

# PREDGOVOR FOREWORD

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The Faculty of Arts, under the auspices of the University of Ljubljana, has joined the current European Researchers' Night, which started in 2022 and will end on 29 September 2023, with its scientific research focus being the coexistence of humans and animals. The project of the Faculty of Arts is carried out under the slogan Humanities Rock!, and is the only one of the 300 European projects highlighting the humanities. The humanities are the central factor that connects all the other sciences, the common denominator of everything that we explore, because there is no scientific or artistic creation without humans or humanity.

The European Researchers' Night is a European Commission project under the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the period 2021-2027, based on the pillars of scientific excellence, tackling global challenges and competitiveness, and creating a more innovative Europe. The European Commission aims to promote scientific excellence and to train and retain talented scientists in the European Research Area, thus strengthening the EU's leadership in science. At the same time, it wants to expand existing research infrastructures, as supported by programmatic, open funding from the European Research Council (ERC), the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and various forms of research infrastructure. It also aims to address global challenges and the issue of sustainable development, covering the full spectrum of the UN Development Goals – health, culture, inclusive societies, digitalisation, climate, mobility, food, natural resources and the environment. It also highlights innovation, which includes technological development and the demonstration and transfer of knowledge. The latter is also a guiding principle of the current European Researchers' Night – Humanities Rock! project, which seeks to explore and highlight one of the oldest links that humans have established with other living beings, the link with animals.

Human(e), Animal – for more than two thousand years, philosophers have pondered their coexistence, scientists have explored it, writers have

written about it and poets have sung about it. Artists have always depicted man and animal, and this year's theme for the European Researchers' Night – Humanities Rock! highlights the topic of man and animal and explores their relationship and interdependence. The relationship between humans and animals, and animals and humans, has never been such a central concept in scientific debates as it is today. These debates touch not only on ethical, cultural, legal, philosophical, political, social and other factors, but also on methodological challenges and the theoretical foundations of already known research. The question of whether and to what extent we can extend our anthropocentric way of thinking and reasoning with new perspectives and approaches that are as fair as possible to animals, their needs and interests is coming to the fore. Re-examining the connection between human and animal ways of being can provide important starting points for a new way of looking at these issues, and can fundamentally change the relationship both ethically and practically.

Although we consider humans to be the crown jewel of creation, it is clear that without the help of animals history would have taken a very different course. The relationship between man and animals has changed repeatedly over the millennia, has always been complex and affected both stakeholders. If we start from the legal basis that animals are sentient beings, then the evolution of the relationship between animals and humans cannot be ignored. Through domestication, animals developed a new, emotional relationship with humans, becoming attached to and even completely dependent on them. Man, who has historically placed himself at the centre of the world as a thinking creature, has often looked upon animals in a benevolent light. Modern animal ethics, which puts animals at the centre alongside human beings, moves away from a purely benevolent view of animals and sees them as beings with consciousness, will and emotions. Our view today is thus ambivalent: on the one hand, we increasingly emphasise our own similarity to animals and argue on this basis for treating them better, while on the

other hand today we have developed the killing of animals to perfection. As a consequence of such divergent views on animals, a tendency has emerged (especially in Western culture) to bring animal rights closer to human rights.

In this scientific monograph, you will find contributions dealing with the coexistence of humans and animals in different contexts: natural, social, humanistic and artistic; or more precisely, contributions in the fields of history, literary history, art history, philology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, law, librarianship, didactics, veterinary medicine, bioethics, and the intertwining of all of these. They are sandwiched between two artistic texts, an excerpt from the tragicomedy *The Lipizzaners Go to Strasbourg* by Boris A. Novak and the poem *The Cultivated Life* by Maja Klarendić, and visually they are adorned with the beautiful work of the artist Jure Brglez – a human image combined with an animal, illustrating man's view of the past and, at the same time, his path to the future, which will necessarily result from the connection of the two. We thus begin with animals as sentient and thinking beings who seek justice from the highest human institutions, and end with poetry that encourages us to reflect on the essence of (animal) existence, and in between we invite you to read selected scientific texts that may help to raise awareness of the human-animal relationship among academic and non-academic audiences alike.

On behalf of the editors, I would like to thank all the authors whose contributions have enriched our scientific biography and shown the very rich and diverse range of human-animal coexistence – and perhaps modern humans are now losing their anthropocentric foundation and opening up a space for animals to inhabit as sentient beings.