

FP7-MC-IEF “European Orthodoxy”

Final summary report

The aim of the project “European Orthodoxy”, situated at the intersection of political theory and sociology of religion, was to investigate the attitude towards democracy and human rights in Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian Orthodoxy in view of a making a general argument about the relationship between religion, pluralism and political normativity. The project, conducted by the **researcher Kristina Stoeckl**, was supported by the **scientist in charge Alessandro Ferrara** at the **University of Rome Tor Vergata** and had a duration of **24 months**.

Research questions

The research-project “European Orthodoxy” has sought to assess the process of confrontation and reconciliation between Orthodox Christianity and political modernity on the basis of three case-studies: Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian Orthodoxy. The initial selection of these cases was guided by the observation that these three branches of Orthodoxy are similar in terms of doctrine, but, being situated in different countries and political contexts, take different stands vis-à-vis common European values. The research-project wanted to show how the confrontation of Eastern Orthodoxy with democracy and human rights partly evokes rejection and partly brings about a critical endorsement, i.e. the re-negotiation of these values from an Orthodox religious perspective.

The research-questions which guided this analysis were:

1. How do the three Orthodox traditions reconcile (or not reconcile) their religious claims with the demands for democracy and human rights?
2. What characteristics of *European Orthodoxy* as "public religion" emerge from a comparison of these three branches of contemporary Orthodoxy?
3. What new insights about the relationship between religion and pluralistic democratic politics can be gained from this analysis for normative political theory?

Research results

During her Marie Curie Post-doctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, the researcher has:

(a) **completed** the theoretical and conceptual work of her research-project as laid out in the initial work-plan. She has dealt with questions of multiple modernities, postsecular society, and methodological and theoretical issues in research on politics and religion. The theory-relevant work is documented by publications, teaching, lectures and conference-participation throughout 2009-2012 and has benefited from the researcher’s admission to the highly-competitive summer-school *Religion in public life* of the Institute for Human Sciences Vienna (IWM), that took place in Cortona (Italy) in July 2010.

(b) **completed** the empirical research on the Russian case-study as laid out in the initial work-plan. The researcher undertook two 14-days research-missions to Moscow in May 2010 and in February 2011, during which she collected material and conducted interviews and took part in academic meetings and conferences. The focus in the empirical work was on the institutional and ideological context of the *Russian Orthodox Church's Teaching on Human Dignity, Liberty and Rights* (2008) and is documented by several publications.

(c) **not completed** the empirical research on the other two case-studies (Bulgaria and Serbia). Research on these cases could not be completed during the fellowship-period for practical reasons: the researcher was pregnant during the second year of the fellowship, suspended the project for five months of obligatory maternity-leave, and subsequently resumed the project work. During this period the researcher could not travel and therefore could not do the necessary field-work for the Bulgarian and Serbian case-study.

(d) **completed** the organisation of a workshop as laid out in the initial work-plan: in May 2011, the researcher organised the workshop "Multiple Modernities and Global Postsecular Society". The papers of this workshop are forthcoming as an edited volume: *Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies*, edited by Kristina Stoeckl and Massimo Rosati (Farnham: Ashgate).

(e) **achieved** important results that went beyond the initial work program:

- During her fellowship at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, the researcher has become founding member of the *Centre for the Study and Documentation of Religions and Political Institutions in Post-Secular Society* (CSPS).
- The researcher has organized a Russian-Italian workshop on "Politics, Culture and Religion in Postsecular Society" in May 2011 in Faenza (Italy) at the *Centro per l'Europa Centro-Orientale e Balcanica* at the University of Bologna. The results of this workshop have been published as a working-paper series.
- The researcher has successfully applied to the highly competitive APART [Austrian Program for Advanced Research and Technology] fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences which will allow her to complete her *habilitation* at the University of Vienna (starting in March 2012 until June 2015).

(f) **submitted a book-proposal** with the results of her research to the publisher Routledge. The title of the planned monograph: *Human Rights and Traditional Values in the Political Discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church* (presumed submission date of the manuscript 30.06.2013)

Important web-links

Researcher's website:	www.kristinastoeckl.eu
CSPS University of Rome Tor Vergata:	www.csps.uniroma2.it
Institute for East Central Europe and the Balkans:	www.iecob.net