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ENDLESS WAR OR UNSOLVABLE WAR?

RESILIENCE FROM THE BLACK SEA TO THE BARENTS SEA AFTER FOUR YEARS OF WAR IN UKRAINE

The 5th Annual Conference of the Romanian Centre for Russian Studies

12-14 November 2026

Venue: University of Bucharest,
Faculty of History, 4-12 Regina Elisabeta Bvld.,
Nicolae Iorga Amphitheatre (1st floor),
Library Reading Room (2nd floor) and
Council of Faculty Room (2ndfloor)

More information
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MEDIA PARTNERS:

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PROGRAM

Endless War or Unsolvable War? Resilience from the Black Sea to the Barents Sea after Four Years of War in Ukraine

The 5th Annual Conference of

the Romanian Centre for Russian Studies

organized by

The Romanian Centre for Russian Studies

(University of Bucharest)

and

The Fridtjof Nansen Institute (Oslo)

12-14 November 2026, Bucharest, Romania

Conference venue: University of Bucharest, Faculty of History, 4-12 Regina Elisabeta Bvld., **Nicolae Iorga Amphitheatre** (1st floor), **Library Reading Room** (2nd floor) and **Council of Faculty Room** (2nd floor)

Thursday, 12 November 2026

9,00-10,00: Registration (registration desk in the front of the Nicolae Iorga Amphitheatre)

10,00-11,00: Opening Session (Nicolae Iorga Amphitheatre)

H.E. Mrs. Hilde SVARTDAL LUNDE, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in Bucharest

Prof. Dr. Marian PREDA, Rector, University of Bucharest

Dr. Iver B. NEUMANN, Director, Fridtjof Nansen Institute

Prof. Dr. Mihai Răzvan UNGUREANU, Director, Romanian Centre for Russian Studies

Prof. Dr. Alexandra IANCU, Dean, Faculty of Political Science

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matei GHEBOIANU, Dean, Faculty of History

11,00-11,15: Coffee Break

11,15-13,15: Plenary Panel 1A (Nicolae Iorga Amphitheatre)

Forging nations, foreign policies and doctrines of the post-war world

Chair: Dr. Iver B. Neumann

Dr. Arild MOE (Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Oslo, Norway): ***The Foreign Policy Dimension in Russian Energy – How Big an Asset is Energy for Russia***

Dr. Anatoliy KRUGLASHOV (Chernivtsi Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Ukraine): ***Ukraine Forged by the Flame of Russian War: from a Bewildered Country to a Resistant State and Resilient Society***

Dr. Mihai Răzvan UNGUREANU (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Harry S. Truman and 90 Years of Peace in Europe***

13,15-14,00: Lunch

14,00-15,45: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 2A (Library Reading Room)

Reinforcing the exposed: the Eastern Flank under growing pressure

Chair: Dr. Arild Moe

Dr. Cristian NIȚOIU (Loughborough University London), United Kingdom: ***Constructing Europe's Future in an Age of Crisis: The European Union's Geopolitical Futures***

M.A. Rebecca GROSSI (University of Leipzig, Germany): ***Romania, Poland, and The Security Duet That There Is Not (Yet)***

Dr. Silviu MILOIU (Valahia University, Târgoviste, Romania): ***Baltic-Black Sea Connectivity as a Driver of Intermarium and the Three Seas Initiative: Continuities, Challenges, and Strategic Perspectives***

Dr. Dimitar KERANOV (German Marshall Fund of the United States): ***Asymmetric Resilience: Why the Frontline State Defends Better Than the Member State. Moldova and Bulgaria***

Panel no. 2B (Council of Faculty Room)

Republic of Moldova - juggling with integration and reintegration processes

Chair: Dr. Pål Wilter Skedsmo

Dr. Laurențiu PLEȘCA (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***The Crumbling Pillars of Transnistria. Moldova's Window of Opportunity for Reintegration***

Damian DMITRI (University of Bucharest, Romania): ***From 5+2 to 1+1: The Transdniestrian Settlement Process in the Context of the War in Ukraine***

Dr. Tatiana COJOCARI (Institute of Political Science and International Relations, The Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania): ***The EU Engagement with Contested Territories as a Solution for Conflict Resolution. A Case Study of Transnistria Region***

Dr. Octavian ȚÎCU (Institute of History, Moldova State University, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova): ***The War in Ukraine, the Transnistrian Separatism and the Geopolitics of Football. The Case of FC Sheriff Tiraspol***

15,45-16,00: Coffee Break

16,00-17,45: Plenary Panel 3A (Library Reading Room)

Navigating the sea of hybrid threats

Chair: Dr. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu

Prof. Dr. Corneliu BJOLA (University of Oxford): ***Drone Incidents and Cognitive Resilience: Testing AI Support for Strategic Communication*** (online)

