



International Centre for  
Ethnic and Linguistic  
Diversity Studies

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FACULTY  
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Charles University



Embassy  
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Prague



EXPERT SEMINAR 6 DECEMBER 2019

# A CENTURY OF MINORITY RIGHTS – LESSONS FROM THE POST- VERSAILLES SYSTEM

**Venue:**  
the **House of National Minorities**,  
Vocelova 602/3, Prague 5

## **ORGANIZERS:**

**International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies**  
and  
**the Department of Russian and East European Studies, Institute of  
International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University**

The seminar is held with financial support of Charles University, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Czech Republic, and the German Embassy to the Czech Republic.



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6 December 2019  
SEMINAR PROGRAMME

08.30	<b>Registration</b>
09.00	<b>Welcome Address</b>  <i>Hanna Vasilevich</i> (Chair of the Board, International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies, Czechia),  <i>Kateřina Králová</i> (Head of the Department of Russian and East European Studies, Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University),  <i>Markus Klinger</i> (Counsellor for Cultural Affairs and Protocol, German Embassy to Prague)  <i>Anne Seyfferth</i> (Head of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Czech and the Slovak Republics)
09.30	<b>Key-note speech</b> <b>The impact and legacies of the Versailles system and the post-WWI Minority Treaties</b> <i>James Kennedy</i> (University of Edinburgh, the United Kingdom)
10.15	<b>Q&amp;A Session</b>
10.45	<b>Coffee Break</b>



11.15	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>The modes of and challenges to international cooperation in the area of minority protection in Europe throughout the XX - XXI centuries*</b></p> <p>Chair: <i>Milada Polišenská</i> (Anglo-American University in Prague, Czechia)</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Raul Cârstocea</i> (University of Leicester, the United Kingdom)</li><li>2. <i>Maciej Górný</i> (the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland)</li><li>3. <i>Beata Halicka</i> (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland)</li><li>4. <i>Zoltán Kántor</i> (Research Institute for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, Hungary)</li><li>5. <i>Kiryl Kaścian</i> (International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies/Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Czechia /Germany)</li><li>6. <i>Marián Sloboda</i> (Charles University, Czechia)</li></ol>
12.45	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
14.15	<p><b>Key-note Speech</b></p> <p><b>Liberal vs non-liberal approaches to minority policies – is there a common ground?</b></p> <p><i>Alexander Osipov</i> (Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany/ICELDS, Czechia)</p>



15.00	<b>Q&amp;A Session</b>
15.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
16.00	<b>Panel discussion</b>  <b>The new challenges and new dividing lines between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ and the future of the European minority rights regime**</b>  Chair: Jakub Štědroň (House of National Minorities, Czechia)  Discussants: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Balázs Dobos (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary)</li><li>2. Ondřej Klípa (Charles University, Czechia)</li><li>3. Szabolcs Pogonyi (Central European University, Austria/Hungary)</li><li>4. Harald Christian Scheu (Charles University, Czechia)</li><li>5. Hanna Vasilevich (International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies /Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Czechia /Germany)</li><li>6. Balázs Vizi (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary)</li></ol>
17.30	<b>Concluding Remarks</b>  Hanna Vasilevich (ICELDS, Czechia), Ondřej Klípa (Faculty of Social Science of the Charles University, Czechia).



### Speakers (in alphabetic order):

**Raul CÂRSTOCEA** is Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Leicester. He has previously worked as Lecturer in European Studies at the Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany (2017-2019), as Senior Research Associate at the European Centre for Minority Issues (2013-2017), as Teaching Fellow at University College London (2011-2012), and held research fellowships at the Imre Kértesz Kolleg Jena (2018) and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (2012-2013).

His research interests focus on anti-Semitism, Jewish history, nationalism, fascism, and the Holocaust, and more broadly on state formation and nation-building processes in 19th and 20th century Central and Eastern Europe and their consequences for minority groups.

His most recent publication is *Modern Antisemitisms in the Peripheries: Europe and its Colonies, 1880-1945* (co-edited with Éva Kovács; Vienna, 2019).

**Balázs DOBOS** obtained MA degrees in history and political science at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and a PhD in political science at the Corvinus University of Budapest. Since 2007, he has been working as a research fellow, and since 2019 as a senior research fellow at the Institute for Minority Studies within the Centre for Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. He teaches courses on ethnic conflict and minority policies in East Central Europe at Corvinus and on human and minority rights at ELTE.

