

VI. HONOURED PERSONALITY

**TO UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DOCTOR ENRIQUE BANÚS IRUSTA ON
THE OCCASION OF AWARDING THE DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA
DEGREE OF UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA**

LAUDATIO

**To Professor Enrique BANÚS IRUSTA, PhD. on the occasion of
granting the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* of the University of Oradea**

Perhaps each of you sharing with us today such a solemn moment agrees that the exceptional moments of our lives are scarce, in spite of our longing for them. We believe that it would not be wrong to say that a particular aspect of our existence is the continuous



quest, whether conscious or not, for these exceptional moments that give us the source for our will and determination to continue our projects and that stay with us as permanent landmarks, which never lose either beauty or strength, no matter how much time would pass by. It is the precise aspect of our life and personality that contains, paraphrasing the philosopher Simone Weil, **the strength and the grace**

to capture from everything that surrounds us exactly those elements which are necessary to self-development, to self-address questions, to understand, to create, to give. Only that, to achieve these moments of grace, it is not enough for this side of our life to simply exist, but we also need our life to intersect with a particular person or a particular event that often creates the emerging point of such moment of the exceptional. But then again, this is a necessary but not sufficient requirement, because we also need to make use of our ability to recognize an opportunity and to make the most of it, to take advantage in the noblest sense of the word of what it can offer for our existence to unfold or to change as we would like for it to do.

Eugene Ionesco stated in his *Journal* that we are the results of the situations we encounter and of the people we meet. While this statement may be the subject of an entire philosophy of existence, with pro's and con's, we would rather believe that the great writer was right. We would also state that we cannot ignore our influence on events and on the people with whom we have crossed paths if we consider the numerous exceptional personalities and the great variety of exceptional events that we encounter during our academic career.

Such a moment was the meeting with Professor Enrique Banús Irusta, at both personal and professional levels and not only for myself but also for the team I represent, namely of the Department of International Relations and European Studies within the Faculty of History, Geography and International Relations. The first moment of this meeting was the seventh edition of a renowned scientific event of great relevance for all those interested in European issues, namely the Congress of European Culture in Pamplona, a scientific event held in the spring of 2004 by the Honourable Professor and Europeanist Enrique Banús Irusta. Thus it began a long-term collaboration between Professor Enrique Banús Irusta with the members of the Department of European Studies

and International Relations. The following year Professor Banús Irusta attended an international seminar held in Oradea, followed by his participation in various conferences of the Jean Monnet Action, held in Brussels, a conference in Poland, in 2007 and one in Cluj, Romania, in 2009. Beyond such participation in joint events that have always created and fostered opportunities to discuss new joint projects addressing current European issues, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta has become one of the most active collaborators of *Eurotimes*, a journal published by the Institute for Euroregional Studies Oradea-Debreceen within the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, and one of the most important external collaborators of our department.

We should, however, share with you who Professor Enrique Banús Irusta is, so that you could have a comprehensive image of the exceptional nature that is to be found within an academic and scientific cooperation intertwined with human relations, as well.

Professor Enrique Banús Irusta completes his academic studies within the area of Literature at the Universities of Bonn and Aquisgrain (Aachen), the early years of his academic career being related to the German space, where he teaches before he returns to Spain, in 1988, within the Universities of Aquisgrain, Cologne, Bonn and Paderborn. Between 1988 and 2007 he works as a professor within the University of Navarra, teaching courses of Comparative European Literature; this period is one of maximum implication at institutional level in the European issues. In this respect it is to be noted that between 1989 and 2007 Professor Enrique Banús Irusta has the sequence of the following positions: Director of the European Documentation Centre of the University of Navarra, Director of Center for European Studies of the same university and on numerous occasions between 1990 and 1997, President of Organizing Committee of the European Culture Congress. Also, Professor and the Europeanists Enrique Banús Irusta was a member of the team of experts on Intercultural Dialogue within the General Directorate for Education and Culture of the European Commission. As of 2008, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta becomes a member of the *European Community Studies Association-Spain* and is elected for 2009-2010 as the International President of the European Communities Study Association, “the premier scholarly and professional association focusing on the European Union, the ongoing integration process, and transatlantic relations”. Currently, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities from the International University of Catalonia and the Director of Charlemagne Institute for European Studies within the International University of Catalonia (Barcelona), “a part of the University dedicated exclusively to study, research and dialogue on the state of Europe”.

Although very involved in activities of a rather institutional-administrative nature, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta has always found time for the activity that is probably the closest to his heart, i.e. teaching and teaching he does with a full-fledged passion! Thus, in over thirty years of academic career, entire generations of students from different cultures have benefited from the scholar qualities of Professor Enrique Banús Irusta and have been introduced to various aspects of the European culture, some of them finding, following this intersection, the direction of scientific and professional direction.

Professor Enrique Banús’s concerns for European affairs, and especially for the European culture, will push him to undertake permanent action not only by means of various institutions where, as mentioned, he served in the highest positions, but also by means of scientific activity, both as single author and as editor or co-author.

