

Romanian Moldovan Study Group Colloquium
SSEES, 14-15 February 2008

While discussion of the impact of Romania's admission on Romania and the EU itself has focused on the economic and political dimension, little attention has been paid to the synchronization of behaviour and an acceptance of shared values which are implicit in respect for the *acquis communautaire*. The aim of the Romanian-Moldovan Studies Group is to assess how far Romania has come since 1990 in adjusting to these particular implications of the *acquis*. A similar assessment will be made with regard to the Republic of Moldova which aspires to join the EU. Romania's membership of the EU will act as a magnet to the Republic of Moldova, given the linguistic – and in part, cultural - identity that the majority of Moldovans share with the Romanians. The group is engaged in promoting the study of a space, in this case Romania and Moldova, and the multiple perspectives coexisting within them rather than unilateral analyses of a state. The group has, to date, organized three colloquia (two in SSEES and one at Wadham College, Oxford) since autumn 2006 and has brought together PhD students from centres in both the UK, in continental western Europe, and in Romania, Moldova and Russia to focus on an examination of Romanian identity, to challenge the ethno-centric narratives that permeate the discussion of Romania's past and present by counter-balancing them with studies of minorities in Romania and border areas. In this respect the position of the Roma minority, the largest of its kind in Europe with an estimated population of 2.2 millions, that of the Hungarians of Transylvania and of the Csangos, and of the Gagauz in Moldova have been addressed. The group has also invited scholars researching Moldova's past and its peoples to consider the validity of the concept of a Moldovan identity and to examine to what degree the debate over this has contributed to the division of the Republic with the secession of the territory self-styled Transdnestr (Transnistria).

The group sees its activity in the form of a rolling programme of workshops which seeks to integrate Romanian and Moldovan PhD students working on themes promoted by CEELBAS with students pursuing similar themes from universities elsewhere in Europe. In this sense it plans to extend the network-building that it has already achieved. The group is formed of 25-30 participants, chosen principally from within SSEES/UCL and Oxford University, and including PhD students from the University of Jena, Paris (Sorbonne), the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), and Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj, Romania. The pattern of this academic schedule is intended to be evolutionary and has as its objective the publication of original research.

The colloquium held in February 2008 attracted some 30 participants. Chairpersons were drawn principally from SSEES staff but also included a CEELBAS research scholar who was afforded her first opportunity to act in this capacity. The colloquium programme is presented below.

Dennis Deletant
Co-convenor
22 February 2008