

EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM FOR

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HUMANITIES INSTITUTES AND CENTRES



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The European Consortium for Humanities Institutes and Centres (ECHIC) fully supports the World Logic Day initiative, organised by UNESCO and CIPSH, and shares the motivations that have inspired this public celebration.

Logic is the core ingredient of all human intellectual endeavours, guiding us in constructing valid arguments and in detecting invalid ones and inconsistency. These verses from Dante's *Divine Comedy* vividly illustrate how vital this can be: "... assolver non si può chi non si pente, né pentere e volere insieme puossi per la contradizion che nol consente ... Forse tu non pensavi ch'io loico fossi" ["... who does not repent cannot be absolved; nor can we admit the possibility of repenting a thing at the same time it is willed, for the two acts are contradictory ... Perhaps you hadn't heard that I was a logician", in the 1954 English translation by John Ciardi]. With these words a devil successfully argues against St. Francis to claim the soul of Count Guido of Montefeltro, guilty of believing that Boniface VIII, in asking him to commit a sin, could, *qua* Pope, absolve him from that very sin (*Inferno*, XVII, 90-120).

As a discipline logic is almost as old as mathematics and philosophy and throughout history its teaching has been present in most curricula in schools and universities, typically as a required subject matter, both in science and humanities. It should be so even more now, after the amazing progress of logic in the last 150 years or so has laid the groundwork for the informatics revolution that we are living through.

In our information age, with all its opportunities and dangers, logic and critical thinking are essential as ever for democracy and for a peaceful and sustainable progress of humanity as a whole. It is replete with symbolic value that one of the great founding fathers of modern logic, Bertrand Russell, was also a peace activist who opposed World War I and campaigned against nuclear weapons.

The forthcoming celebration on January 14<sup>th</sup> provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the relevance of logic and to support its development.

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