort from all countries and communities to respond effectively and to engage with one another in constructive and open-minded debate, based on genuine understanding of each other's viewpoints.

Developing a flourishing intercultural orientation within philosophy, and within the humanities at large, will enable us to address the problems of exclusion and lack of diversity. One of the most fundamental philosophical skills is the ability to think from the perspective of others. This involves understanding and critically interrogating ideas and problems from different viewpoints. The more that this can be done, the more the fear of being different can be reduced. This ability to think from the perspective of others is particularly indispensable in developing democratic attitudes, which provide the foundation for a pluralistic society.

A call for deep conviviality

With its etymology of 'living together', 'conviviality' seeks modes of togetherness across difference, embracing diversity and interculturality. Conviviality resonates with many philosophical traditions. It embraces the global coexistence of different, and sometimes radically opposed, ways of thinking and engaging with the world. How to bring these together and open up respectful ways of seeking understanding of each other is crucial.

The concept of conviviality has sometimes been criticized for giving insufficient attention to dissensus and dispute. Our proposal, however, is to surmount this by mobilizing philosophy's engagement with argumentation and working through and across different perspectives in order to develop deep conviviality. By this we mean a new form of radically pluralized convivial philosophizing that puts deep engagement with the ideas of others at its heart. Precisely by promoting rigorous debate across existing borders – revelling in new intellectual contact zones – we can develop new concepts, and revivify and repurpose old ones for peaceful and sustainable living together.

Action points

The following action points are proposed to promote conviviality, the value and practice of philosophy, and intercultural approaches:

1. Make a concrete commitment to extend philosophical and humanities education, especially among younger generations across different levels of education, with an emphasis on continuity between secondary and tertiary education, and on broadening the public reach of philosophy.

The benefit of this action is that philosophy and the humanities contribute in a unique and significant way to (a) personal growth and social cohesion; (b) intercultural communication and conviviality; (c) resilience and wellbeing; (d) meaningful use of digital technology and artificial intelligence, and the philosophical reflection on their limits and possibilities; (e) the promotion of peace, the cultivation of active citizenship, and the survival of democracy.

2. Ensure that borders do not hinder conviviality, intercultural dialogue, and academic exchange. Universities and academic institutions must be recognized as places of refuge and supported with adequate resources.

As a discipline concerned with the fundamental questions of humanity, philosophy is studied and practised across borders and has been enriched throughout its history by intercultural exchange. Visa restrictions are a barrier to this. A growing logic of borders that turns them into loci of exclusion, violence, and dehumanization should be resisted and condemned.

3. Take action to respect and safeguard academic freedom, to eliminate censorship, intimidation, and persecution, and to enhance and facilitate academic growth, mobility, and exchange.
4. Address structural and material disadvantages to facilitate engagement within the global academic community.
5. Foster academic networks of philosophers through multi-level action, including:
 - (a) supporting existing philosophical institutions in universities and research bodies;

- (b) promoting philosophical dialogue across different regions of the world;
- (c) increasing and extending the exchange of students and researchers, with particular attention given to South-South, East-West and North-South mobility;
- (d) sustaining the dissemination and communication of philosophical research through scholarly and other outreach initiatives;
- (e) providing for regular high-level philosophy meetings, including within the context of the G7 and in connection with the World Congress of Philosophy.

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