

"EVEN THE MOST WRETCHED INDIVIDUAL OF OUR PRESENT SOCIETY COULD NOT EXIST AND DEVELOP WITHOUT THE CUMULATIVE SOCIAL EFFORTS OF COUNTLESS GENERATIONS."

Mikhail Bekunin



Generations in Dialogue

In 2003, ERSTE Foundation evolved out of the Erste Oesterreichische Spar-Casse, the first Austrian savings bank. It holds 25.3% of the shares of Erste Group. ERSTE Foundation invests its dividends in social development projects in Austria and Central and South-Eastern Europe. It supports social participation and civil-society engagement; it aims to bring people together and disseminate knowledge of the recent history of a region that has been undergoing dramatic changes since 1989. As an active foundation, it develops its own projects within the framework of three programmes: Social Development, Culture and Europe.



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CONTEXT

Among the most significant challenges for the future of social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity are the demographic changes, which affect the social and economic transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe. This has prompted us to look into the causes, implications and necessary actions of this phenomenon by commissioning different scientific studies.

There are two basic reasons for our interest to research societal transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe. Firstly, results provide a well-founded, practical and realistic basis for the decision-making and planning processes, not only of the Foundation, but also that of policy-makers, civil society and businesses. The second, equally important motivation is our commitment to support the scientific work and research activities in social and political sciences of institutions (e.g. universities), research communities and individual researchers based in Central and Eastern Europe.



IMPACT

We publish the biennial research results at the end of each cycle on our website. Also, we promote the researchers' specific recommendations in the region together with our project partners. We, furthermore, ensuring the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas through linking the results to other researchers in related fields, such as, for example, journalists.

During each fellowship, several international meetings take place, encouraging researchers to discuss their projects with each other and with invited experts. For instance, the selection process for the 2010–2011 cycle was made during the International Migration Conference in The Hague. The kick off meeting takes place in Vienna, while the final event, the Summer School, is held in Florence, with the topic 'International Migration, challenges and opportunities for the EU and its neighbourhood'.

Photo left:
Jiří Kovand, Bez názvu, 3. 9. 1977, Praha. "Na eskalátoru...otočen hledím do očí člověku, který stojí za mnou..."

Photos:
Generations in dialogue Fellowship meeting in Vienna, 2009.

"Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it onto future generations."

G.B. Shaw



FACTS

We started in 2008 with the first generation of ten fellows covering the topic of 'Ensuring Income Security and Welfare in Old Age'. Then, the focus lay on the demographic changes in the CEE region. We closely cooperate with the World Ageing and Demographic Forum at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. The fellows presented their papers and research results at the 6th World & Ageing Generations Congress in 2010.

The topic of the second generation focuses on 'Migration and its effects on demographic and economic development in Central Eastern Europe', analysing social change processes. For the first time, a group of researchers submitted the topic of Roma Migration, which proved a necessity of highlighting this aspect. As a result, we decided to create a research group with this focus.



GENERATIONS IN DIALOGUE

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generations-in-dialogue

Cover:
Kateřina Šeda, Copying Mother, Copying Father, Copying Child, 2004, video, color, sound, 7min 43sec, Courtesy: Kontakt. The art Collection of Erste Group