



European Association of Social Anthropologists
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux

To: Whom it may concern

President

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Dear Colleague,

Subject: Establishment of a joint social anthropology doctoral programme in the Baltic States

I am writing in my capacity as president of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). The EASA is a professional association open to all social anthropologists either qualified in, or else working in, Europe. The EASA was established in 1989 and currently unites more than 1800 anthropologists across the world.

We would like to express our strongest support for the establishment of the Baltic Anthropology Graduate School (BAGS) joint PhD programme. The programme would unite the efforts of five universities from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. We applaud the aspiration of our colleagues from Riga Stradins University (Latvia), University of Latvia, Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), Tallinn University (Estonia) and Tartu University (Estonia) at joining forces to establish a regional centre of learning and academic excellence.

As a professional association, we have followed the development of social anthropology in the Baltic States. Our colleagues in the Baltic States have demonstrated their persistence and commitment to the discipline since the early 1990s. However, as it is understandable for a comparatively new field in the region, the establishment of a full-scale PhD programme has been curtailed so far because the available resources are scattered across various countries and universities. The BAGS boldly proposes to overcome this limitation by establishing the first independent social anthropology PhD programme in the region.


The scope that the BAGS proposes to cover is wide; the instruction language of the programme is English, and the BAGS aim to recruit students from around the world. This will undoubtedly have two results. Firstly, it will bring young and bright scholars into the Baltic academic area. Secondly, the job market for the graduates of the programme will be much wider than only the Baltic States. Therefore, we envisage that there will be a wide range of job opportunities for scholars who have completed the BAGS programme.

We believe that the establishment of the BAGS joint doctoral programme would help social anthropologists in the Baltic States to consolidate the potential of the discipline and continue the

advancement of anthropological knowledge and its application in many spheres of social life in the region and beyond. Importantly, it will help to widen the ranks of anthropologically educated citizens and thus enhance the scholarly and public debate on important socio-political issues in the Baltic States, Europe, and elsewhere. At a time of great global social challenges, exemplified most recently by the Europe's migrant crisis, as well as political and economic instability, keen in-depth anthropological analysis and search for alternative solutions are indeed much needed.

Therefore, on behalf of the EASA, I strongly support the establishment of the BAGS joint doctoral program and urge you to support its further development.

Kind regards,



Valeria Siniscalchi

EASA President