
5th CRCEES Research Forum

May 17-18, 2012 (Glasgow)

Glasgow recently hosted the annual conference of the **Center for Russian, Central and East European Studies** (CRCEES), affiliated with the famous Scottish alma mater. In compliance with the scope and the aims of the Center, the conference concentrated on Russia's recent political developments, as well as analysis of Soviet influence on the shaping of the **post-1991** world. Moreover, analyses were presented on the relations between Moscow and Central and Eastern Europe, with a particular focus on the **Baltic region**. The overall success of the conference benefited from the contribution of numerous scholars and researchers with diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. Fellows from the University of Glasgow took charge of chairing the panels and presenting their latest research endeavours. Professor Geoff Swain, Dr Ann Mulholland, and Dr Clare McManus were the organizers of the venue and conducted all activities rigorously and expertly.

An important moment of the two-day event was the keynote speech by **Professor Marta Dyczok**, from the University of Western Ontario, Canada. Dyczok presented a detailed account of the development in the **Ukrainian media** sector. After the overview on the ownership and the influence of the media, she went on to outline the main argument of her research: media is not just a set of tools in the hands of the decision-making bodies or the big interest groups to shape the will of the audience. Rather, Dyczok argues that media is a space, a "platform where power is contested". The increasing accessibility of newer means such as the internet, makes the control on the message nearly impossible, thus leaving room for more independent journalistic efforts.

The fine line of interdependence traced by Professor Dyczok was rehashed during the **Energy panel** in which **Elvira Oliva and Paolo Sorbello** took part. PECOB's Energy Policy Studies researchers underscored the decisive and multifaceted impact of Bulgarian energy-related decision making on Sofia's inclination towards Moscow or Brussels. Oliva and Sorbello argued that a more independent **Bulgarian foreign policy** is only possible with the emancipation of the country from the tug-of-war over its own **energy sector**. Later during the panel, Glasgow's Jack Sharples outlined a few policy scenarios for Polish energy after the discovery of shale gas basins, emphasizing that dependence from Russia is neither a threat nor a guarantee for the energy security of Warsaw. Finally, Sorbello took the floor again to speak about a peculiar case of **Russo-Kazakh cooperation** in the Northern part of the Caspian. Upon highlighting the characteristics of the offshore oilfield of Kurmangazy, Sorbello reinforced the argument of interdependence between the various factors concerning energy from several disciplines, drawing from the research effort that characterized his Master thesis published last June.

Our researchers participated with great interest to such a renowned international event and were delighted by the invitation.

Elvira Oliva and Paolo Sorbello
Energy Policy Studies – Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe