

2020 Report
of the CAS Representative to ICCEES
(International Council for Central and East European Studies)

Zoom: 25 June 2019

1. COVID-19 and the decision to postpone ICCEES Congress 2020 to 2021 created unexpected organizational challenges. **The Organizing Committee responded** to the new situation in several ways:

- **Concordia University** has agreed to the postponement and **will maintain the partnership with ICCEES in hosting the Congress in 2021**. The original 2019 Agreement has been revised and the new version will be signed by all parties shortly.
- **Block reservations** with preferential rates **at hotels were reinstated for 2021**, each involving a separate agreement. Our principal Congress hotel, the Queen Elizabeth no longer offered the preferential rate with 2015 prices, so we are arranging accommodations at other nearby hotels.
- The notice of postponement was posted on our website, distributed to member associations, and to all proposers of panels, roundtables, and individual proposals. **Those who had registered were given the option to request reimbursement or to maintain their registrations until next year. Over 80% chose to maintain their registrations**, and will be able to revise their original proposals, especially in the case of time-sensitive topics.
- Since postponement, the **Organizing Committee has had numerous Zoom meetings to reboot or restart preparations for the World Congress 2021**, beginning with a new Call for Proposals in the fall. We can take advantage of things that are already in place, like the website and on-site staffing, and focus on improving the planning as much as possible.

2. Postponement affords opportunities for significant improvement, especially relating to advances in information technology and the paradigm shift from direct to virtual participation in academic conferences. **The Organizing Committee is studying the explosion of global connectivity** associated with the transition from Skype to Zoom **and how this opens up new possibilities for participation in international congresses.**

- Just as the ICCEES EC held its recent annual meeting via Zoom, the CAS EC meets today virtually for the first time.
- Similarly, the Canadian Federation of the Humanities Congress was not entirely cancelled this year. Some associations conducted their academic meetings via Zoom.
- Our Organizing Committee is following these developments closely, attending educational sessions, and collecting all available information and best practices on how the new technology can enable virtual participation at academic conferences. We anticipate that a blend of direct and virtual participation will be both possible and desirable.

Request to CAS: if anyone has ideas or suggestions on how the paradigm shift from direct to virtual participation at Congresses could help us improve accessibility without compromising academic quality /integrity of the Congress experience, we will be grateful to receive them.

3. Special thanks to CAS members on the Academic Program Committee of the ICCEES World Congress, for their tremendous work in processing hundreds of proposals AND for generously agreeing to process the second round of the Call for Proposals, to be issued this fall.

4. We will keep CAS posted on further developments in planning Congress 2021. CAS President **Alison is a pillar and Hawkeye** on the Organizing Committee. Thanks, Alison.

Respectfully submitted – apologies for the delay
Andrii Krawchuk