If we were limited to a quantitative approach, the name of Professor Enrique Banús Irusta would be associated with twenty books and one hundred and thirteen articles.

Such statistics, however, speak about the prolific author Enrique Banús Irusta, but not about his scientific interests or his research directions that he has pursued, reflecting his interdisciplinary approach of European or international issues. Because it was very difficult to pick only one title, we have tried to make a summary of research topics undertaken by the Europeanists Enrique Banús Irusta: studies of European literature and European comparative literature; women's image in the history of European literature; Herder's philosophy; European identity; European cultural identity; European citizenship; European cultural heritage; European intercultural dialogue; European cultural relations; European cultural borders; the place of culture within European politics, the Christian foundation of the European Constitution; the Christian foundations of European literature; culture and social imaginary in Spain; Spain and European integration issues; the principle of subsidiarity; the European economy issues; impacts of globalization; recession and its effects.

It is very difficult to catch in a few-minutes speech the Europeanist's characteristics and significance of writing, the humanist and man of culture who Enrique Banús Irusta really is. But even after this brief observation, which you might consider superficial, of Enrique Banús's writings it is very difficult to appreciate what first recommends the Professor and Europeanist Enrique Banús Irusta, his highly intense institutional activism or his scientific activity? Which of the two aspects of his professional life lays the foundation for the other? In what concerns us, we believe that these two aspects are intrinsic to each other and they are the way of being of Professor Enrique Banús Irusta, a way of being based on the work of a lone researcher, a man of letters, but also of an activist permanently serving not only students or European citizens, but the human being in both his universality and his humanity, in the service of European culture, but through this job to a humanism that transcends national borders and even those of cultures and mentalities. And if we were to paraphrase another Europeanist that has imprinted with his effervescence of his verb on the idea of European unity, Denis de Rougemont, who believed that the duty of a theorist is to link between thought and action, to not allow the gap between theoretical thinking and practical action, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta is the Europeanist that demonstrated that he "*is thinking with the hands*", putting ideas to work through the institutions where he worked, led or represented.

In 2003, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta was awarded a Jean Monnet Chair ad personam in "European Culture," by the European University Council, a distinction granted by the European Commission to scholars who make significant contributions to European culture in the academic field on both national and international levels. Such as the rules of the European Commission specify, "ad personam Jean Monnet Chairs are reserved for distinguished Jean Monnet Chairs who deliver evidence of a high-level international teaching and publication record (that was achieved, at least in part, outside their country of residence) and/or professors with a distinguished background as former high-level practitioners in the field of European integration".

Perhaps after having received such a distinction one may believe that all other things will come naturally, that for the recipient it is time to slowdown, to relax, to rest. It is not the case of Professor and Europeanist militant Enrique Banús Irusta, for whom the receiving of such distinction meant assuming his duty to permanently reconfirm his merit that has already been recognized; the activity carried out by Professor Enrique Banús Irusta in the last decade is an undeniable proof of this desire to reward through hard work, through more activism, through more militancy, the reward of another work, another activism, another militancy, all having been already proven. The University of Oradea, through the Department of European Studies and International Relations housed within

the Faculty of History, Geography and International Relations have had both the chance and the honour to enjoy Professor Enrique Banús's partnership in a period when this specialization was new, a period in which the support of a specialist was more than required for us to take the next step with confidence.

Today, the University of Oradea wishes to express the deepest admiration for all the work carried out by Professor Enrique Banús Irusta in supporting the European culture, and thus the idea of European unity. Also, the University of Oradea wishes to express its gratitude towards Professor Enrique Banús Irusta for his support and trust that he has provided us with boundless generosity and kindness. It is for certain that the time has not allowed us to remind in this too-fast presentation all accomplishments belonging to the Professor, the Europeanist and the man of culture that Enrique Banús Irusta is. Surely that both time and also our clumsiness or a certain shyness in front of the strength and talent of Enrique Banús Irusta - The Man turned us unable to bring out all his qualities and merits; we apologize for this not so much to him, but especially to you, our distinguished guests. We are nevertheless positive that we were able to present aspects of the work and personality of Enrique Banús Irusta – The Scholar, as much as needed in order to convince you that our gesture of admiration and professional gratitude of today is a natural one.

We do therefore consider the proposal submitted by the Faculty of History, Geography and International Relations, i.e. to grant the title of Doctor Honoris Causa to the one of the most distinguished current Europeanists, as of our capacity to both recognize human values and to assume the European values in their generality, especially the cultural ones.

Thus, following the decision of the University of Oradea Senate, Professor Enrique Banús Irusta has been included in the gallery of Oradea professors and assumed as a European value and it is a great honour to grant him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of our university. Professor Banús Irusta, please receive our deepest consideration, admiration and gratitude! We are deeply convinced that our collaboration will continue and reach new levels!

Oradea, 31 March 2011

Prof. Ioan HORGA, PhD.