

## Call for Papers: 4th International Balkan Studies Conference

Faculty of Humanities in cooperation with the Institute of International Relations and the Faculty of Social Sciences (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic)

under the auspices of the Dean of FHS UK – Ing. arch. Mgr. Marie Pětová, Ph.D.



**Date and venue: DECEMBER 1-2, 2017**

**DŮM NÁRODNOSTNÍCH MENŠIN ★ Vocelova 602/3  
PRAHA 2, ČR**

**Languages: ENGLISH, CZECH, SLOVAK**

**Application deadline: October 31, 2017**

**Online application: <https://goo.gl/forms/RDVBNBX9Z77xRRE42>**

**Email: [konference.balkan@gmail.com](mailto:konference.balkan@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.rakijatour.cz/balkan-express/](http://www.rakijatour.cz/balkan-express/)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/KonferenceBalkan](http://www.facebook.com/KonferenceBalkan)**

### **Organising committee:**

**PhDr. Mirjam Moravcová, DrSc. ★ PhDr. Dana Bittnerová, CSc.**

**František Šístek, M.A., Ph.D. ★ Mgr. Markéta Slavková, Ph.D. ★ Mgr. Ivana Skenderija**

# BALKAN EXPRESS: THE INVISIBLE, THE OVERLOOKED, THE FORGOTTEN

We cordially invite you to the 4th International Balkan Studies conference, another stop of the Balkan Express, organized this year by the Faculty of Humanities in cooperation with the Institute of International Relations and the Faculty of Social Sciences (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic). This year's event is focused on topics of significant importance to social reality in the Balkans which have often been neglected in academic discourse to date. We wish to draw attention to invisible or marginalized social groups in the Balkans, including ethnic minorities and others who are overlooked, forgotten. We welcome contributions focusing on the people, events, and processes which continue to shape Balkan dynamics.

The problematics of "social invisibility" also raise important questions about social exclusion, one of the most pressing issues in the world today, emerging from marginalization and systematic overlooking or even *failing to remember/forgetting* specific groups or individuals. The Balkans are home to a wide range of marginalized groups – not just so-called ethnic, national, and religious minorities or immigrants and refugees but also others including individuals who are poor, homeless, orphaned, partnerless, or veterans of war. At this conference, we wish to explore phenomena which we ourselves have deemed unimportant or too sensitive in the past.

The central theme this year is thus "invisible Balkans." The word *invisible* evokes multiple meanings and, we hope, encourages submissions on both familiar and ignored topics across a broad field of studies. We ask three primary questions around the central theme: What *don't we see* and what *don't we want to see* (i.e., what *do we overlook*), or what *we have stopped seeing (forgotten)* when we consider the Balkans? These three kinds of "blindness" refer to three different levels of *considering invisibility* in the region.

*What we don't see* refers to the history of Balkan Studies. What topics have previously been avoided, and why? What are the origins of our investigative blind spots, and what impact has their absence had on academic discourse about the region? How are new themes emerging and developing? With this question, we wish to encourage discussion about new topics, paradigms, and methodological approaches to contemporary Balkan Studies.

*What we don't want to see* focuses solely on the social reality of the Balkans as such, including taboos and aspects, including artifacts, of life in the Balkans which for some reason have not (or are *not supposed to have*) been seen.

*What we have stopped seeing, forgotten* takes us back to Balkan Studies as a science in the context of *overseeing* something or someone. With this thread, we welcome submissions discussing aspects of life, phenomena, or social actors clearly visible in the past and which influenced the character of the region but which now have lost meaning. The dilemma of visibility in the past and invisibility in present can involve life strategies, memories, and relations to important figures or events.

We invite contributions from anthropology, ethnology, philosophy, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines, and particularly welcome discussions of "lost" topics crucial in the past, those which deal with taboos, and those which encourage rethinking the dynamics of social and cultural development in today's Balkans and which deepen our understanding of the region's people.

Our conference is international and we allow submissions in three languages: English, Czech, and Slovak. Presentations in Czech and Slovak will be simultaneously translated into English at the event. In addition to a rich program, the conference will also provide a glimpse into Balkan culture with food, photography, film, and music. We look forward to meeting you in person in Prague this December.

