



## **Roundtable on “Ethnic Minorities in the Baltic Sea region”**

### **The Roundtable**

The Baltic Geopolitics Programme of the University of Cambridge, together with the Faculty of History of the University of Vilnius, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the European Centre for Minority Issues are holding a roundtable in Vilnius to consider the challenges facing ethnic minorities in the Baltic Sea region. The purpose is to explore what practical steps might best be taken to protect minority rights and build positive and constructive community relations in the region.

In the last 80 years there has been substantial movement of people in the Baltic Sea region. This has left a wide range of different ethnic minorities in different positions in the countries in which they live. These movements have arisen from the major movements of population in 1945 and immediately afterwards, the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, other movements of people into the region and, most recently, the consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The purpose of the roundtable is to explore the history of this situation, to understand the contemporary challenges, both to the full civic rights of existing minorities and to the community cohesion upon which resilient modern democracies depend, to look at how practical solutions can be developed and to understand the geopolitical pressures which could exacerbate these issues.

### **The event itself**

The Roundtable consists of about 20 people with significant expertise in the field, from a range of disciplines, and takes place on Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup> in Vilnius, at the premises of the University of Vilnius.

The event takes place under Chatham House rules, and there will be no press participation. Though the whole day will be filmed, the recording is for our own records and will not be public. Only the last session of the day will be open to the academic community of Vilnius University. After the event we hope to publish and publicise a report of the roundtable, with its conclusions. Ms Pille Petersoo (University of Tallinn) will be attending in order to draft this report.

We are delighted with high-level participation from people involved in minority rights discussions across Europe.



## Agenda Roundtable on Ethnic Minorities in the Baltic Sea region

### Wednesday Sept 24<sup>th</sup>

Restaurant of Hotel Artis Centrum, Totorių Street 23 – 01120 Vilnius

1800 - 1900 Welcome drinks reception  
1900 - 2200 Pre-workshop dinner, plus after-dinner speech

### Thursday Sept 25<sup>th</sup>

Vilnius University, Faculty of History, University str 3 – auditorium 331

0915 – 0930 **Welcome by the organisers**  
*Dr Kęstutis Kilinskas* Senior Researcher, Faculty of History, University of Vilnius  
*Prof Brendan Simms* Director, Centre for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge  
*Prof Vello Pettai* Director, European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)  
*Beate Martin* Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Baltic States

0930 – 1000 **Keynote: “Minorities and minority protection: Understandings, norms and current challenges”**  
*Prof David Smith* Alec Nove Chair in Russian and East European Studies, Glasgow University, UK

1000 – 1100 **Panel 1 – History of ethnic minorities in the Baltic Sea region**  
*Prof Brendan Simms* (moderator) Director Centre for Geopolitics, and Professor of History of European International Relations, University of Cambridge, UK  
*Prof Jurgita Verbickienė* Faculty of History, Centre for Studies of East-European Jewish History, Vilnius University  
*Prof Andžej Pukšto* Dept Political Science, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania  
*Prof Raivo Vetik* School of Governance, Law and Society, University of Tallinn, Estonia



1100 - 1120

Coffee break

1120 – 1230

**Panel 2 – Contemporary challenges**

*Prof Vello Pettai* (moderator) Director of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)

*Dr Mikko Puumalainen* Deputy Chancellor of Justice, Former Vice Chairman of Council of Europe’s Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Finland

*Ewelina Dobrowolska* Former Minister of Justice, Lithuania; Head of Public Affairs and Strategic Growth at Fabula Rud Pedersen Group

*Boriss Cilevics* Minority Rights defender, founder of MINELRES, former Latvian MP, former member of Parliamentary Assembly of the council of Europe, former chair Sub-Committee on the Rights of Minorities

1230 – 1345

Lunch

1345 – 1500

**Panel 3 – Attitudinal change**

*Dr Akvilė Naudžiūnienė* (Moderator) Faculty of History, Dept. of Historical Theory and Cultural History, Vilnius University

*Mārtiņš Kaprāns* Senior Researcher, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia

*Prof Piret Ehin* Professor of Comparative Politics and Deputy Head for Research at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies at Tartu University, Estonia

*Prof Inta Mierina* Director of Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Latvia

1500 – 1530

Coffee Break



1530 – 1645

**Panel 4 - Geopolitical Pressures**

*Dr Donatas Kupčiūnas (Moderator)* Baltic Fellow, Centre for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge

*Kadri Liik* Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations

*Prof Margarita Šešelgytė* Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University

*Amb Eitvydas Bajarūnas* Senior Fellow with the Democratic Resilience Programme at the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) and former Ambassador to the UK, Russia and Sweden

1645 – 1700

Short Coffee Break

1700 – 1800

**OPEN SESSION – “Whither ethnic politics in the region”**

*Rt Hon Charles Clarke (moderator)* Leader Baltic Geopolitics Programme, Centre for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge, UK

*Prof David Smith* Alec Nove Chair in Russian and East European Studies, Glasgow University, UK

*Oliver Loode* Estonian human rights activist and expert in the rights of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, Managing Director of URALIC Centre NGO

1800

**Close**