



To the attention of the Scientific Board of the
Advanced Studies Centre "A.S.Cent."

Final REPORT on the Centre's activities - year 2023

Dear colleagues,

below is a summary of the activities and critical issues that affected the Advanced Studies Centre in 2023.

First of all, it should be noted that during the course of this year the Centre has promoted numerous valuable initiatives, despite some persistent problems (already highlighted in the 2022 report) which affect, *first and foremost*, the impossibility of using the premises of the former Hotel de France to host foreign colleagues, as well as the lack of an official headquarters for the Centre and above all the shortage of administrative staff and adequate funds for the Centre's commitments and activities.

As noted by the Council, the lack of consideration given to the work of the Centre and to the essential nature of internationalisation is regrettable. As foreseen in the University's strategic plan, should be achieved through the exchange of ideas and research with foreign professors and researchers of high academic prestige who should be attracted and welcomed to the University; the presence of Visiting Fellows at the University also allows our University to be appreciated abroad, increasing its perception and prestige (as in the case of the most important ranking in the world, that of QS). One euro spent for these purposes translates into an increase in the quality of research of our researchers and professors and consequently in an increase in the 'value' of our university also for the purposes of university funding.

The Scientific Board of the Centre for Advanced Studies therefore unanimously queries for greater attention and greater availability, including budgetary, from the university's governance.

Centre head office and premises for Fellows

The premises of the Hotel de France, particularly the six rooms on the top floor, initially intended as accommodation for visiting Fellows, have never been made available to the Centre despite repeated requests. For a long time, the premises have either been empty or occupied by the university's central administration services. Only recently did we learn that the management of the premises in question would be assigned to ERSU. However, to date, no agreement has been signed.

Regarding the fact that the rooms continue to be unused, we reiterate the request that they be readapted as 'self-catering flats' and assigned to the Centre to host visiting fellows.



It should be noted that having those six rooms available, the Centre could host a greater number of Fellows while obtaining a significant reduction in expenses. The average cost for renting those self-catering flats would be around 350 euros per month compared to the 700/800 euros budgeted so far for external accommodation (in this regard, the continuous increase in prices for short-term renting in the city of Palermo should be emphasised).

So far, the Centre has not been able to use the planned "Senior Common Room" for Fellows' meetings to encourage gatherings and the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

The "Bianca di Navarra" room at Steri is available, but only on request, and is not entirely suitable for the purpose, as it is not adequately equipped.

Until October of this year, the Centre had no premises to use. Only in October, thanks to the availability of the Department of Political Science and International Relations (DEMS), was it possible to use a room in that department as the Centre's temporary head office, while waiting for the definitive one. The DEMS department has also temporarily made a small room available for Fellows' meetings.

Negotiations are underway with the Municipality of Bagheria to grant the use of premises for the Centre.

Administrative Staff

The lack of administrative staff has negatively affected the centre's activities, slowing down administrative procedures.

Initially (October 2022) the Centre had obtained the availability of Dr Daniela Cataldo. After various reminders, the new General Management appointed Dr Valeria Floriano as the Centre's administrative secretary (ad interim) and, on 25 May 2023, by e-mail, Mr Dario Pirrone (computer technician), Laura Pezzano (secretary) and the aforementioned Cataldo were appointed to provide assistance for the Centre's activities.

Mr Pirrone contributed to the design of the Centre's website but, having moved on to another job, was no longer able to collaborate with A.S. Cent.; the same fate befell Dr Floriano and Pezzano, so from June the Centre was completely without staff, except for the voluntary and unpaid work of Dr Cataldo who, however, resigned from any role in September 2023.

In October 2023, the General Director appointed (ad interim) Dr Annalisa Lorito as Administrative Manager and Dr Francesca Schiavo as Technical Secretary of the Centre. Since October, therefore, the Centre has finally obtained the administrative staff necessary for its operation.