Dr. Marius DIACONESCU (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Russia, the "Good Guy" Versus Ukraine, the "Devil"! How Could Be Countered the Demonization of Ukraine by Russian Propaganda in Romania?***

Daviti KATCHAKHIDZE (Odesa I.I. Mechnykov National University, Ukraine): ***Detecting and Countering Hybrid Threats Through Cyber Diplomacy***

Dr. Nicolae ȚÎBRIGAN (The Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations "Ion I.C. Brătianu" of Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania): ***AI as Shield or Echo? Auditing Large Language Models Against Russian Strategic Narratives in Europe's Information Space***

17,45-18,00: Coffee Break

18,00-19,30: Roundtable – *The Unification of the Republic of Moldova with Romania in the 2026 Public Debates: Political Statements, Pragmatic Approaches, and Geopolitical Risks* (Library Reading Room)

Organizer and moderator: Dr. Marius DIACONESCU

Speakers: Prof. Dr. Mihai Răzvan UNGUREANU, Prof. Dr. Octavian ȚÎCU, Prof. Dr. Magdalena DEMBINSKA (Montreal University, online), Dr. Iver B. NEUMANN, Prof. Dr. Anatoliy Kruglashov

19,30-20,30: Dinner

Friday, 13 November 2026

9,45-11,15: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 4A: (Library Reading Room)

Charting some Russian understandings of security arrangements

Chair: Dr. Cosmin Ioniță

Dr. Argyrios TASOULAS (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece): ***Soviet and Russian Naval Presence in the Mediterranean***

Dr. Tetyana PODKUPKO (Odesa National Medical University, Ukraine): ***The Treaty of Radnot (1656): Ukraine's (the Hetmanate's) Attempt to Seek a System of International Security Amid Protracted War*** (online)

Dr. Adrian Bogdan CEOBANU and Dr. Mihai Răzvan UNGUREANU (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Experts and Expertise in Romanian-Russian Relations in the first Decades of the 20th Century. The Case of Dimitrie Ciotori***

Panel no. 4B (Council of Faculty Room)

Constructs on the role of religion in state building and policy-making

Chair: Dr. Radu Carp

Dr. Andrzej SZABACIUK (Institute of Central Europe, Lublin, Poland): ***Orthodox Churches in Ukraine and the State's Civilisational Choices Post-2014***

Domingos Tavares CAMPOS (Nova's University of Lisbon, Portugal): ***The digital catacombs: religiosity, disinformation, and the Russian Orthodox Church***

Natalia ZHDANOVA (The University of Oxford, United Kingdom): ***Sacralising War: How the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church Use Religious Rhetoric to Justify Russia's War against Ukraine*** (online)

11,15-11,30: Coffee Break

11,30-13,15: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 5A (Library Reading Room)

Cutting old dependencies, building new (geo)economic entanglements

Chair: Dr. Anatoliy Kruglashov

Dr. Cosmin IONIȚĂ (University of Bucharest, Faculty of History, Romania): ***Russia and the Institutional Limitations of BRICS***

Dr. Karolina GAWRON-TABOR and Dr. Joanna PIECHOWIAK (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland): ***The End of Russian Gas Transit via Ukraine as a Test of the Resilience of Central European Gas Configurations: Between Transformation and Adaptation***

M.A. Antonia-Laura PUP (European University Institute, Florence, Italy): ***The Anxiety of Abandonment: Critical Minerals Diplomacy as Upward Reassurance in Ukraine and Romania under the second Trump term*** (online)

Dr. Sanja TEPAVCEVIC (European Humanities University, Vilnius, Lithuania): ***EU Integration via Business***

Acquisition? The Case of Hungarian MOL's Bid for Serbian NIS from Russian Gazpromneft (online)

Panel no. 5B (Council of Faculty Room)

Limits of international law during war

Chair: Dr. Laurențiu Pleșca

Kateryna DANYLEVYCH (Juliusz Mieroszewski Centre for Dialogue, Warszaw, Poland): ***"Just Peace": Russian Interpretations of Justice in the Context of the War against Ukraine***

Dr. Viktoriia KHALANCHUK (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine): ***The Leadership Crime? Attributing Responsibility for the War through the Crime of Aggression***

Dr. Tomislav DAGEN (Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia) and Dr. Elizabeta MAĐAREVIĆ (Independent Researcher, Zagreb, Croatia): ***Challenges of Achieving Kant's Perpetual Peace in Contemporary Europe: A Geopolitical and International-Law Perspective*** (online)

Irina-Valentina CARNARIU (University of Bucharest, Faculty of History): ***Selective Recognition: Russia, the Yazidi Genocide, and the Politics of the Genocide Convention***

