Editorial Foreword

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The current issue of Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice / The Romanian Journal of Baltic and Nordic Studies (RRSBN) continues the publication of selected papers presented at the second international conference for Baltic and Nordic Studies in Romania entitled Black Sea and Baltic Sea Regions: Confluences, influences and crosscurrents in the modern and contemporary ages, an event which was organized under the aegis of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies with the support of the embassies of Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden in Romania, of the Consulate of Latvia, of Valahia University of Târgoviște, of the City Hall of Târgoviște, of the The Princely Court National Museum Complex of Târgoviște and of Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House and of the respected companies Niro Investment Group and Arvi Agro SRL.

One of the most inspiring papers presented at the conference authored by Stefan Ewert from Greifswald University in Germany approaches comparatively the development of regional integration and identity by the means of regional higher education in the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions. The author finds out that the two regions resemble each other only in terms of challenges they are facing, but when it comes to regional identity, regional co-operation and political institutionalization the Baltic Sea Region is well ahead its South-Eastern European counterpart. Instead of conclusions, the author chooses to suggest the steps to be taken by future comparative researches in the field of regional academic cooperation within the two regions, such a comparison allowing evaluating “the empirical background for an appropriate EU-strategy in the Black Sea Region.”

The Finnish respected historian Vesa Vares of University of Turku continues his analyses on the perception of „otherness“ in the European political culture, approaching the way Finland regarded Eastern Europe’s political systems and national characteristics during the interwar period. While Finland was regarded in Western Europe or in Scandinavia as part of the periphery and consequently her elite strove to prove how committed
the country was to Western values, her perceptions of Eastern Europe grew negative during the interwar period and she often accused the peoples of this area of the same sins others were attributing to herself.

The Greek historian Dimitris Michalopoulos of Historical Institute for Studies on Eleutherios Venizelos and his Era undertakes an analysis of the Romanian-Polish relations and of their regional implications. The author approaches the rationality behind the concluding of the Romanian-Polish alliance and underlines the importance of this coalition for East Central Europe in the complex geopolitical and ideological circumstances of the interwar period. Despite the rock-hard foundation on which these relations were established and the common security threats the two nations were facing, the bonds between them started to dwindle in mid-1930s as a result of the changing balance of power in Europe and of the raising influence of totalitarian great powers.

Dalia Bukelevičiūtė of Vilnius University brings a fresh air from the Lithuanian and Czech archives on the issue of the Little Entente and of Romania’s foreign policy and the way they were interpreted in Kaunas. According to the author, Lithuania showed some interest in the developments in Central and South-Eastern Europe only by mid-1930s, but even that was short-lived and shallow.

A recent Ph.D. of the University of Iaşi and an associate researcher at the University of Oslo, Vasilica Sîrbu discusses in her paper the failure of Romanian personalities to be proposed or accepted as candidates for winning the Nobel Peace Prize as well as their advocacy on behalf of various personalities to be awarded this highly respected recognition.

Ana-Maria Despa, in her debut article, reconstitutes the history of diplomatic relations between Romania and Norway during the interwar period and the international and domestic environments which affected their development. The conclusion of the author is that “the diplomatic relations between Romania and Norway in the interwar period can be considered peripheral, but by no means can they be regarded as irrelevant both in the context of their foreign policy and in relation to the system of international relations”.

We hope that the diversity of topics, methods and approaches from this issue of the journal will engender a good reception from our public and that they will be a catalyst for further researches aimed at deepening our knowledge and understanding of the past and current encounters between the Black Sea and Baltic Sea rim peoples.

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