

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is an important factor in strengthening a culture of inclusion, mutual recognition and civic participation, especially in countries such as these that experience especially high levels of distrust in institutions due to the experience of Communism.

A CST-CEE baseline project was developed in 2017, aimed at creating a Knowledge Base of the Catholic and Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions (CHEI) of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) that are currently running a programme of formation in CST. The project designed an original course content classification method, with the objective of comparing and evaluating courses from different education systems, and created the first integrated Knowledge Base of the Catholic and Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions (CHEI) providing CST courses. An analysis of the main characteristics of the courses on CST provided evidence on the current situation regarding formation in CST at the higher education level in the CEE region. This could be used, along with other inputs and sources, in developing programmes of various types, such as reinforcing social capital development or social inclusion.

The teaching of CST in the CEE region is important and can be improved. It is important as a source of values and orientation in countries that underwent decades of Communist rule and now struggle with the impact of Western liberalism. It can be improved especially through greater collaboration and networking among existing institutions and experts within the region as a whole. Institutions face shared challenges, can benefit from the sharing of best practices, and, by building transnational contacts, can prepare the ground for proposals for project funding.

The CST-CEE 2020 project builds on the results of the baseline CST-CEE project: it is a new initiative started in 2018, an innovative approach to supporting the development of such a network, by creating a transnational group of young CST scholars from the CEE in Rome (close to the central institutions of the Church, close to the Papacy, close to new developments in CST), guided by, but also supporting, an Expert Council made up of key leaders from CEE. Together they will work towards the development of the wider network over the next years. Prof. Helen Alford OP leads the Expert Council and the overall initiative, with support from Prof. Inocent Szaniszló OP.

The CST-CEE Initiative of the FASS

di Marina Russo

A first group of professors from universities of Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine joined the Expert Council in May 2018. A first meeting held at the Angelicum in Rome on 28-30 June 2018. In the same week, a summer school was organized with eight students selected from universities in Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. They attended specific lessons on CST, participated in meetings and worked both together and alone to refine their project topics; finally they presented their work to the Expert Council members and shared with them ideas and proposals. Three students have later been selected as the first members of the CST CEE Task Force: they have entered the Licentiate programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences in this academic year.

Below are articles by four of the students.

Contributors

Mariia Kozak is currently completing her Master in Management at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin (Poland). Mariia participated in the June 2018 CST CEE Summer School.

Vojtech Kubis is completing his Master in Social Sciences/International Relations at Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic). He joined the CST CEE Task Force, starting his Licentiate programme in Social Sciences/Political Sciences at Angelicum.

Iuliu Morariu completed the Masters in History and Pastoral Counselling at the Babes Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca (Romania). He joined the CST CEE Task Force, starting his Licentiate programme in Social Sciences/Political Sciences at Angelicum.

Lucija Stanojevic is completing her Master in History at the Catholic University of Croatia in Zagreb. Lucija participated in the June 2018 CST CEE Summer School.