



**The Third International Conference on Nordic and Baltic Studies of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies and [Balkanalysis.com](http://Balkanalysis.com) will be held from**

**May 25-27, 2012**

**in Targoviste, Romania**

### ***European networks:***

## ***the Balkans, Scandinavia and the Baltic world in a time of economic and ideological crisis***

### **Conference General Topic Description:**

The current global economic crisis has generated debate in Europe regarding not only the future expansion of the EU, but the very viability of the European project itself. The discussion regarding the integration of the Balkans in the EU or NATO has been accompanied or even replaced by the question of whether the European project will in fact survive the general economic and social crisis that Europe faces today. While the Balkans still look towards Western European models and standards, Europe itself is suffering a crisis of political deadlock, economic decline, and an increasingly sharp ideological divide. Similarly, while Estonia has just entered the Euro club and Latvian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian and Romanian leaders talk about joining into the Euro zone, top world economists are at the same time predicting the end of the Euro as a currency sometime in the near future.

The economic crisis in Europe seems to be partially responsible for the adoption over the past few years of anti-immigrant policies, something also being fed by fears of the future role of Islam in Europe. But these policies have also targeted citizens of European Union countries in Central and Eastern Europe (such as the Roma minority in Romania), as well as those of non-EU Balkan states.

A common reason stated for exclusionary policies is to safeguard the jobs of domestic workers. However, this crisis has also fostered the development of a new far right bloc around Europe, having as one of its features the exaltation of xenophobia, fear of immigrants and foreigners in general. The debate regarding the Roma has been particularly fierce, with even the Finns and the Swedes opposed to the formers' presence in their countries. A transformative moment in the evolution of this phenomenon occurred in July of 2011, with the Oslo attacks carried out by Anders Behring Breivik,

allegedly done to save Norwegian society from the government's liberal policies on immigration and multi-culturalism. Disturbingly, this event proved that even advanced and well-organized European states such as Norway are unable to prevent large-scale extremist violence.

### **The aims of the conference:**

The conference has two major goals. The first is to foster debate and academic discussion regarding contemporary problems facing the Balkan and Baltic regions during a period of severe global economic instability. These include the rise of extremist political groups with violent aims in the Baltics, the continued activity of Balkan-origin organized crime groups in Scandinavia, and the role that Baltic states may play in helping Western Balkan countries integrate politically and institutionally with the EU. The second aim of the conference is to foster cooperation and the creation of research networks between scholars from two geographical peripheries of Europe.

### **In this respect, the conference will address themes such as:**

- The accession of Balkan states to the EU and/or NATO, with particular reference to the experiences of the relatively new EU and/or NATO Member States from South-Eastern Europe and the Eastern Baltic region. What lessons or information-sharing experiences or networks do the latter states have for the Balkan ones?
- Perceived threats to Western Europe (in economic, security or cultural terms) posed by Balkan and/or Eastern European states/non-state actors. Are these threats real or exaggerated? What measures can and are being taken to deal with them?
- The development of the far right in the Balkans and in Northern Europe, past, present and future. What linkages can be observed, and what conclusions can be made?
- Strategies for integrating minorities in the Baltic Sea rim countries and in the Black Sea areas. What is being done, and how can it be done better?
- Past and present networks of cooperation at state or NGO level between the Baltic and Black seas regions. Do these present a useful model for results-oriented cooperation (ie., in sharing experiences for EU membership goals), or otherwise how should they be modified?
- Current economic relations between Baltic and/or Nordic states, on the one hand, and the Balkan countries, on the other: trends and directions of trade between the two regions, labor costs and competitiveness, business perceptions, economic integration etc.

- Current political, cultural and diplomatic relations between Baltic and/or Nordic states, on the one hand, and the Balkan countries;
- Balkan organized crime in the Scandinavian countries
- The Balkan Roma people as threat for Western Europe

The second aim of the conference is to foster cooperation and the creation of research networks between scholars from two geographical peripheries of Europe, the Balkans and the Baltic World. This conference aims at putting this people together, at facilitating the contacts among them, at offering them the framework for developing new projects, for finding in cooperation new solutions to old dilemmas. Creating specialized networks is indeed an implicit aim of every international conference, but this would be the first organized event specifically designed to bring together scholars, academics, PhD students from the Balkans and Baltic world or interested in the problems of these two specific areas.

ARSBN welcomes papers, panels and roundtable proposals. Contributions are encouraged from disciplines but not limited to: history, cultural studies, economics, ethnic relations, international relations, political science.

Paper, panel or roundtable proposals shall be send to the organizers of the conference at [conference2012@arsbn.ro](mailto:conference2012@arsbn.ro) and must include an abstract (motivation, problem statement, approach, results, conclusion) of no more than 300 words and a curriculum vitae.

All participants whose papers are accepted for presentation will be offered free conference attendance, meals and an excursion. The accommodation will be provided based on individual applications within the limit of our budget. Please be aware that the travel expenses are not covered except for a few possible travel grants offered by the Nordic and Baltic embassies in Romania (the confirmation of which is still pending). However, the participants arriving from abroad will be commuted from and to Bucharest International Airport “Henri Coanda” (some 75 km east to Targoviste).

Selected papers presented at the conference will be published in the journals:

- *Revista Româna de Studii Baltice si Nordice* / The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies: <http://www.arsbn.ro/RRSBN.htm> - deadline June 15, 2011
- *Valahian Journal of Historical Studies*: <http://www.valahianjournal.info> – deadline September 15, 2012;

In addition, the possibility of publishing a thematic volume at an international printing house is also prospected.

### Conference Schedule and Deadlines:

- Proposals for panels and roundtables (approx. 500 words): December 31, 2011
- Abstracts for individual papers (approx. 300 words): February 1, 2012
- Notification of Acceptance: March 1, 2012
- Publication of the Conference program: March 31, 2012
- Conference: May 25-27, 2012

### Conference organizers (others still to confirm):

The Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies



Balkananalysis.com



Embassy of Finland, Bucharest



Embassy of Lithuania, Bucharest



Embassy of Norway, Bucharest



Consulate of Latvia, Bucharest



Consulate of Estonia, Bucharest



Valahia University of Târgoviste



"Grigore Gafencu" Research Center for the History of International Relations and Cultural Studies



The Târgoviste Municipality



The Royal Court National Museal Complex, Targoviste



Cetatea de Scaun Printing House



**Sponsor (others still to confirm):**



## **Organizing Committee:**

### **Honorary Chair of the Organizing Committee:**

- H.E. Dr. Vladimir Jarmolenko, Ambassador of Lithuania, The Honorary President of *the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies*;

### **Chairs of the Organizing Committee:**

- Dr. Silviu Miloiu, The President of the *Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies*;
- Chris Deliso, The Director of *Balkananalysis.com*;

### **Members of the Organizing Committee (the full list will be posted soon):**

### **Secretary of the Organizing Committee:**

- Elena Dragomir, The Secretary of *The Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies*

**The webpage of the conference:** <http://www.arsbn.ro/conference-2012.htm>

**Past conferences:** <http://www.arsbn.ro/conferences.htm> and <http://www.arsbn.ro/conference-2011.htm>

## **Contact information:**

For further assistance, please contact the organizers of the conference at:

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