FONDAZIONE BRUNO KESSLER
MAGAZINE

2021 at the FBK Center for Religious Studies

January 20, 2021

ISR's research and cultural initiatives go on with the mission of the center always clearly defined in the background

A new year has also begun for the FBK Center for Religious Studies – ISR, led by Professor Marco Ventura. Activities go on within the well consolidated mission, which essentially aims to understand the relationship between innovation and religion and to find ways and strategies to improve it.

The hoped-for and increasingly strong collaboration with the information technology division of the Foundation also continues, in particular with the engineers who deal with artificial intelligence and the innovation that this discipline entails, within the framework of a precise strategic plan. Specifically, ISR focuses on AI society, on regulatory, ethical and cultural issues, in conjunction with the scientists who develop it.

After the 2019 position paper Religion and Innovation and the response paper Engaging Religiousand Belief Actors in the European Approach to Artificial Intelligence , which contributed to the European debate on the European Commission's White Paper On Artificial Intelligence – A European Approach to Excellence and Trust, in 2021 ISR's main objective is to work on the drafting of a policy paper on "Religion and Innovation for AI". To do this, it will be essential to keep exchanging views with religious, economic and research actors to understand how they can work together, also within specific projects funded at European and local level.

Among those underway, let us mention **DIG4Future** (in collaboration with Save the Children), which as part of Erasmus+ is developing innovative tools for digital education and artificial intelligence with inclusion in mind; the newly acquired **Protector,** on electronic surveillance of places of worship in Europe (ICT and Digital Society issues); the **Religious Innovation in the Alpine Space** project, funded by the Cassa Rurale di Trento, which explores the growing religious diversity in the Alpine space of Trento and examines the relationship between religions and the mountains from a sociological perspective. It envisions the Alps area as a distinct environment in the rural world, capable of profoundly modeling the settlement and development of the religions that inhabit it.

Finally, the **INGRiD** project, promoted by the European REC program and coordinated by the Center for International Cooperation (CCI), which addresses the fight against multiple

discrimination by activating and strengthening a network of civil society organizations engaged in various Italian regions, including Trentino Alto Adige, and internationally.

The extensive Ai & Religion webinar series (AIR 2020/21) also goes on, which aim not only to be cultural events in their own right but are part of the center's global planning and ISR's research.

Due to the pandemic crisis still underway, no major events have yet been scheduled but the fall of 2021 already includes two important events that see ISR involved in the organization: the **G20 Inter-Faith** in Bologna in September and the European Academy of Religion, which will be held in October in Münster.

Finally, the research work of the three doctoral students of the center continues: Raphael Durante deals with populism, religion and family, Matteo Corsalini works on trendy businesses and on how religion does business and finally Monica Consolandi who studies medical-clinical aspects of bioethics and biotechnology.

Another year, therefore, full of research and wide-ranging cultural activities.

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