His research field mainly concerns the political and legal situation, the political participation and representation of national and ethnic minorities through various institutional channels in Hungary and in the broader Central and Eastern European region, in particular non-territorial cultural autonomies and Roma political mobilization. He currently works on projects examining the role of special minority elections in non-territorial autonomous contexts, and the effectiveness of these arrangements in reaching and mobilizing group members.



His latest article was published on The Elections to Non-Territorial Autonomies of Central and South Eastern Europe in Nationalities Papers.

**Maciej GÓRNY** is a historian. In 1999, he received master's degree at the Historical Institute of the University of Warsaw. In 2000–2004, he completed doctoral studies at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In 2004–2006, he was a scholarship holder at the Berlin School for Comparative European History (BKVGE).

In 2006, he defended his doctorate in the Polish Academy of Sciences and the BKVGE on Marxist historical sciences of the CEE countries in the contexts of the national traditions of 19th century historiography (German, Polish, Czech and Slovak). From 2006, he is an assistant professor at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

In 2006-2010, he is researcher at the Historical Research Center of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin. From 2014, he is a researcher at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland.

**Beata HALICKA** a professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań: from 2013 to 2018 at the Polish-German Research Institute in Collegium Polonicum in Słubice and since 2018 at the Institute of Eastern Studies (Faculty of History). She lectured in cultural history of East Central Europe at the European University of Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) between 2006 and 2014 and was a visiting professor at the universities in Calgary, Canada (2014) and El Paso, USA (2016). She received her doctoral degree in 2001 from the University of Vechta, Germany.

From 2001 to 2003 Dr. Halicka was a lecturer at the College of German at the University in Zielona Góra, Poland, where she was also granted the university's Science Award in 2002.

Between 2005 and 2008 she was involved in a research project about the German-Polish border region "Odra-Oder – the past, present and future of a



European cultural region", which was headed by prof. Karl Schlögel at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder).

Her Post-doc project [habilitation] was a study on forced migration and cultural appropriation of the Oder region 1945-1948. It was funded by the German-Polish Science Foundation and completed at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) in 2012. The project resulted in a publication of the book "Poland's Wild West", which received the Identities Prize 2016 for the best historical book in Poland.

**Zoltán KÁNTOR** is affiliated with Research Institute for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, Hungary. He received his degree in Sociology at the University of Timisoara in 1995 and in Political Sciences, Central European University Budapest in 1996. Further he obtained an MA at the joint ELTE - UNESCO Minority Studies Master's Degree Program in 2000.

Between 1996 and 2006 he was a research fellow at Teleki László Institute, since 2007 at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. He was granted a fellowship at the Department of Sociology of the University of Edinburgh in nationalism studies in the academic year 1998-1999. His field of research covers nationalism, national minorities; Hungarian national minorities abroad, Romania's domestic and foreign policy.

**Kiryl KAŚCIAN** is a Visiting Researcher at the Department of Law & Anthropology, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. He holds an LL.M. degree in European and International Law and a doctoral degree in law from the University of Bremen. He successfully completed several trainings in human rights and minority issues.

In 2009-2015, was a lecturer and faculty member in a number of Czech and German Universities. Since late 2000s, Dr. Kascian in various capacities has been actively involved in the research and civil activism pertinent to fundamental rights, interethnic relations, minority issues and territorial studies. In 2010-2013, was a pro bono legal advisor of the civic initiative for the inclusion of a representative of the Belarusian community in the National Minorities Council at



the Government of the Czech Republic (legal support and expertise of the campaign which resulted in inclusion of a representative of the Belarusian community into the Council).

In 2015, was a part of the Equal Rights Trust team, carrying out a study of ethnic and racial discrimination and the state of ethnic and linguistic minorities in Ukraine. The project resulted in the Comprehensive Country Report on equality and non-discrimination in Ukraine, titled *In the Crosscurrents: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Ukraine*.

Since 2017, a Board Member at the International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies and a contributing editor with the analytical minority-focused project “InBaltic.LT”. Since 2018, consultant at Revanta B.V., providing regular tailored monitoring services to international organizations that work in the fields of developments concerning inter-ethnic relations.