13,15-14,00: Lunch

14,00-15,45: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 6A (Library Reading Room)

Choosing Euroatlantic path despite Russian roadblocks

Chair: Dr. Arild Moe

Dr. Marius GHINCEA (ETH Zurich, Switzerland) and Laurențiu PLEȘCA (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Geopolitical Enlargement as a Demarcation Project***

Dr. Noela MAHMUTAJ (University of Tirana, Albania) and Dr. Iver B. NEUMANN (Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Oslo, Norway): ***The Prize of Small-state Status-seeking: Albania–Russian Relations Following Albania's Accession to NATO in 2009***

Dr. Pål Wilter SKEDSMO (Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Oslo, Norway): ***Diversification Without Decoupling: Armenia's Strategic Balancing***

M.A. Sebastian SCHÄFFER (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Vienna, Austria): ***Scenarios for Elections in Ukraine***

Panel no. 6B (Council of Faculty Room)

Attempts at clearing the thick mist over the Black Sea: new strategies for security and resilience

Chair: Dr. Krzysztof Żęgota

Dr. Olha MOROZOVA (The Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Ukraine): ***The Black Sea as an Area of Russia's Strategic Interests: The Case of Ukraine in Historical and Contemporary Perspective***

Dr. Tomasz STĘPNIEWSKI (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland): ***From Reassurance to Frontline: NATO's Eastern Flank and the Deepening of EU-NATO Cooperation in the Wake of Russia's War Against Ukraine*** (online)

Dr. Ioana Mădălina MIRON (Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania): ***Transactional Pragmatism in the Black Sea: Evaluating the Structural Drivers and Limits of Russia-Turkey Relations in a Long-Term Conflict***

M.A. Lou ZHENYU (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bulgaria): ***Minilateral Resilience without Strategic Convergence: Bulgaria, Romania and Türkiye in the MCM Black Sea Task Group (2022–2026)***

15,45-16,00: Coffee Break

16,00-17,45: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 7A (Library Reading Room)

Unravelling the Russian cognitive war and strategies to counter disinformation.

Chair: Dr. Marius Diaconescu

Dr. Jakub OLCHOWSKI (Institute of Central Europe, Lublin, Poland): ***Russia's Cognitive Warfare as a Key Challenge for Europe's Resilience – the Case of Poland***

Dr. Krzysztof ŻĘGOTA, Dr. Marcin CHEŁMINIAK and Dr. Wojciech KOTOWICZ (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland): ***Historical Memory and Disinformation: Russian Narratives about Poland***

Dr. Olga NADSKAKUŁA-KACZMARCZYK (The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland): ***Beyond Defensive Resilience: Offensive and Affirmative Strategies against Russian Information Warfare. Lessons from Alexei Navalny***

Dr. Olena PAVLOVA (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany): ***Toxic Landscapes and Mediascapes of***

Occupied Mariupol: The Architecture of Environmental Narratives in the contemporary Hybrid Wars

Panel no. 7B (Council of Faculty Room)

Seeking shared stability and security: EU wingspan in its neighbourhood

Chair: Dr. Laurențiu Pleșca

Dr. Radu CARP (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***The EU Expansion with Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and the "Strategic Autonomy" of Europe***

Dr. Sergiu MUSTEAȚĂ (Ion Creangă Pedagogical State University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova): ***History Education for Democratic Resilience: Curriculum Reform on the Republic of Moldova's Path towards European Integration***

Dr. Gjeraqina LEKA (University of Tetova, Republic of North Macedonia): ***EU Enlargement Amid the Invasion of Ukraine: Lessons from the Western Balkans***

Florin-Mădălin NICU (University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Engagement Without Alignment: The Limits of EU Influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia***

17,45-18,00: Coffee Break

18,00-20,00: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 8A (Library Reading Room)

The Republic of Moldova's roadmap towards the EU: obstacles and opportunities

Chair: Dr. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu

Dr. Marius DIACONESCU (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania), Octavian IACOB (University of Bucharest / Faculty of History), and Luca OANCEA (University of Bucharest / Faculty of History): ***Narratives on Social Media Against the Unification of the Republic of Moldova with Romania Following President Maia Sandu's Statements***

Dr. Keith HARRINGTON (School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, Ireland): ***Minorities in Their Own State: Experiences of Moldovans in Transnistria and Georgians in Abkhazia and South Ossetia during the Collapse of the Soviet Union***

Will KINGSTON-COX (Lincoln College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom): ***Competing Nationhoods: Transnistrian Identity Politics and Moldova's (Re)integration Challenge***

Sam FERDINAND (College of Europe, Tirana, Albania): ***"Because We Live on Different Sides": Identity, Mutual Perceptions, and Hopes of the post-1992 Generation in Moldova and Transnistria*** (online)

