

On behalf of the above organisations, we invite you to the
4th Biennial Conference
for Research in Diaconia and Christian Social Practice

Hidden Europe: The Challenge to Diaconia and Christian Social Practice

Prague, Czech Republic, September 27-29, 2012
Hosted by the Protestant Theological Faculty, Charles University

Introduction

The rapid developments and disruptive changes in Europe present new challenges to diaconia. This conference focuses on research and development in relation to the 'hidden' aspects of these developments. These are especially challenging for Diaconia which focuses attention on marginalised and excluded groups. The specific aspects of 'hiddenness' which the conference will explore include:

- The nations and regions of Europe which are on the margins of discussions about the future of the European space, especially countries of the former Soviet Union, the Balkan region and much of Eastern Europe.
- Those people who are living in European countries but who do not have legal citizenship or identity as well as migrants and refugees.
- Those people and communities who are excluded because of disability or on other grounds of identity.

The recent **economic and political changes in the European context** have created new issues which Diaconia has to address. Also, the frameworks within which services can be provided have become more limiting due to political decisions. The conference will therefore explore how the impact of market based thinking is influencing the direction of Diaconia. For example, how does this shape or limit the ability of faith based organisations to fulfil their mandate to care for the least?

These developments raise issues about **the identity of Diaconia** as an expression both of compassion and the struggle for justice. Not only that some of the core concepts which have informed Diaconia and Christian social practice are being modified, such as the limits being put on services for those without regular papers who may be in great need. Concepts of human rights and legal citizenship frameworks are in tension.

As well as these concrete issues and structural questions, the conference will explore new research into the **structures and practices of Diaconia** as well as into the methodologies which are effective in the new contexts.

Network of European Universities Involved in Teaching & Research of Diaconia Diaconia - Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice

Date and Place of the Conference

The programme of the conference will start in the morning of Sept. 27 (9 a.m.) with opening addresses and last till lunch on Saturday Sept. 29. The arrival of participants is foreseen for Wednesday Sept. 26.

The conference is to take place in the premises of hotel Olsanka near the city center. Accommodation, foods and conference rooms are placed within the hotel complex. You can find more about the hotel on <http://www.hotelolsanka.cz/contact?locale=en>.

Programme of the Conference

The programme of the conference will include three keynote addresses by invited speakers focused on the topic of „Hidden Europe“ and a number of research papers delivered and discussed in several sections and workshops.

The **Call for Papers** and more details about the programme is to be found on the conference site:

<http://web.etf.cuni.cz/ETFENG-1.html>

One of the important items on the agenda of the conference is possible establishing of an ***Academic Society for the Study of Diaconia*** as a structured platform for developing and coordinating the exchange in the research and academic work in the field.

Registration & Fee

You can register for the conference by **sending a registration form by May 31, 2012** and confirm your registration by paying the conference fee by the end of June. **The conference fee is 150 €** and includes organizational expenses, food and drink during the conference. The accommodation is to be paid individually but the organizers offer to make a reservation for you to secure favorable price. More details you can find in the **Registration form** on the conference site.