Funding

The Centre has obtained a total budget of 40,000 euros for 2023. This budget is completely insufficient for the proper functioning of the Centre, limiting the possibilities of hosting Visiting Fellows for whom, in addition to a partial reimbursement of travel expenses (maximum 800 euros for intercontinental return flights), in the absence of the availability of the guest house of the former Hotel de France, the Board has planned a maximum contribution of 700 euros per month to reimburse accommodation costs. It should be noted that the monthly cost of rooms at the 'Casa del Goliardo' in agreement



with ERSU is much higher (between 1,000/1,200 euros). It is obvious that, as previously explained, if the rooms of the Hotel de France were available, a considerable saving would be made.

The Centre has therefore asked to be able to use at least part of the funds originally reserved for the International Relations Commission (CO.R.I.) to cover the long-incoming, i.e. expenses related to stays, exceeding one month, of foreign professors and researchers. In fact, in synergy with the Vice-Rector for Internationalisation, it was decided to concentrate the management of long-term stays at the Centre to avoid unnecessary duplication and guarantee savings. However, so far, there has been no sign of the effective transfer of even a part of these funds (only a third of the funds allocated to CORI for this specific activity at the Centre, i.e. 20,000 euros, would be enough to drastically improve performance).

The Director of the Centre has been mandated by the Council to repeat the request for next year.

To find further funds, the Centre plans to participate in calls for national and international projects.

Institutional, research, promotion and third sector activities.

Despite the difficulties described above due to the lack of administrative personnel available to the Centre, it relied on the personal availability of the Centre's members. At the meeting of the Scientific Council on 1 March, a programme of activities planned for the year was drawn up.

Firstly, guidelines were prepared for the financing of the centre's activities.

Secondly, a series of meetings with the department directors were organised to illustrate the aims of the centre.

Thirdly, a website for the centre was created*

**The activation of the centre's website was requested from the University's IT services on 7 March 2023. However, it was not until 29 March 2023 that, after repeated requests, a dedicated web page was opened. It should be emphasised that the 'content population' of the web page was made possible thanks to the highly personal contribution of the Centre Director and members of the Scientific Council and Eng. Pirrone (the latter until June 2023) until the assignment (October 2023) of Dr F. Schiavo as technical secretariat. In practice, the site has been fully operational since October of this year, 2023.*

Fourthly, the official logo of the Centre has been created and approved.

Fifthly, the organisation, sponsorship and attending at scientific events have been planned.

Fifthly, a call was issued for the co-financing of international projects and activities involving foreign teachers and researchers.

Sixthly, the Director was given the mandate to prepare a draft call for Visiting Fellows (junior) and Senior Visiting Fellows.

Seventhly, the Director was given the mandate to prepare a framework agreement with



the Municipality of Bagheria for the purposes of the Centre, including the preparation of 'seasonal schools' and scientific meetings to be held there.

Scientific activities and events.

Starting in March, the Centre participated as organiser and partner in the following events:

- 1) *Winter School* on 'Energy Transition and Fundamental Rights', held in Palermo from 27 February to 4 March in collaboration with the Centre for Sustainability and Ecological Transition (CSTE), the PhD in Systems Dynamics (DEMS-UNIPA), the PhD in Human Rights: evolution, protection and limits and the PhD in legal pluralism (DIGI-UNIPA);
- 2) presentation of the book 'The Principles of BRICS contract law' in the presence of the editors professors M. Bussani and S. Mancuso, at the Department of Political Science and International Relations (DEMS);
- 3) *Lectio Magistralis* held by Prof. Vadims Mantrovs, University of Latvia, Riga (LU), entitled 'Civil Liability regimes depending on fault as a precondition on liability' held on 19 May at the Department of Political Science and International Relations (DEMS);
- 4) participation as a partner in the 30th World Congress of the *International Society of Family Law*, Antwerp, an event attended by a large delegation from the University, made up of professors, PhDs and Post-Docs, as speakers and *discussants*.
- 5) participation as a partner in the 40th *Cambridge International Symposium*, Jesus College, Cambridge University. In particular, with the UNIPA delegation (professors, PhDs and Post-Docs), the Centre, organised the *Plenary Workshop* on 'Business and integrity: the experience of Italy in addressing the dark side of business.
- 6) organisation of the 'Talking' on the methodology of scientific comparison held on 2 December 2023 at the DEMS department.
- 7) organisation and stay at the 9th Seminar on 'Market Protection' in collaboration with the Order of Accountants and Confindustria Sicilia, Palermo.
- 8) 8th Juris Diversitas General Congress 'Regards dystopiques sur le droit', Palermo.
- 9) Study Day: *Italy, Europe, Mediterranean: for a new vision of the national interest*, Rome, MedOr Foundation.

