

Study Group on the Baltic States - Inaugural Workshop

On 2-3 November 2023 the relaunched BASEES Study Group on the Baltic States held its inaugural workshop at the University of Manchester, with financial support from the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies and the UCL Doctoral School. The group takes over and continues the work previously undertaken under the auspices of the UK Baltic Study Group/ BASEES Study Group on the Baltic States (2005-2015).

The aim of the workshop was to bring together postgraduate and early career researchers, and to showcase the latest research on Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia undertaken across the United Kingdom and beyond. It offered the space and opportunity for researchers working on the Baltic states across the country to meet in person and to make new connections. It was also a chance to discuss the future direction of the Study Group.

The four panels across two workshop days - 'Latvian Challenges to the Centre', 'The Baltic States in Methodological and Regional Comparisons', 'Memory Dynamics in the Baltic States' and 'Authoritarianism and Democratisation in Estonia' - captured the microcosm of the current research activity within the UK. The panels led to fruitful discussions about the diversity of approaches and subjects within current research on the three states and their wider transnational connections. The keynote by Dr Gražina Bielousova and the book presentation by Vincent Hunt likewise led to productive reflections on the state and history of Baltic States Studies, including methodological and historiographical challenges as well as the potential future directions of investigation within the field.

The further aim of the workshop was to build on and to provide a platform for exploring common research interests in the region that exist among the Study Groups of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies. A roundtable, organised together with the members of the BASEES Eurasian Regions Group, proved to be a first step in this direction and provided an opportunity to reflect on the conversations about the place of the Baltic states within broader East European scholarship. The Study Group on the Baltic States is looking forward to working together with the Eurasian Regions Group, Polish Studies Group and other interested groups and scholars at the future events.

Dmitrijs Andrejevs, John Freeman, Paris Pin-Yü Chen, Rasa Kamarauskaitė