

TWENTY YEARS OF THE "NIKOLA TESLA" FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Authors present a short review of objectives and activities of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation, established in Belgrade in 1979, on the initiative of the "Nikola Tesla" Society, founded in Belgrade in 1936, and with the consent of Nikola Tesla. The mission of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation is to motivate and stimulate creators and creativity within organizations aimed at more successful economic and social development, including spreading of the international scientific-technological and economic cooperation.

1. TESLA AND ITS FOUNDATION

Nikola Tesla, the Serb from Lika district in Croatia, son of the orthodox priest, born on the 10th July 1856 in Smiljane, passed away on the 7th January 1943 in New York as the United States citizen. Nikola Tesla, a scientist, engineer, inventor, philosopher and humanist, contributed to the greatest extent to the world development at the end of the 19th and in the course of the 20th century, and that in return he did not neither request nor receive anything from the enormous wealth created through industrial development. Spiritual wealth and the satisfaction to invent and create was for him the greatest reward. The world civilization has the obligation to maintain the name and works of Nikola Tesla as the stimulus for other creators, which is at the same time the obligation for all those who care for development by stimulating and supporting the creativity. The name of Nikola Tesla shows in the best possible ways the mission of the Foundation named by him, which has similar objectives and motifs: a man, creator, mankind well-being, creators and creativity, motivation, development of science and the society without borders.

The idea to establish the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation was born already in 1956, at the time of marking the one hundred anniversary of Nikola Tesla's birth. Later on, during marking of new Tesla's jubilee in 1976, this idea started with the organized realization, thanking to wide support of the public, scientific workers, citizens and working organizations. The Founding Assembly of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation, with 101 Statute signatories, was held on the 9th January 1979 in Belgrade in the festive hall of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, with participation of 270 delegates, officials and guests. The festive part of the Assembly was chaired by the academician Branko Žeželj. The basic aim of the Foundation, as it was noted down in the Statute, was: to support and stimulate the development, namely the application of scientific-research creativity in the field of

natural and technical sciences, and particularly in the fields of Nikola Tesla activities. His research ethics, personal sacrifice and self-denial as the topmost satisfaction, as well as achievements of this great Yugoslav and world scientist, represent an ideal of the scientific and creative attitude towards nature, research, development and future of the world civilization.

2. TESLA AWARDS

First Tesla awards were given in 1981. The "Nikola Tesla" Foundation established the "Nikola Tesla" awards as the highest social recognition for creativity, which are given in the following fields:

- scientific achievements in natural and technical-technological sciences;
- highest engineering technical-technological achievements;
- invention, rationalization and innovation;
- realization of objectives of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation in organizations;
- creativity of the youth.

Tesla award comprises the medal with Tesla image, charter, and cash. Money for awards is mostly formed from the memberships of member organizations, which, based on this acquire the right to propose candidates from their environment for Tesla awards in all the above fields of creativity. Due to decreased number of the Foundation members after disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, the money for Tesla awards used to be provided by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of Serbia. In addition the Ministry used to provide a part of financial resources, according to the Ministry programme of support of non-governmental organizations, for the Foundation current expenses and activities.

Continuing the tradition of holding scientific conferences within the framework of marking the jubilee anniversaries of Tesla's birth, the Foundation organized the 5th international conference under the title TESLA 3rd MILLENNIUM, held in Belgrade, 15-18 October 1996. The objective of the Conference was to pay a deserved tribute to Nikola Tesla, and at the same time, based on the scientific truth, to critically review his achievements, with participation of the most competent representatives of science and scientific institutions from the country and abroad, and assess the real Tesla's contribution to modern civilization development. In addition,

reviewing the development in the fields of scientific and invention activities of Nikola Tesla, achieved in the 20th century, and having also in view Tesla's achievements, inventions and ideas contained in thousands of pages of his published and unpublished papers, it was intended to get to know to what extent all this may represent the inspiration, stimulus or the basis for further development.

One hundred and five scientific papers (60 from FR Yugoslavia and 45 from foreign countries) were presented at the Conference, which were published in two Proceedings. Presentation of scientific papers was attended by over 300 scientific workers and experts, of whom 41 from 16 foreign countries. The Managing Board of the Foundation, as a token of gratitude for popularizing the person and works of Nikola Tesla, awarded the golden plaque "NIKOLA TESLA" to Ms. Margaret Cheney, well known American writer and biographer of Nikola Tesla, the author of the book "Tesla, man out of Time", who, according to numerous opinions is "the best, the most accurate and the most complete biography

of Nikola Tesla". The book has been so far translated into French, German, Serbian and Japanese languages.

