



The University of Craiova
The Department of Applied Foreign Languages



invites you to participate in the International Colloquium

Language, Culture, Civilization

organized between the 25th – 27th of March 2010
at the Casa Universitarilor in Craiova

The 9th edition of our colloquium (the 2nd international edition), keeps the three components that are already traditional: *language, culture, civilization*. After this manifestation became international in 2009, we want to continue with a new edition, as any successful beginning (according to the majority of the participants at the previous edition) deserves a continuation! For the members of our department, which is mainly made of young and very young teaching staff, this represents a true challenge. We all hope to be able to manage things successfully!

Nowadays, when frontiers are erased (at least in the Europe of the 27) and they can only be seen on the maps in geographical atlases, Cioran's statement in *Confessions and Curses* acquires, maybe more than anytime, unexpected present interest: "We do not live in a country, but in a language. This means a homeland, nothing more."

This is why, when so many distinctive features among peoples become uniform by internationalization (starting from gastronomic habits, sport preferences and political orientations, up to crime networks, to currencies used daily as means of payment, and to common government), managing to create an amorphous mass, a population and not a people, there are still three elements in the life of each that are meant to differentiate between us, to keep us from an existential monotony that would be hard to bear.

The first of them is the **Language**, as "those who speak the same language make up a whole", being linked between them by "thousands of invisible connections", as the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte used to say.

Therefore, like at last year's edition, wishing to be together – with all the elements that differentiate between us, but do not separate us! –, the organizers encourage the use of "homelands": **English, French, German, Italian, Spanish** and, obviously, **Romanian**, provided that, nevertheless, there is a large enough number of "patriots" who want to present their contribution in one of these!

The second element is **Culture** as, according to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, "offering culture means offering thirst", and "the rest will be a consequence"! The way in which we will succeed, each of us – tiny pieces in a huge "puzzle" called people –, in quenching this thirst, will make the final image different from the one of a different "puzzle", that of another people...

Culture, along with the spoken language (and written, obviously), can differentiate between us, making us keep our uniqueness and, why not?, it can unite us on spiritual bases, which are much stronger than the economic ones, such as the community of ideas, values and kinds of behaviour.

The third element that is meant to differentiate between us is *Civilization*, whose inventor, if we were to believe Freud, is “the first man who would rather swear than cast a stone”. We do not know exactly who that man was, or whether he was alone, but, judging from the Romanians’ appetite for swearing, they must have been there as well!

Consequently, we believe that, if even swearwords can be considered a manifestation of a certain type of civilization (or, according to others, a lack of civilization!), then other preoccupations of the human mind can also be integrated here and, as a result, any “civilizing” approach will be welcomed by those who participate in our colloquium...