



SOFIA UNIVERSITY “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”

Professor Thierry de Montbrial Was Conferred Doctor Honoris Causa of Sofia University

Professor Thierry de Montbrial was conferred Doctor honoris causa of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” at a solemn ceremony at the Aula magna of the University.

The proposal for the conferral of the honorary degree by the oldest and most prestigious academic institution in this country comes from the Faculty of Law and is based on Professor Montbrial’s contributions to the development of international relations, foreign policy and security.

The event was attended by Professor Dr habil Anastas Gerdzhikov, Rector of Sofia University, Professor Sasho Penov, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Georgi Bliznashki, former caretaker prime minister, His Excellency Monsieur Eric Lebedel, Ambassador of France to this country, Dr Solomon Passy, President of the Atlantic Club, faculty, students and guests.

Professor Sasho Penov, Dean of the Faculty of Law, opened the ceremony and pointed out that Professor Montbrial as a scholar of high repute has been known to the expert community in this country with his works, translated in the Bulgarian language and impressive with their in-depth and analytical approach and originality. They include studies such as “Memoirs of the Present”, “Political Geography”, “Action and System of the World”, “Twenty Years That Shook the World. From Berlin to Beijing”. “These are only part of the twenty odd pieces of work and also many other publications that brought him the reputation of a scholar, expert and consultant of global caliber, a long sought for interlocutor who strikes the audience immediately not only with both his revelations and dreams, but also with their pragmatic essence. His scientific impact in the world treasure of scientific research in the domain of international relations is beyond doubt,” Professor Sasho Penev pointed out.



The Dean noted that Professor Montbrial was a leading contemporary analyst of international relations on a global scale. He is well-known as an eminent erudite and excellent expert in mathematics; he constantly attempts at reestablishing existing or possible bridges between the exact sciences and the humanities, and to affirm the applicability of the latter. Professor Penov

stressed that Professor Montbrial was not a fan of theoretical novelties and extremes, and often subjects to scientific criticism newfangled concepts of newly arrived luminaries in science.

The Dean of the Faculty of Law presented Professor Montbrial's CV. The latter finished the Ecole superieure politechnique in 1965 and, subsequently, the Ecole nationale superieure des mines (1966-1969) and UCLA in Berkeley. In 1970 he was a PhD student in mathematical economics supervised by the Nobel Prize winner Professor Gerard Debreu.

Professor Thierry de Montbrial founded the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) in 1979 and is still its head. Professor Montbrial's interests are in the domain of mathematical and theoretical economics; applied economics; international system analysis (history, geography, economics, politics, security); action theory and decision making.



His academic contributions make him authoritative member of a number of academies: the European Academy (1993), the Royal Academy of Belgium (1996), the Swedish Royal Academy of Engineering Sciences (1999), the Romanian Academy of Sciences (1999), the Russian Academy of Sciences (2003), the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (2006), the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2006), the Royal Spanish Academy of Economic and Financial Sciences (2008).

His qualities of an eminent and welcome lecturer have motivated many world famous universities to invite him as a visiting professor. Professor Thierry de Montbrial was a visiting lecturer in a number of French and foreign high academic institutions, including the Institute for Political Research in Paris, the Institute for High International Research at Geneva University, the University of Tel Aviv and the Beijing Diplomatic Institute.

He is the laureate of a number of prizes and distinctions, including the Prize of the Academy of the Humanities and Social Sciences Louis Marin (1991), the Prize of the Louise Weiss Foundation (1991), the 1996 Prize of the Ambassadors (for his book "Memoirs of the Present"), the Big Prize of the Geographical Society for his overall activities (2003), the Georges Pompidou Prize for his book "Human Action and the System of the World".

Professor Thierry de Montbrial was awarded the French prizes of the Commander of the Legion of Honour (2007), Superior Officer of the National Order for Merit (2011), Commander of the Order of Academic Palms (2002), Commander for Merit in Agriculture (2008).