Panel no. 8B (Council of Faculty Room)

Chair: Dr. Noela Mahmutaj

Social constructs in the post-Cold War world: narratives, identities, and interests

Dr. Iulia MUSTĂȚEA (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***Images of Post-communist Russia: American Perception of Russia vs. Russian Self-perception. Congruence or Clash?***

Dr. Nataliia NECHAIEVA-YURIICHUK (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine): ***One War, Many Fronts: Russian Imperial Identity and the Logic of Protracted Confrontation*** (online)

Arina KOSAREVA (University of Oslo, Norway): ***Beyond the Appearance of Consensus: Everyday Antiwar Resistance on Russian Social Media***

M.A. Fatemeh MOTAMEDISEDEH (University of Tehran, Iran): ***Political Humor, War, and Social Resilience: Continuities and Transformations from Soviet Political Jokes to Contemporary Russia*** (online)

20,00-21,00: Dinner

Saturday, 14 November 2026

9,45-11,15: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 9A (Library Reading Room)

Enduring social forces during war

Chair: Dr. Marius Diaconescu

Dr. Iryna DRUZHKOVA (Odesa National Medical University, Ukraine): ***Medical Heritage between Vulnerability and Resilience in Wartime Odesa***

Dr. Nadia IERMAKOV (Ariel University, Israel): ***Rebuilding Continuity: Displaced Universities in Wartime Ukraine*** (online)

Dr. Edina Lilla MÉSZÁROS (University of Oradea, Romania): ***Operationalizing Societal Resilience to Disinformation in the EU: Nordic Good Practice Models and Their Transferability to Romania*** (online)

Panel no. 9B (Council of Faculty Room)

Enablers for policy and cultural transformation

Chair: Dr. Tatiana Cojocari

Robert Gabriel ȚICĂLĂU (Romanian Centre for Russian Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania): ***From Balancing to Asymmetric Alignment: The Evolution of Belarusian Foreign Policy in the forth year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine***

Polina FEDORENKO (Ukrainian Institute, Ukraine): ***Russian Cultural Diplomacy in France: Narratives and Strategies under Sanctions*** (online)

Anna AMILAKHVARI (Central European University, Wien, Austria): ***Identity Formation and Negotiating Dual Trauma among Georgian-Ukrainian Youth*** (online)

11,15-11,30: Coffee Break

11,30-13,45: Parallel Panels

Panel no. 10A (Library Reading Room)

Key takeaways from the war in Ukraine: insights into potential new security strategies in Europe

Chair: Dr. Laurențiu Plește

Dr. Dorin DOLGHI (University of Oradea, Romania): ***The Consequences of Russian Aggression on Ukraine and Hybridization of Regional/International Politics. A theoretical Framework*** (online)

Dr. Bogdan ȘTEFANACHI ("Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Romania): ***Towards a Geopolitical Europe: The European Political Community and the Transformation of European Security*** (online)

Dr. Natalia PUTINĂ (Moldova State University, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova): ***The Changing Role of Civil Society in Moldova's Democratic Resilience*** (online)

Dr. Ludmila ROȘCA (Moldova State University, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova): ***The Resilience of European Democracy in the Context of War in the Region*** (online)

Panel no. 10B (Council of Faculty Room)

Chair: Robert Gabriel Țicălău

Complexities of the war in Ukraine: military and digital dimensions

Claudia-Alecsandra GABRIAN (Babeș Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania): ***Targeting the Digital Frontline: The Geopolitical Battle Over Starlink Connectivity in the Russia–Ukraine War*** (online)

Dr. Ionuț Alexandru DRĂGULIN (Romanian Diplomatic Institute, Bucharest, Romania): ***Military Attrition and Diplomatic Bargaining over Donetsk***

Dr. Oğuzhan MANIOĞLU and Emre ATSÜ (Istanbul Kent University, Türkiye): ***From the Black Sea to Brussels: Ukraine as a Security Co-Producer in the EU's Defence Readiness 2030***

Dr. Sanda NICOLA (University of Ostrava, Czech Republic): ***Security over sustainability? The shift in CEE's Just Transition driven by the Russia-Ukraine conflict***

13,45-14,00: Closing Speech (Council of Faculty Room)
Dr. Mihai Răzvan UNGUREANU, Director, Romanian Centre for Russian Studies

14,00-15,00: Lunch

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Conference venue: University of Bucharest, Faculty of History (4-12 Regina Elisabeta Blvd., Bucharest)



Direction from the Metro Station Universitate (Nicolae Bălcescu Exit) to the Faculty of History:

Nota Bene! The entrance to the Faculty of History is right after the bus stop.

