

CEE – A REGION IN-BETWEEN

26-27 September 2019, Pécs, Hungary

Organised by the Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Pécs in cooperation with the Central European Political Science Association.

Venue: Faculty of Humanities, University of Pécs | H-7624 Pécs, Ifjúság str 6.

For all the participants in this fascinating debate, "Central Europe" was defined, not by geography, but by values. "Central Europe" was, in György Konrád's words, a Weltanschauung, not a Staatsangehörigkeit (i.e., a way of looking at the world rather than a question of citizenship); for Leszek Kołakowski it was a "culturally connected area"; for Stefan Kaszyński a "state of mind"; for Czesław Miłosz "a way of thinking".

Adrian G. V. Hyde-Price

The International Politics of East Central Europe. Manchester University Press ND. 1996.

Recent trends in the Central Eastern European countries further proved the unique position and mindset of the region – in-between two different worlds and cultures, the East and the West. What a few might call the return of history, the countries once again experience uncertainty, political extremity and the influence of external powers.

The EU scepticism, the refugee situation, the *soap opera* called BREXIT, the rise of nationalism and the (re)arrival of the Russian interest questioned the world the CEE countries created for themselves after the change of regimes and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. What once was a strategic priority, i.e. to become members of the Euro-Atlantic organizations, now is a target of criticism. Though most of their goals have been accomplished, there still is a huge gap between the Western European members and the CEE region, driving the critical voices.

Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary became members of the NATO 20 years ago, starting the Eastern Enlargement of the security cooperation as well. What was a criticised move back then by some scholars and NATO officials (and Boris Yeltsin, the then President of the Russian Federation), is a historical turning point looking back from 2019. But that cooperation is also uncertain, given the slightly changing foreign policy of the US, their shift towards Asia and the continuous criticism of the military budgets of the majority of the European members.

Within this uncertain situation, in-between East and West – the project that once was a holy grail for the CEE countries, is at least losing its previous shine. Regional initiatives might offer answers to these challenges, but there are also serious concerns about what concept these countries should adhere to – not to mention the rebirth of nationalism, in some cases generating suspicion and fear among countries of the region.

In 2019 these processes are going to continue, conclude (in the case of BREXIT possibly) and generate further questions for CEECs. Therefore, we are offering our academic community a chance to meet and reflect on the major issues of our region, the continent and its initiatives. Given the success of the previous editions of the CEPASA conferences we are convinced that amidst these challenges and

debates, there is still a need for substantive discussions and recommendations from the academic community.

Within the conference panels both theoretical and analytical contributions might be presented in connection with the general theme "CEE – A REGION IN-BETWEEN". Below, we mention a brief list of themes that might be discussed within the panels:

- NATO's first Eastern Enlargement;
- CEECs towards the idea of military integration in the EU;
- Importance of Collective Defense for CEECs;
- NATO's future enlargement: The case of Macedonia (Northern Macedonia) and Ukraine;
- Political trends in CEE;
- Civil society in Central and Eastern Europe
- Trajectories of Party Politics in the Region;
- Threats to Liberal Democracy;
- Rise of Conservatism and Nationalism;
- Rise of right-wing populism in CEE;
- Regional Initiatives - The V4 and the Three Seas Initiative;
- CEE and the EU;
- CEECs and the EP elections;
- What's next for CEE after BREXIT?;
- CEE towards the refugee crisis;
- CEE towards the EU enlargement process and the Balkans;
- Energy Security in CEE;
- CEECs and the US;
- CEECs and Ukraine;
- CEECs and Russia;
- CEECs and China;
- CEECs in Africa;

A broad range of topics is suggested, which cover theoretical studies, international relations, comparative politics, area studies and other sub-disciplines of political science. While participants are especially invited to respond to the conference theme, proposals on other aspects of Central European politics will be considered as well. The conference is open to researchers from all countries with an interest in Central European affairs.

The academic programme for the conference will be organized in the usual format of panels. Each panel should comprise three to five papers plus chair. We welcome individual paper proposals and / or complete panel proposals, as well.

Proposals for panels should include:

- Name, institutional affiliation and email address of the proposed panel chair.
- Proposed panel title and summary of its theme (approx. 250 words + up to 5 keywords).
- Tentative indication of possible panelists including their names, institutional affiliation proposed paper title, summary and email addresses.

The closing date for panel proposals is midnight CET 30 April 2019.

Proposal for papers should include:

- Name, institutional affiliation and email address of the proposed contributor.
- Proposed paper title and summary (approx. 250 words + up to 5 keywords).

- Possible panel where the paper could be placed (if known)

The closing deadline for paper proposals is midnight CET 31 May 2019.

The proposals should be sent to: cepsa2019@pte.hu

All proposing a panel or paper will be notified of the selection **until 15 July 2019**.

Organisational issues:

- there is no conference fee
- the organizers do not cover any travel costs
- the organizers are prepared to help all participants in search for accommodation