Institutional activities:

A) With regard to the promotion and strengthening of the University in terms of research, the Centre has arranged for the co-financing of internationalisation projects with the presence of foreign teachers and researchers. The results of the call for proposals (extended to 2024) particularly favoured the following proposals for collaborations with foreign colleagues:

- 1) Antonia Trichopoulou (Athens) proposed by the BIND department;
- 2) Rebeca Gomez Betancour - Lione 2 proposed by the Dems department;
- 3) Kresimir Purgar - Academy of Arts and Culture - University of Osijek-Croatia on the proposal of the Culture and Society department;
- 4) Rike Sitas - Senior Researcher- African Center of Cities (University of Cape Town-South Africa) on the proposal of the Darch department;



- 5) Thorsen Botz-Bornstein- Gulf University of Science and Technology, on the proposal of the Humanities department;
- 6) Jane E. Everson (Royal Holloway University of London-UK), on the proposal of the Humanities department;
- 7) Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly -University of Oxford on the proposal of the Humanities department.

B) In order to promote and strengthen the University in terms of research, the Centre issued a specific call (protocol 89678 of 14.07.2023) for 2 visiting fellowships lasting one year, reserved for Ukrainian professors and researchers. The Centre received 5 applications, from which those of Prof. Oleksiy Kresin (Academy of Sciences, Kharkiv) who has been carrying out research and teaching at our University since September 2023; and that of Prof. Lidjia Petrushova (National University of Pharmacy, Kharkiv) who has been carrying out research at the STEBICEF department of UNIPA since September 2023.

It should be noted that, given the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation, Prof. Kresin is currently being hosted free of charge at the private studio of the Centre's Director.

B.1) At the meeting of the Scientific Council on 21 September, a further implementation of the strengthening and integration phase in terms of research was initiated.

The Centre has published a call for *Visiting Research Fellowship Programmes* and the related *application forms* for the academic year 2023/2024. The meeting also discussed the issue of identifying accommodation and organising services for *Visiting Incoming Professors*.

A total of 50 *applications*, 25 for the position of *senior visiting fellow* and 25 for the position of *junior visiting fellow*, were received by the Centre in response to the above call for applications.

Of these, the Centre selected 19 candidates from the following universities:

Paris Institute of Political Studies (France), Pompeu Fabra Barcelona (Spain), Erlangen (Nürnberg), Bialystok (Poland), Weill Cornell Medical College New York (USA), London (UK), Helsinki (Finland), Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University Mostaganem (Algeria), Jagellonian University (Poland), Lebanese American University (Lebanon), University of Cape Town (South Africa).

The researchers' scientific fields are:

Philosophy of Law, Legal Reasoning; Law and Criminology, Criminal Law, Administrative Law, Migration Law; Artificial Intelligence; Public International Law, International Relations, Human Rights; Political Sciences, International Relations; Modern History, Women and Gender History, Microbiology, Chemistry, Anthropology.

B.2) From another point of view, the work of disseminating the Centre's activities and initiatives continued by all the members of the Board who, as has been the case since the Centre was established, communicated and helped to disseminate the planned initiatives to the relevant scientific community, also through the department directors.



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PALERMO

CENTRO DI STUDI AVANZATI "A.S.CENT."
CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDIES "A.S.CENT."

The Director: Prof. Avv. Antonello MIRANDA

Full prof. of Comparative and European Law



The dialogue, already started in October 2022, with the Mayor of Bagheria for the possible concession of spaces for the Centre head office and for the creation of *seasonal schools* and reception and hospitality spaces for *visiting fellows*, has also continued. Similarly, talks are continuing with the mayors of Palermo and Monreale and with the other 3 Sicilian universities for the development of synergies and the planning of the future 'School of Advanced Studies' for young researchers, post-docs and PhDs.

Palermo 20th Dec 2023

In Faith



The Director
Prof. Avv. Antonello MIRANDA