

Since the 17th century, on the verge of modernity, Southeastern European elites and peoples have been negotiating their symbolic and spatial status at the intersection and on the edges of empires. Such position of borderland, in the broadest sense of the term, implicitly placed the region at the margins of world orders. Yet, being at the periphery was hardly a pre-determined or immutable condition: populations, elites, and later, governments constantly re-imagined themselves and adapted in relation with imperial centers, Great Power politics, and, more recently, international organizations. Inevitably such tribulations generated specific dynamics within Southeastern Europe, among its different peoples and their (self-proclaimed) representatives.

The workshop aims to identify ideas, policies, institutions, and alliances articulated from within Southeastern Europe to cope with and contest the status of periphery of either empires or world/continental orders. We wish to highlight political dynamics, development projects, intellectual programs, and state practices that emerged as a result of local/regional attempts to design and channel projects of modernity as means to negotiate marginality. At the same time, the condition of (post)imperiality was intrinsic to these local initiatives. However, we understand periphery to be fluid: historical actors and agency determined its evolution over time at macro (in relation to empires or international orders), meso (within the region itself), or micro levels (within specific spaces – such as nation-states, or communities – such as social, ethnic, or religious minorities).

ORGANIZER

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Conference

Negotiating Periphery: Southeastern Europe across and after Empires



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
Institutul de Istorie
Nicolae Iorga



October 20–21, 2026

Institutul de Istorie Nicolae Iorga
Bulevardul Aviatorilor 1
011851 București, România

Program

20 October 2026

09.30–10.00

Opening remarks

Mioara Anton, Nicolae Iorga Institute of History (NIIH)

Oliver Jens Schmitt, Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences (IHB)

10.00–11.15

Keynote

Oliver Jens Schmitt, IHB

Moscow's Western Rivals: Political Culture as Defining Element of a Complex Neighborhood

11.15–11.35

Coffee break

11.35–13.10

Panel 1: Peripheral Communities across Empires

Chair: Ovidiu Cristea, NIIH

Lena Sadovski, IHB

The Periphery of European Catholicism? The Eastern Balkans (Bulgaria, Wallachia, Moldavia) as a Trans-Imperial Space within the Early Modern Catholic Missionary Structure

Dana Caciur-Andreescu, NIIH & Ovidiu Olar, IHB & NIIH

Pietro Cedulini's Informants in the Eastern Balkans: The Case of Benedetto da Gagliano

Mária Pakucs, NIIH

The Lutheran Community in Bucharest at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century: A Node between Empires

13.10–14.40

Lunch break

14.40–16.15

Panel 2: Politics Re-discovered in the Ottoman Empire

Chair: Lena Sadovski, IHB

Michael Portmann, IHB

Taxation, Protection, and Statehood in the Sandžak of Smederevo (1791–1839). An Ottoman History

Constanta Vintila, NIIH

Between Imperial Protection and National Becoming: Sudiți and the Politics of the Periphery in Southeastern Europe

Dimitra Grigoriou, IHB

From Analogue to Digital: Digital Editions at the Institute of Habsburg and Balkan Studies

16.15–16.35

Coffee break

16.35–18.10

Panel 3: Contested Identities and Spaces

Chair: Konrad Petrovzsky, IHB

Andrei Cușco, A. D. Xenopol Institute of History, Romanian Academy

Southern Bessarabia from the Crimean War to World War I (1856–1914): Romanian Nation-Building and Russian Imperial Policies in a Contested Borderland

Emanuel Plopeanu, Ovidius University in Constanța

The Inferiority of the Others: The Image of the Non-Romanian Communities from Dobrudja after 1878

Camelia Zavarache, NIIH

Drafting the New Curricula for Normal Schools in Romania during the 1920s: Political Stakes, Cultural Identity and Teachers' Reactions

21 October 2026

9.30–10.40

Keynote

Mioara Anton, NIIH

A Changing World: Nicolae Ceaușescu and the New International Economic Order

10.40–11.00

Coffee break

11.00 – 13.10

Panel 4: The First World War and Irresolute Aftermaths

Chair: Bogdan Popa, NIIH

Ana-Maria Milčić, IHB

At the Edge of Empire: Avant-Garde Art in Fiume from the Habsburgs to Fascism

Gabriela Dristaru, NIIH

Cowardice or Impotence? Examining Desertion in the Romanian Army during World War I

Radu Tudorancea, NIIH

From Mistrust to Animosity and Hate. Foreigners and Ethnic Minorities in First World War Romania

Flavius Solomon, A.D. Xenopol Institute of History, Romanian Academy

Toward a Civilizational Hierarchy of “National Priorities”: The Romanian Left and the Germanophile Movement in the Old Kingdom

13.10–13.35

Coffee break

13.35–15.10

Panel 5: Sovereignty, Socialism, and Post-1989 Legacies

Chair: Ana-Maria Milčić, IHB

Bogdan C. Iacob & Idris Idrizi, NIIH & IHB

Reframing Socialist Defiance: Albania, Romania and Global Circulations of Sovereignty (1960–1964)

Luciana Jinga, Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Regime and the Memory of Romanian Exile

Romania's Military Aid for the Global South (1960s–1980s)

Robert Pichler, IHB

Social Development, Migration, and Ethnic Conflict in (Post-)Socialist Macedonia: Findings from a Comparative Ethnographic Village Study

15.10–15.45

Conclusions