His fields of professional interest are minority rights and activism, ethnic conflicts, non-discrimination, constitutional identity and kin-state policies.

**James KENNEDY** is the Director of the Centre of Canadian Studies and Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh, the United Kingdom. He holds PhD in Sociology, Master of Science in Sociology, and Master of Science in Socio-Cultural Studies.

His research interests lie broadly in comparative/historical sociology and political sociology. In addition, he places an emphasis on identifying the key role that the modern state has played and continues to play in shaping societal relations. More recently he has undertaken research, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, with Liliana Riga exploring the influence of American understandings of race and ethnicity on postwar settlements in East Central Europe through the 20th century.

He is currently President of the British Association for Canadian Studies (BACS), and a member of the Scientific Council of National Movements and Intermediate Structures in Europe (NISE).



**Ondřej KLÍPA**, Ph.D., Mgr., is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and at the Department of Civil Society Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University of Charles University, Czechia. He received his PhD in 2013 in International Area Studies from Charles University in Prague.

His most significant research grants are on Cultures in Times of Transition, East Central Europe after 1989 (Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung) and Ukrainian peripheries – Ukraine as a periphery: A borderland in a legal space perspective (The Brandenburg Ministry of Sciences, Research and Cultural Affairs, Seed-Money project development grant).

His research interests include social cohesion, ethnic conflicts, migration, and nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Alexander OSIPOV** is a Lecturer at the Europa-Universität Flensburg, where he teaches a course on European Border Region Development. Since 2017, he is a Board Member at the International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies, Czechia.

Since the late 1980s Dr. Osipov pursues the research focused on human rights, minority issues and interethnic relations. Holds doctoral degree obtained at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In 1996-2010, was a Programme coordinator at the Human Rights Centre "Memorial" (Moscow, Russia), guiding the advocacy and analytical program on ethnic discrimination in Russia and managing of a project on collaboration of minority activists, human rights groups and professional lawyers for minority protections; compilation of analytical materials concerning discrimination, particularly national NGO shadow reports before UN and CoE treaty bodies.

In 2010-2017, was Senior Research Associate, European Centre for Minority Issues (Flensburg, Germany) guiding the Justice and Governance Cluster, pursuing and coordination joint and individual research projects concerning legal and political dimensions of non-discrimination, minority governance, autonomy arrangements, power-sharing, conflict mitigation and other relevant issues. *Inter alia*, as an academic director of the ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme



“National Minorities and Ethno-Political Issues in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine” (EPP), was responsible for the academic and contextual implementation of the three-year project.

**Szabolcs POGONYI** is Associate Professor in the Nationalism Studies Program at Central European University. Since 2018, Pogonyi has been serving as head of department.

Pogonyi was also the recipient of the ERSTE Foundation Fellowship for Social Research for 2014/2016. In the academic year 2006/2007, he was Visiting Fulbright Researcher at the New School in New York. His current research focuses on nationalist populism, diasporic nation building, trans-border minorities, non-resident citizenship and external voting.

He is member of the EUDO Citizenship research consortium. He is the author of several articles in political theory and editor of books in the history of political thought.

His papers in citizenship studies were published in *Nationalities Papers*, *Ethnopolitics*, the *ECMI Yearbook* and the *EUDO Citizenship* paper series. His is also the other of the book *A Nation Beyond Borders: Extra-Territorial Ethnic Politics, Discourses and Identities in Hungary* analyzing Hungarian transborder citizenship and diaspora politics.

**Harald Christian SCHEU**, Doc., Mag. phil., Dr. iur., Ph.D., educated at the University of Salzburg (Dr. iur., 1995, Mag. phil., 1996) and the University of Prague (Ph.D., 1997, Doc., 2006). He has received numerous fellowships (Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht in Heidelberg, University of Bern, European University Institute in Florence, University of Zürich, University of Vienna).

He is a member of the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Human Rights (since 2013) and a member of the Czech Government's Legislative Council (since 2014). From 1997 to 2006 he lectured at the Department of International Law and since 2006 at the Department of European Law of the Law Faculty of Charles University in Prague.



