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### The crucial idea of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICESHS

BEING THE INITIATOR OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the European Society for the History of Science organised in Cracow, entitled “The Global and The Local: The History of Science and the Cultural Integration of Europe,” as well as being the person who, on behalf of the Programme and Local Committees, the Conference Office and as the conference Webmaster, have stayed in contact with nearly all participants of the conference, I would like to emphasise the central idea of our Cracow meeting. This is the idea of *a critical dialogue*:

- between Europe and other continents,
- between different parts of Europe,
- between different countries both the big and the small; and finally,
- between the circles of diverse languages both national tongues and characterising different disciplines.

What’s more, we should see the four aspects mentioned in the context of very complicated branch of knowledge that researches science in its historical dimensions, including the changing meaning of science itself and all possible relationships of science with other parts of culture.

In our search for global standards in our branch, we should also appreciate the diversity of the issues which characterise local views and perspectives. These global and local elements are complementary and constitute the core of the process called “a cultural integration of Europe.” I wish you ... I wish us a fruitful participation in our conference and extend an invitation to discussions in the spirit of openness and critical dialogue. However, what does this openness and this critical dialogue mean? Their collective meaning is: let us abandon the naive belief that — speaking figuratively — “we live in the centre of the whole world”, let us listen carefully to others despite barriers of language, culture and economic natures, and if it is possible let us only use rational arguments in our discussions, give evidence in support of our statements, and ask that others behave in the same way. All these criteria are necessary for us to be real partners and co-creators of a dialogue at our meeting.

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