

Conference
*Ivan Illich (1926–2002), a Century of Critical Thinking:
On Ways of Addressing Global Crises*
Cres, 24–27 September 2025
A Report

The conference *Ivan Illich (1926–2002), a Century of Critical Thinking: On Ways of Addressing Global Crises* took place in the town of Cres on the island of Cres. Organized by the Center for Advanced Studies – Southeast Europe (CAS SEE) and hosted at the Moise Palace in the historic center of Cres, the event was conceived as a continuation of the conference held in May 2024 in Budapest, supported by the Foundation Convivial, the PARCECO Programme 2025 of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, and Sorbonne University. As indicated by its title, the meeting addressed the intellectual legacy of Ivan Illich (1926–2002), the internationally renowned philosopher, theologian, and social critic. The symposium took place primarily in person, complemented by a few online presentations that enabled broader participation.

The program commenced on the evening of 24 September with a keynote lecture delivered by Thierry Paquot (Institut d’urbanisme de Paris), entitled “Writing the Life of Ivan Illich”. In his presentation, Paquot examined methodological challenges in constructing Illich’s intellectual biography, emphasizing the necessity of situating his thought within its historical and cultural context. His personal acquaintance with Illich lent particular depth to the lecture.

The first session began on the morning of 25 September. Following introductory remarks by the members of organizing committee Eva Koczisky and Daniel Baric, three presentations were delivered.

Daniel Baric (Sorbonne University) gave a talk entitled “Illich and Jerome the Dalmatian: The Thinker and His Languages”, exploring parallels between Illich’s and Jerome’s approaches to multilingualism. Bernard Hostić (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb) presented his paper “From Indifference to Intensive Reading: Ways and Obstacles to a Reception of Ivan Illich in Central and South-eastern Europe”, analyzing Illich’s reception in the region. Guilhem Pousson (Sorbonne University) concluded the block with his presentation “Nominalization and Reification of the World: Illichian Perspectives”, discussing linguistic dimensions of Illich’s thought.

The afternoon session featured three contributions. David Cayley (Canada), a prominent figure in the contemporary revival of Illich's ideas, delivered the lecture "Ivan Illich, Carl Jung, and the Next Christianity".

Petar Bojanić (Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade) presented "Illich on Institutions or Illich on the 'Contre-Institution'", examining Illich's critique of institutional structures. Jörn Etzold (Ruhr University Bochum) followed with his presentation "Schooling as Ritual: Ivan Illich on Institutions and Conviviality", and Valeria Graziano (Justus-Liebig University Giessen/CAS Rijeka) concluded the session with talk entitled "For a Militant Conviviality".

The third day began with Marija Martinović (Sorbonne University) presenting "The Influence of Ivan Illich: The Case of Slavoj Žižek", highlighting the intersections between their respective visions of a humane society. The session continued with Dominik Finkelde (Hochschule für Philosophie, Munich), who delivered "Illich with Žižek: Decoding Capitalism and Desire".

Sanja Bojanić (CAS/Rijeka) explored Illich's dialogue with Jacques Derrida in her presentation "Autonomy and Attachment in Dialogue with Ivan Illich and Jacques Derrida", followed by Eva Kocziszky (University of Theatre and Film Arts, Budapest), who presented "Writing, Thinking and Speaking: Illich and the Deconstruction". The evening concluded with a roundtable dedicated to the *Acervus project*, aimed at revitalizing Illich's intellectual heritage, featuring a talk by Franco Augusto, one of its initiators.

The final session at the last day of symposium began with presentation by Alpár Losoncz (University of Novi Sad), delivering "The Nemesis of the Figure of *pax aeconomica*", addressing Illich's conceptual linkage of war and economy. Lajos Mítvány (University of Szeged) followed with his paper "The Deconstruction of the Idea of Progress in the Thought of Ivan Illich", situating Illich within the discourse of the degrowth movement. This theme was extended in the presentation by Lajos András Kiss (University of Nyíregyháza) "Variations for the Critique of Capitalism and for Eco-Socialism – Ivan Illich and André Gorz", which examined parallels between Illich and Gorz. The symposium concluded with presentation by Luka Janeš (Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb) presenting "Issues of Iatrogenesis in the Modern Time Psychiatry", proposing the application of Illich's concept of iatrogenesis to psychiatric practice.

This symposium stands as evidence of the growing scholarly interest in Illich's thought and serves as a stimulus for further research and, perhaps most importantly, for convivial exchange – embodying the very notion of *conviviality* central to Illich's philosophy.