From 2005 to 2006 he served as a diplomat at the Austrian Embassy in Prague. He teaches and conducts research in the fields of International and European Law and International Human Rights Law. Since 2015 he is a member of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

**Marián SLOBODA** is an assistant professor at the Department of Central European Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University. He teaches Slovak and the sociolinguistics of Central Europe, focusing on Czechia and Slovakia.

His scholarly interests lie in the branch of sociolinguistics inspired by ethno-methodological sociology and linguistic anthropology. His work has concerned various aspects of language diversity and multilingualism, such as minority language use, rights and policies.

Outside academia, he was active in the Czech Government Council for National Minorities and is a member of the advisory board of MigraceOnline, a website on migration in Czechia and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

**Hanna VASILEVICH**, PhD, M.E.S., M.Sc., is a Visiting Researcher at the Department of Law & Anthropology, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany. Dr. Vasilevich holds doctoral degree in International Relations and European Studies from the joint programme by the Metropolitan University Prague and the Institute of International Relations in Prague. She also completed a Joint Master Programme in European Integration and Regionalism by the Karl-Franzens-University of Graz and the Autonomous University of Barcelona, as well as a Master Programme in International Relations and Diplomacy at the Anglo-American University in Prague.

In 2010-2013, she was a pro bono coordinator of the successful civic initiative for the inclusion of a representative of the Belarusian community in the National Minorities Council at the Government of the Czech Republics. In 2010-2017, Dr. Vasilevich taught at several universities in Czechia and Germany to the topic related to international organizations, national minorities, nationalism and interethnic conflicts.



In 2012-2017 she was a Project Research Associate, European Centre for Minority Issues (Flensburg, Germany) pursuing joint and individual research projects concerning ethno-cultural diversity in Central and Eastern Europe, including minority participation in public life, minority education and other relevant issues. *Inter alia*, as a project manager of the ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme “National Minorities and Ethno-Political Issues in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine” (EPP), was responsible for overall implementation of the three-year project.

In 2018-2019 Dr. Vasilevich conducted research on consultative and advisory bodies at the Queen's University Belfast, the United Kingdom.

**Balázs VIZI** graduated in law at the Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest). He received PhD in political science from the Catholic University of Leuven. He has specialized in international human and minority rights law.

From 2002 he works at the Institute for Minority Studies, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence. He is head of department at the Department of International Law, Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the National University of Public Service, and lectures at the „Eötvös Loránd” University.

He is author of several publications on minority issues in the context of the European integration and co-editor of several books on minority rights protection.

### **Chairs of panels:**

**Milada POLIŠENSKÁ**, prof. PhDr., CSc. Is Deputy to the President and Chief Academic Adviser; Distinguished Senior Lecturer at the Anglo-American University in Prague, Czechia.

Prof. Milada Polišenská is a tenured Professor of history and international relations. Her main specialization is the modern and contemporary history of Central and Eastern Europe with a primary focus on diplomatic history and the history of nationalism. She is the author of several scholarly books and of a number of articles and conference presentations.



Her most recent monograph is "Czechoslovak Diplomacy and the Gulag, 1945-1953" published by Central European Press: New York, Budapest, 2015.

She has worked for the Institute of International Relations in Prague and for the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences as well as taught as Visiting Professor at universities in the United States, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Prof. Polšenská has been awarded several major research grants, scholarships (Fulbright scholarship), and fellowships (Cold War International History Project Fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C.).

She was most recently awarded the Senior Fernand Braudel Fellowship at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. She is a member of academic boards at several universities and a reviewer of the Czech Accreditation Office and of CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies). She joined the AAU in 2003 and has held various administrative positions. Since 2008, she has been serving as Provost of the AAU.

**Jakub ŠTĚDROŇ** is the Director of the House of National Minorities, Prague, Czechia. In 2007 he completed studies of culture theory at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Since September 2006 he has been working at the Prague City Hall.

Initially he was a national minorities specialist and, since March 2007, as an assistant to the Prague Social Ombudsman. In his activities he deals with social counseling and assistance especially to seniors or handicapped citizens.

From October 2008 to February 2009, he completed an internship at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna.