After the 5th international conference TESLA 3rd MILLENNIUM was held the Managing Board of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation passed the decision to introduce the international recognition entitled "Jubilee Tesla Medal" which, together with a diploma, has been awarded since 1996 to recognized foreign scientist and institutions.

National TESLA AWARDS and international "Jubilee Tesla Medal" are awarded by the Foundation Managing Board in accordance with determined rules and criteria, and on the basis of proposals submitted by the competent jury composed of the most eminent national scientific workers and experts. In previous twenty years of the Foundation activities 126 national awards were given in all fields, in addition to 12 international recognitions. Details pertaining to individual fields are as follows:

GRANTED "TESLA AWARDS", 1981-1999:

- SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN NATURAL AND TECHNICAL-TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES 19
- HIGHEST ENGINEERING TECHNICAL-TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS 18
- INVENTION, INNOVATION, RATIONALIZATION 41
- REALIZATION OF OBJECTIVES OF THE "NIKOLA TESLA" FOUNDATION IN ORGANIZATIONS 7
- CREATIVITY OF THE YOUTH 48

TOTAL NATIONAL AWARDS 126

▪ "JUBILEE TESLA MEDAL" WITH DIPLOMA-INTERNATIONAL TESLA AWARD

TOTAL INTERNATIONAL AWARDS 12

In previous years the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation succeeded to maintain a high reputation and level of "Tesla Awards" thanking to a strong competition of candidates for these high recognitions.

3. STIMULATING CREATIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Number and quality of proposed candidates for the TESLA AWARD present the best indication of the attitude of a society towards its own development and its own future. Following the Foundation activities it is possible to make a number of statements on questions related to our future.

1. During several past years of the 20th century our society, when it comes to creativity and relation towards creators, was experiencing a serious crisis.

2. Increasingly smaller number of proposed candidates for "Tesla Award" coming from domestic scientific institutions, educational and other organizations, including candidates from their environment, for the open annual "Competition for Tesla Awards" witness the crisis of the society. In this:

- a) awards are granted every year if the level and number of proposed candidates provides high levels of criteria set up for winners in each category;
- b) due to insufficient number of proposals and inadequate competitiveness of candidates in the previous twenty years five times awards were granted for two years period - 1987/88, 1989/90, 1991/92 and 1994/95;
- c) For the years 1999/2000 "Tesla Awards" were not granted since there were not enough competitive proposals of candidates from organizations, which causes the concern and points out to a deep crisis of our society. The fact that concerns is that in our organizations, which seems to be the case with the State as well, there is increasingly less interest for creators and less care for creativity. It is our duty to launch the warn on this issue, to invite our organizations and the State to pay much more attention to stimulating the creativity and creators, first of all for their own interests, and the interest to develop these organizations.

3. From year to year the number of member organizations of the Foundation having the right to propose candidates from their environments for the "Tesla Awards" has been decreasing. Having once over 200 member organizations the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation has today less than 50.

4. Economic, financial and social crisis effected the Federal and Republican budgets, which, through the appropriate ministries, insufficiently financially support activities of the Foundation as a non-governmental organization which takes care of human resources development.

5. Foundation and Society "Nikola Tesla" have not solved the problem of business premises, despite the fact that during several decades they have been functioning in the premises belonging to the Belgrade "Business premises".

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

"Nikola Tesla" Foundation invites all our scientific institutions, economic organizations and the appropriate State authorities to support the mission of the Foundation, as well as to take part in managing the Foundation, for the sake of successful realization of the "Nikola Tesla" Foundation

objectives, which contribute to development of the society through stimulating and developing human resources.

Attitude of the society towards creators and the role of human resources in development are best expressed through Nikola Tesla's thoughts:

"Great are not those who humiliate a man, but those who praise him, who enrich his spiritual heritage, contributing thereby to his happiness."

"Without hope there is not satisfaction in science, and as long as a man has not ideals he can not be happy".

Over a hundred years ago Nikola Tesla expressed a thought which is very true today in the era of the use of human wisdom and motivation of people on whom the economic and social development depend:

"Human imagination is the only asset of factories".

Without knowledge, without human imagination, without creativity, there could not be changes, no development of organizations, nor the society development. "Nikola Tesla" Foundation can operate successfully only as a part of the conscious society which motivate and reward creators, building up thus its own future.