

## Editorial Foreword

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The current issue of *Revista Română de Studii Baltice și Nordice / The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* combines the publication of scientific articles highlighting issues of identity, memory, culture, translation and economy of the Nordic and Baltic area with an educational section featuring the innovative syllabi of disciplines to be taught at the summer school of Nordic and Baltic Studies, which is the core of the project “A piece of culture, a culture of peace” (CoolPeace), and a corpus of scientific articles. The project is financed under the measure “inter-institutional cooperation projects” of the EEA grants and is intended 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 ANPCDEF (the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training). The embassies of Finland, Norway and Sweden in Romania are cultural partners in this endeavour. Two of the articles published in this issue were presented at the Sixth international conference on Baltic and Nordic Studies in Romania entitled *Historical memory, the politics of memory and cultural identity: Romania, Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region in comparison*, hosted by the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies, Faculty of History and Political Sciences of Ovidius University of Constanța and International Summer School of The University of Oslo, Norway, in Constanța, Romania, on May 22-23, 2015, and financed within the Fund for Bilateral Relations at National Level. The 2015 conference focused on historical memory, the politics of memory and cultural identity, on historical narratives, including competing narratives, and on the use of history in identity politics. Places of commemoration, autobiographies, biographies and memoirs, empiric or theoretical research relevant to the conference’s topic stood also at the heart of the meeting. While concentrating on the three subjects underlined in the title of the conference, it also sought to approach other topics of

interconnection between Romania, the Black Sea region and Scandinavia and Baltic Sea Region such as the role of women in shaping the society, energy, geography and environment, economics and trade, international relations.

The educational section of the journal encompasses a unit dedicated to Scandinavian (Norwegian, Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish), Finnish (Finnish and Estonian) and Baltic (Lithuanian and Latvian) languages and a second unit devoted to the history, culture, society and peace-building in Nordic and Baltic states. A special emphasis is placed on peace-building and peace education, an endeavour where a special role is played by Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania. Our Norwegian partners from the University of Agder and the International Summer School of the University of Oslo are instrumental in teaching courses and organizing workshops of Norwegian literature, language, and culture. The Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies contributes to the summer school with its expertise on history, culture, filmography and geography of Nordic and Baltic areas of Europe.

The scientific section of the journal opens with an article signed by Leonidas Donskis, which can also be perceived as a pleading in favour of a new interpretative framework of East-Central European sensibilities. The article explores the Western European perception of what was called, during the Cold War, Eastern Europe. The works of two exponential writers of the region, Czesław Miłosz and Milan Kundera, are taken as witnesses and clues to the awareness and understanding of East-Central Europe.

Crina Leon keeps us within the topic of imagery dealing with the representation of Sweden and Norway in two of the novels signed by the Nobel Literature Prize laureates Selma Lagerlöf and Knut Hamsun. Inspired by a profound knowledge of the lands where they grew up and despite their allegiance to different literary movements, the two novels bring an important contribution to the way these areas are incarnated in our mind.

Francesco La Rocca approaches the political clashes between Prussia and Denmark on the basis of the intellectual debate between German and Danish intellectuals with regard to the cultural heritage of the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg and of Scandinavia as a whole. The continuation of these intellectual debates was the Schleswig Wars, but their avenues of influence are to be found extending as far as Nazi Germany's totalitarian ideology and the Second World War.

Darius Žiemelis tackles the issue of the second serfdom from the perspective of neo-Marxist capitalist world system theory. Employing the

method of modern comparative historical sociology, he reaches the conclusion that the most characteristic features of the second serfdom are to be found in Lithuania in the second half of the 18th century up to 1861.

Finally, the issue ends with an interview with the distinguished translator of Romanian literature in Norwegian language Steinar Lone, who brought to the Norwegian public the writings of authors such as Camil Petrescu, Mihail Sadoveanu, Mircea Eliade, Mircea Cărtărescu or Gellu Naum. From the discussion between Crina Leon and Steinar Lone we learn about ongoing and forthcoming translation projects of the Norwegian intellectual.

We hope that this new issue of the journal will shed more light on Nordic and Baltic history, culture and society in Romania, in the Baltic and Nordic regions and beyond and will contribute to the education of new experts in this field from among the Romanian participants at the CoolPeace programme.