



## **15<sup>th</sup> International “Border Crossings” Students’ Conference 6-9 April 2017, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria**

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### **TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE BORDERS: STUDYING BOUNDARY CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES IN EASTERN AND SE EUROPE**

It has become common knowledge, when we talk about borders and boundaries, to assert, firstly, that we live in a borderless and de-territorialized world where the significance of geopolitical borders has changed and borders have become more permeable via the constant movement of people, capital, goods and information. Yet, the political reality across the world and the study of borders and boundary construction processes point otherwise. Existing borders have been undermined or eroded, new borders have been established, and others have been reinforced through ethno-nationalist aspirations and security concerns over terrorism and illegal migration.

Focusing on Eastern and SE Europe, we could see that the expansion of the EU in the region and the political and economic integration after the fall of communist regimes have created a complex setting for the study of boundary construction processes. Imperatives of actual or desired EU membership have led nation states to develop new policies which have resulted in the opening up of borders and the increase of communication. Yet, the idea of EU's borders, both internal and external, is problematically accommodated within the idea of state borders. The current tensions and conflicts in the Middle East and northern African countries and the vast waves of refugees and illegal migrants are perceived as compromising stability in the region and EU security. Borders are connected with the notion of the protection of territorial integrity and national security.

If politically constructed and imposed, borders are literally visible, and in recent years they tend to become more tangible and impenetrable. Yet culturally constructed boundaries are often intangible or seek to remain invisible, or on the contrary, they demonstrate their existence openly. The borders express difference. When imagination has the potential to divide people it also has the potential to unite them. Overcoming borders then asks for the reimagining of borders and the reimagining of outsiders as insiders. That however, would ask for the imaginative framework that allows people to meet and interact with “others”, with “strangers”.

This conference aims at bringing out the multilevel complexity of borders and boundary construction processes. It intends to address the processes of political, economic and cultural change that Eastern SE European countries have been undergoing. SE European borders require considerably much more documentation and analysis so that this work could be proved sufficiently and comparatively rich and adequate. An ethnographic approach to borders and boundaries can connect their study to wider interdisciplinary debates about identity, territory, sovereignty and citizenship. Having in mind the political importance of borders after 1990 and their centrality in the geopolitical changes that still occur in Eastern and SE Europe the conference wishes to illuminate the wide-ranging transformations these entail.

### Conference subtopics include but are not strictly limited to:

- ✓ Negotiation of borders and boundaries.
- ✓ The dynamics of state borders and border zones.
- ✓ Experiencing border checkpoints.
- ✓ Borders crossing, trespassing, smuggling.
- ✓ Forbidden and permitted – the meanings of a borders and boundaries.
- ✓ Interactions between center and periphery.
- ✓ New minorities – welcomed or stigmatized?
- ✓ Mixed marriages - new dimensions to the term.
- ✓ Different generations, different memories.
- ✓ The places to return – are they always the same?
- ✓ Openness of holy shrines – a myth or reality?
- ✓ Culture in motion.
- ✓ Culture facts – shared, taken, borrowed, stolen?
- ✓ Youth subcultures.
- ✓ Gender and sexuality.

### Organizing Institutions:

Border Crossings Network

Center for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Veliko Tarnovo University “St Cyril and St Methodius”, Veliko Tarnovo

Department of History and Archaeology, University of Ioannina, Ioannina

Department of Balkan, Slavic and Eastern Studies, Macedonia University, Thessaloniki Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Belgrade

National School of Political Studies and Administration, Bucharest

Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, St Cyrill and Methodius University, Skopje

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Zadar, Zadar.

### Organizing Committee:

Prof. Dr. Margarita Karamihova, Center for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Veliko Tarnovo University “St Cyril and St Methodius”, Veliko Tarnovo

Prof. Dr. Petko St. Petkov, Center for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Veliko Tarnovo University “St Cyril and St Methodius”, Veliko Tarnovo

Prof. Vassilis Nitsiakos, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Ioannina, Ioannina

Prof. Vintila Mihailescu, National School of Political Studies and Administration, Bucharest

Prof. Rajko Muršič, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana

Prof. Ljupčo Risteski, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, St Cyrill and Methodius University, Skopje

Assoc. Prof. Slobodan Naumović, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Belgrade

Assist. Professor Mario Katic, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Zadar, Zadar

Assist. Professor Dr. Danijela Birt, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Zadar, Zadar

Assist. Prof. Dr. Petra Kelemen, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Assist. Prof. Dr. Marijeta Rajković Iveta, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Assist. Prof. Dr. Tihana Rubić, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Senior Assistant Dr. Ivona Grgurinović, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Senior Assistant Dr. Tibor Komar, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb

Assist. Prof. Alik Angelidou, Department of Social Anthropology Panteion University, Athens

Assist. Prof. Georgios Agelopoulos, Department of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki

Assist. Prof. Ioannis Manos, Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki

Assist. Prof. Vassilis Dalkavoukis, Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini

Lecturer Dr. Vasiliki Kravva, Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini

Dr. Paraskevas Potiropoulos, Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens.

### **Students involved in the organization:**

Nadia Toshmakova, PhD candidate, Center for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Veliko Tarnovo University "St Cyril and St Methodius"

Pavlin Chaushev, Post-doctoral Fellow, Center for Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Veliko Tarnovo University "St Cyril and St Methodius"

Georgia Rina, PhD candidate, Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki.

### **Eligibility:**

The conference is open to all undergraduate and M.A. and Ph.D. students from the universities which are members of the Border Crossings Network, as well as to other students from the area and beyond who might find the network interesting. There are capacities for approximately one hundred participants. Students are expected to present their papers in any way related to the main topic of the conference. The presentation should be maximum 12 minutes (plus 5 minutes for discussion). Power-point and multimedia presentations are welcome.

### **Cost:**

There is no conference fee. However, travel costs and the cost of accommodation have to be covered by the participants themselves. The cost for accommodation in double or triple rooms, including breakfast and two dinners, is 75 EUROS per person for 3 nights.

### **Transportation:**

Participants should make their own travelling arrangements. In addition, a bus for the conference participants will run from Thessaloniki to Veliko Tarnovo on the 6<sup>st</sup> of April and from Veliko Tarnovo to Thessaloniki on the 9<sup>th</sup> April (participants will be notified on time). The bus fare will depend on the final number of the participants and is to be covered by them.

### **Deadline for submissions:**

28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Successful applicants will be notified by the 10<sup>th</sup> March. Please note that there will be NO abstract acceptance after the proposed date (10<sup>th</sup> March).

**Application procedure:**

Applicants should send their personal data, including university affiliation, and titled paper abstracts (around 15 lines) to the following persons:

**Georgia Rina, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki:** [info@border-crossings.eu](mailto:info@border-crossings.eu)

**Margarita Karamihova, Veliko Tarnovo University:** [karamihova2015@gmail.com](mailto:karamihova2015@gmail.com)

**Please contact BOTH persons!**