

# Editorial Foreword

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Volume 6, issue no. 2 (2014) of *Revista Română de Studii Baltice și Nordice / The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* is dedicated to the publication of selected papers of *Fifth annual international conference on Baltic and Nordic Studies in Romania: A piece of culture, a culture of peace, re-imagining European communities in the North Sea, Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions*, which was held in Târgoviște, Romania, between 17-19 August 2014, as part of the project "A piece of culture, a culture of peace" (CoolPeace) and a follow-up to the summer school of Nordic and Baltic Studies. Financed under the measure "inter-institutional cooperation projects" of the EEA grants, the project was designed to strengthen the institutional cooperation at the level of higher education sector between all the partners involved: Valahia University of Târgoviște as the Project Promoter, the University of Agder, the University of Oslo, the Embassy of Lithuania in Romania, Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania and the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies. The Programme Operator of the EEA Scholarship Programme in Romania is ANPCDEFP (the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training). The embassies of Finland and Norway in Romania were cultural partners in this endeavour.

The aim of the conference was to investigate various types of potential conventional and non-conventional threats in Europe which could emerge from poverty, exclusion, competition for resources, weak institutions, ideological views, perceptions of the other or lack of knowledge about the other. Our continent also seems under constant (perceived) threats related to terrorism, energy, Russia's relations with Europe or weapons of mass destructions. Despite many difficulties and constraints, there is justified hope to move from a culture of (perceived) threat to a culture of peace. While politicians stress that one should be prepared to respond to threats and security challenges, and that society should not make the fatal mistake of minimizing the many (potential) dangers that Europe faces today, scientists, artists, historians, linguists etc. argue that peace can and should be preserved through collaboration with the other, through promoting knowledge about the other, through the study of past experiences, through promoting pieces of the other's culture.

This conference focused on intercultural dialogue and forms of cooperation between state and non-state entities, between intra-cultural entities, between different communities. The conference approached the cultural relations from two perspectives:

- as an integral part of bilateral and multilateral foreign policy, focusing on intercultural relations, policies, past experiences;
- as an integral part of bilateral and multilateral foreign policy focusing on intra-cultural relations.

The assumption was that cultural relations manifest in interstate relations, in inter-regional relations, in relations between states and non-state entities, in multicultural states. Cultural relations have effect on policies, political thought, communications, choices of states, ethnic groups, religious groups etc.

The conference brought together scientists, young and consecrated scholars, non-governmental and governmental actors in the areas of cultural relations and peace building, ambassadors, educators. The conference addressed themes such as: language and culture; a diplomacy of peace; World War II - the greatest challenge to peace; intercultural relations; the aesthetics of peace through literature; re-imagining power, gender and contemporary globalization; European networks of peace: modelling the whole.

These themes are well encompassed in this journal, which opens with a theoretical approach to war and peace in Eastern Europe as seen from the perspective of Ukrainian evolutions and approaches topics related to the contribution of music, literature, translations, diplomacy, energy policy, minorities and majority - minority relations to bridging the gaps in Europe. It also discusses the potential area of conflicts which emerge from the past and particularly the interpretation of the past in politics, history and culture.