



Editorial Foreword

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As this issue of *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* illustrates despite the fact that Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region are sometimes perceived and self-perceived in terms of otherness, they share many of the assumptions, values, fears, and inconsistencies of the European continent, albeit in their own terms and with numerous nuances.

Irina Manea's article, which opens the second issue of the 13th volume of the journal, investigating the resurgence of Neopaganism and Heathen groups in Scandinavia, is a good illustration of this point. The völkish and ethnicist perspectives, which are generally seen as matrices of generic fascisms, are persistently represented throughout Scandinavia, despite the fact that Norse symbols and mythology provide them with a number of distinctive characteristics. The author's focus on the Asatru Association in Iceland and The Old Way in Sweden reveals very intriguing characteristics of these movements, which exhibit significant regional nuances, but are comparable to other European movements in their pursuit of "a heritage discourse that can become acceptable and normalized in society, reflecting an open and inclusive attitude."

A common European feature of the post-Communist period in former Eastern Europe is the migration to the Western better-off countries. Maruta Pranka, Ilze Koroeva, and Ginta Elksne of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia investigate the migration of Latvians to Sweden, a society often seen as an epitome of tolerance and openness. The study indicates, despite this, that the ability of expatriates to maintain and transmit their language to their children is contingent on a variety of conditions. Among them are the practical use of language at home,

the ethnicity of the émigré's spouse, the continuous connection with relatives in the mother country, in this instance Latvia, and the activities and events that bind together the expatriate communities overseas.

Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region were often innovative or, at the very least, some of the advanced areas in some fields. Kari Alenius examines the extensive language and cultural rights granted to minorities in interwar Finland and Estonia. The Finnish scholar of the University of Oulu discusses a number of factors that contributed to this process, including the peculiarities of the relationships between majorities and minorities in the two countries, the internal debate on what sort of sociopolitical system was to be established, and the perceived influence of international trends and theories regarding the treatment of ethnic minorities.

The last article in this issue performs an empirical analysis of the Baltic Sea region's boundaries during the interwar era, investigating the intricacies of borders as a twinning of political, social, cultural, economic, and psychological processes and events. The article is the first part of a study that scans both "soft" and "hard" boundaries, meditating on the elements that explain the genesis and perception of a boundary as falling into one category or the other.

The four themes are essential to comprehending the processes defining Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region today, both from a historical perspective and from the standpoint of current major regional events linked to wider European and global developments. In light of this, we believe that The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies will provide some substance to our readers' musings on these processes.