## Seminar description

The seminar is devoted to exploring and revisiting the legacies of a 100-year-old crucial landmark development – the inception of the post-WWI minority regime. 1919 is the year of the Paris Peace Conference which gave birth to the League of Nations and Minority Treaties. The latter partly embodied the Wilsonian ideas of national self-determination and established the first comprehensive multilateral system of minority protection. In particular, the principles and guidelines for national minority policies including non-discrimination, territorial autonomy and equitable distribution of public resources were set up in the first two treaties concerning minority issues signed in 1919 – with Poland and Czechoslovakia. Along with this, the post-Versailles development demonstrated the force of minority nationalism and the destructive potential of trans-border kin-state policies.

The post-WWI European minority regime and its guiding principles were full of contradictions. The Versailles system aimed at the rule of law but presupposed multiple standards with regard to different countries, territories and groups. The proclamation and promotion of human equality went along with establishing strict racial and ethnic categorizations and barriers. The search for peaceful resolution of conflicts by drawing 'fair' boundaries was leading to the multiplication and escalation of conflicts. The protection of minorities went hand in hand with the empowerment of minorities' major adversary – a nation state that promotes its core ethnicity. The solemn and far-reaching declarations ended up with the Great Powers' unwillingness and inability to implement them.

Although the minority system under the League of Nations auspices turned out to fragile and ineffective, it was an important stage in the development of the international and domestic protective mechanisms and provided the world community with a valuable experience that cannot be overestimated. Democracy, the rule of law and minority protection face new challenges of authoritarian backsliding, illiberal populism and nationalist isolationism in Europe



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and globally. The achievements of the last 30 years and of the entire XX century are thus questioned and even jeopardized.

Therefore, the significance of the Versailles historical legacies is to be revisited from different scholarly and analytical perspectives. The recent developments prompt an examination of the achievements and failures, particularly of the loopholes in the international and domestic normative regulations of national self-determination and minority issues and the effects they generate. Broader challenges that democratic nation-states and the minority rights regime in Europe face today and possible remedies for these problems shall be also addressed.

Our seminar seeks to approach these issues. Among them are the opportunities of combining nation-building with minority protection; undeservedly forgotten ideas and solutions of the interbellum period; the potential for protecting minorities and preventing conflicts in non-liberal and undemocratic environments; the opportunities for combining kin-state policies with the maintenance of trust and productive cooperation in inter-state relations.



**\*Question for discussion during the panel on '*The modes of and challenges to international cooperation in the area of minority protection in Europe throughout the XX - XXI centuries*'**

1. Does the framework of minority protection and minority rights allow for accommodating ethnic and linguistic diversity? Can it be abused as a tool of exclusion, and how can one avoid this risk?
2. Is public recognition, classification and hierarchization of minorities a challenge and a source of conflicts, particularly in the time of international migrations?
3. Are kin-state minority policies always leading to mistrust and conflict between states? Are there ways to avoid or overcome such developments?
4. Equality and fair treatment of people regardless of ethnicity can be interpreted in different ways. Is it possible to achieve a wide societal consensus of what equality and non-discrimination on ethnic grounds are instead of having a victimhood competition?
5. Are there opportunities of having authoritative and trustworthy multilateral international institutions protecting minorities?
6. Is it possible to institutionalize minorities' 'voice' in international institutions, particularly through complaint and judiciary mechanisms?



**\*\*Question for discussion during the panel on 'The new challenges and new dividing lines between the 'West' and the 'East' and the future of the European minority rights regime'**

During this panel we suggest the following questions for the discussion:

1. Do cross-border migrations, kin-state policies and broader transnationalism inevitably lead to mistrust in international relations, segregated institutions and alienation of people belonging to different groups? Are there remedies for such developments?
2. Are the protection of 'majority rights' and the cultural integrity of nations with the promotion of diversity and minority protection?
3. Are there ways to reconcile different national narratives and commemoration regimes so that the issues of 'historical justice' do not lead to conflicts and alienation?
4. Are collective mobilization of minorities and autonomy arrangements preconditions for minority protection? Can there be mechanisms for safeguarding individual autonomy and individual opportunities in cultural life, language preferences and education?
5. Are there legal and political remedies for preventing the use of integration policies as tools for assimilation, segregation and marginalization of non-dominant groups?
6. Are the institutional and discursive frameworks promoted by the Council of Europe and other European institutions always optimal forms for the accommodation of diversity in Europe? Are there other opportunities?



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