

## In Memory of Stella Marega (1976 – 2024)

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With a delay of more than a year, I learned that Dr. Stella Marega, a political philosopher from Trieste, Italy, had passed away. She left this world too early, at the age of 47, after a long struggle with a serious illness. The death of Dr. Marega is a great loss for politology of religion—truly immeasurable.

She was the first well-known researcher from the so-called “big world” who recognized the importance of politology of religion. Early on, she understood how mistaken many Western scholars were—especially sociologists and political scientists—in their view of religion. They did not want to see that religion is a lasting reality, one that is not going away, despite what we were wrongly taught by French Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. Like their more insightful fellow countryman Alexis de Tocqueville, Dr. Marega saw that religion is one of the key forces in politics—if not the most important one. More important than basic economic interests, which Karl Marx misleadingly emphasized. But also more hidden than, for example, hunger or poverty. That’s why religion is more important—because it’s harder to see, and therefore more dangerous for social stability.

Following the traces of religion, this brilliantly intelligent and noble woman, Dr. Marega, could not ignore the fact that, in a small Balkan country Serbia, and at its Faculty of Political Science, someone had seen what she had seen, and turned it into a new academic field: politology of religion. Without knowing anyone from the Faculty, and only based on information she found online, she discovered that Belgrade had answered a pressing need in both politics and science—the need to study the role of religion in politics in a scholarly way.

She wrote a paper on that topic for a conference at the University of Chester in England (“Philosophy, Religion and Politics: Contributions and Perspectives of Politology of Religion”) and informed the international academic community that politology of religion was born in Belgrade during the 1993/94 academic year. It is especially important that she was the first—as someone not connected to the editorial

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board of any journal—to introduce the term *politology of religion* into the English language. She understood that this was much better than *political science of religion* or *religion and politics*. With that, Dr. Marega made an enormous contribution to the development of this field, and in that way, indirectly became part of the team at the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade that began work on this discipline. For that, we are deeply grateful.

The global field politology of religion—and especially the one in Belgrade—will never forget her. Her name will forever remain in the history of this academic discipline.

May God welcome her into His heavenly dwelling.