He holds a Doctor honoris causa degree of the Romanian Academy for Economic Research (1996); the Azerbaijani Academy of Sciences (2002); Brasov University in Romania (2003); the Galatasaray University in Istanbul (2004); Kishinev State University (2005); the State University of International Relations (MGIMO), Moscow (2007), Bucharest University (2011) and the Alexander Kuza University at Iassy, Romania (2014).

According to Professor Penov the conferral of the Doctor honoris causa degree of Sofia University to Professor Montbrial is a contribution to the assertion of the reputation of the University as a leading educational institution in South-Eastern Europe and gives the academic community a possibility to refer to his in-depth research.

Professor Dr Habil Anastas Gerdzhikov, Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment ohridski", conferred the high academic degree to Professor Thierry de Montbrial.



The French scholar delivered an academic speech on the topic "Between the Burden of the Past and the Shock of the Future".

At the beginning of his speech Professor Montbrial singled out the significance, role and value of Bulgarian culture and its influence in the development of European culture. He added that Bulgarian culture was part and parcel of the intellectual wealth of Europe, of our structure and of the model we were building together.

Professor Montbrial remarked that we had already been living with the future which was not only in front of us but also in our minds: we think, work, conceptualize the world, and the future world to a large extent was already part of our minds. "The future that is in front of us has never been in historical terms ever so enchanting, exciting, but also alarming," Professor Montbrial stressed that never had the history of mankind been so dynamic. In his speech he talked about the perspectives in the decades to come and also touched on the past by pointing out that we had been just ever so predetermined by the traces of the past as by the perspectives of the future. "These traces are not simply a burden, not only a heavy weight. The past is not a mere recollection. It is an exceptional source of wealth that we have to make ample use of. We have to use it in order to establish our identity, both individual and collective, and also to rationalize the lessons of the past of any order," said Professor Montbrial and added that everything that happened from the day of our birth to our death had to do with both the people who lived before us and those who would come after us.



Professor Montbrial said that the notion of time was the most fascinating one both from a philosophical and also from a human and cosmological point of view. In his words, conceptualizing the present means simultaneous conceptualization of both the past and the future.

In his speech he dwelt on the technological revolution and the new technologies that were in the process of generation. Professor Montbrial analysed the technologies which had already become integral parts of our lives and revolutionized the world to a higher degree than internet. The technologies, which have been developed, pave the road for the changes that will take place in the domains of law, banking, and will thus transform very many professions, whereas robotization will enter the everyday life of the man in the street in ever growing dimensions.

Professor Montbrial appealed to all present to be constantly on the watch out for the humane and ethical aspect of their thinking and the conditions of human existence: "If you lose track of your direction and cut off your roots, you inevitably face the risk of getting lost and becoming subject to myths that will subsequently bring you to the abyss of catastrophe."



In his speech Professor Montbrial also touched on the issue of the past and remarked that since the future exists in parallel with the past, we face the latter in our lives every day. He also shed light on the issue of identity, both individual and collective.

In conclusion, Professor Montbrial stressed that global politics and international relations are two different, not merely interchangeable terms. To a very high extent international politics is predetermined by global politics. If in international relations we are interested in the day-to-day running of problems and do our best to conceptualize them as a whole, the best thing is to view them globally, he pointed out.

Professor Montbrial reviewed the role of the USA on the political scene, the influence of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the way they conceptualize themselves as a global missionary whose values should be disseminated all round the world. In Professor Montbrial's words the great American strategy is to dominate over the military power of all the states of the world taken together.

On the other hand, China also has the strategy of a conquering power, Professor Montbrial said and compared its behavior internationally to the Go game – the enemy is not eliminated but rather surrounded and at a certain moment he realizes that he is in your hands. China is doing its best to get the attributes of a great power, Professor Montbrial stated.

"If we continue this way of life of today, the European continent will end up in a state of competition and dual domination by the USA and China," Professor Montbrial remarked and stressed that the point was how the Europeans would manage to optimally organize themselves in a long-term perspective and, last but not least, their relations with Russia and how Russia would be included in the picture.



Published:
05/11/2017 05:58 pm

Last modified: 05/23/2017 11:13 am