

ACUNS Conference Report – Panel 3 (Corruption and Justice)

By Corina-Ioana Traistaru

The 3rd panel of the Presentation of Academic Papers by Young Scholars dealt with the issues of Corruption and Justice. The members of the jury were: Maximilian Edelbacher (Academic Council on the United Nations System – ACUNS), Dr. iur. habil. Slawomir Redo (Lazarski University, Warsaw, Poland, ACUNS), Prof. Irgard Marboe (University of Vienna Law School, Director of the Erasmus Programme), Dr. Aniko Klara Szalai (Hungarian United Nations Association, University of Szeged), and Prof. Gregory Weeks (Webster University).

The first presentation was given by Mr. Milos Mucok (Serbia) who presented the paper entitled “Pro bono legal services for socially excluded people as an aspect of university legal clinic activities in Serbia”. The main points of Mr. Mucok’s presentation revolved around the necessity of providing free legal assistance for the socially excluded people and of teaching law students how to provide such assistance in specialized legal clinics. Mr. Mucok identified the refugees as the biggest group of beneficiaries of the pro bono legal work and specified that the Serbian system of legal clinics is based on the American model. The debate that followed the presentation was based on the jury’s questions regarding specific features of this system.

The second paper, presented by Miss Julia Biermann (Germany), was entitled “The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Implications and Challenges for National Education Systems”. Miss Biermann identified the Convention as being the main document establishing social, political, and economic rights for persons with disabilities. The Convention identifies the disabilities a person might have as a socially created medical issue and not as a purely medical problem. The focus of the paper was on Article 24 which stipulates that countries need to have inclusive educational systems with schools that can properly integrate the disabled persons into society. Germany and Nigeria were the case studies chosen for analyzing the manner in which countries implement Article 24 of the Convention. The debate that followed centered on the costs incurred by the adaptation of the schools to the needs of the persons with disabilities and the reasons that determined the author to pick such different countries as Germany and Nigeria as case studies.

Mrs. Nadejda Komendantova (Austria), from the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, presented the paper entitled “Corruption risks in renewable energy projects - Case study of North Africa”. Mrs. Komendantova started her research from the question of why North Africa, a region that could export most of the renewable energy needed by Europe, is actually one of the poorest developed in the field. The answer given was that there is little foreign direct investment (FDI) for the existing projects mainly because of the corruption extended especially to countries such as Algeria or Egypt. By conducting interviews, she discovered that among the causes is the unauthorized use of public property, or the manipulation of regulations by the authorities. The debate that followed evolved around the numerous problems that prevent renewable energy resources from being produced and

exported to Europe and on the manner in which the data for the analysis was gathered and interpreted.

Although the jury underlined the value of all three papers, the winner of the panel was Mrs. Nadejda Komendantova. Her paper was appreciated due to the facts' logical presentation and mainly to the very clear presentation of the research's results. The jury strongly encouraged the other two participants to take part in other ACUNS conferences after they have the final results of their respective researches.