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A Milestone in European Anthropology — Zagreb Hosts the EAA Congress for the Fourth Time

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Editorial

In September 2024, Zagreb once again became a focal point of anthropological scholarship as the city hosted the 23rd Congress of the European Anthropological Association (EAA), held in parallel with the 16th Scientific Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Human Growth and Clinical Auxology (ISGA). This joint congress, entitled *"Anthropology in the Anthropocene: Investigating Human Influences on the Global Ecosystem,"* was convened at the Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Zagreb, from 5 to 7 September. The event was organized under the auspices of the Institute of Anthropology in Zagreb.

Bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines like evolutionary biology, biomedicine, epidemiology, genetics, archaeology, and biological anthropology, the congress served as a dynamic platform for presenting the latest advances in the understanding of human health, development, and the anthropological implications of the Anthropocene epoch. Its interdisciplinary nature reflected the increasingly integrative approach required to tackle complex questions concerning human adaptation, variability, and impact on global ecosystems.

Continuing a Legacy of Scientific Engagement

The 2024 meeting marked the fourth time that Zagreb has hosted the EAA Congress, underscoring the city's long-standing relationship with European anthropological scholarship. The inaugural EAA Congress was held in Zagreb in 1977, and subsequent meetings in 2002 and 2016 further solidified the Institute for Anthropological Research's role as a key note in the European anthropological network. Founded in 1976, the EAA has been instrumental in fostering collaboration and advancing research across subfields, and its return to Zagreb in 2024 was both a recognition of the Institute's scientific leadership and a reaffirmation of Croatia's place on the map of international science.

Scientific Highlights and International Participation

The congress featured a distinguished lineup of keynote speakers, including Prof. Kate E. Pickett (University of York, UK), Prof. Jana C. Semenza (Umeå University, Sweden & University of Heidelberg, Germany), Prof. Eörs Szathmáry (Eötvös University, Hungary), Prof. Noel Cameron (Loughborough University, UK), Prof. Tim Cole (University College London, UK), Prof. Emanuela Cristiani (Sapienza University of Rome, Italy), and Dr. Maito Metspalu (Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu, Estonia). Their presentations offered cutting-edge insights into pressing issues ranging from evolutionary theory and genomics to social inequality and public health.

Notably, Croatian scientists also played a central role, with Prof. Dr. Sanja Musić Milanović and Prof. Dr. Davor Štimac addressing the growing burden of childhood obesity, one of the most pressing public health challenges of our time.

Joint Collaboration with ISGA

For the first time, the EAA Congress was held jointly with the 16th Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Human Growth and Clinical Auxology (ISGA), a society founded by James Tanner, a pioneer in human growth research. This collaboration reflected

the natural synergy between the two fields, facilitated by a shared focus on human biological development and health across the life course. The decision to convene both meetings concurrently in Zagreb was a testament to the organizational capacity and international engagement of the Institute for Anthropological Research.

The congress was officially opened by the Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saša Missoni, Chair of the Organizing Committee and Assistant Director for International Cooperation at the Institute for Anthropological Research. The opening keynote was delivered by Prof. Dr. Dragan Primorac, a leading Croatian authority in personalized medicine.

Disseminating Scientific Contributions

In recognition of the high scientific quality of the congress contributions, the Institute for Anthropological Research is proud to support the dissemination of full-text papers in its affiliated journal. This initiative reflects the commitment to not only fostering academic exchange during the congress itself but also ensuring long-term visibility and impact for the research presented.

As the Anthropocene continues to challenge our understanding of human-environment interaction, events such as the 23rd EAA and 16th ISGA Congress provide essential forums for critical reflection, scientific advancement, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Zagreb's role as host once again reinforces its enduring contribution to the field of anthropology.

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