



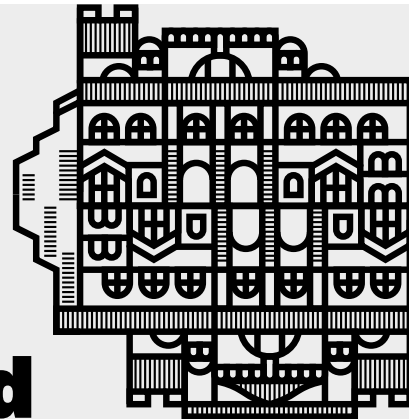
6th International  
Balkan Studies Conference

November 12–13  
Prague, Czech Republic

Balkan Express 2021

#BALKANEXPRESS

# Neighbors and neighborhood in the Balkans



Application deadline: August 31, 2021



The Czech Academy  
of Sciences

Strategy AV21

Top research in the public interest

The conference has been supported by Strategy AV21 - Top Research in the Public Interest, research program of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Date: November 12–13, 2021

Conference venue: Faculty of Humanities,  
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Conference language: English

Conference format: Hybrid (Please specify whether  
you will be attending the conference physically  
or virtually in the online registration form).

Application deadline: August 31, 2021

Online registration: [shorturl.at/kBHS7](https://shorturl.at/kBHS7)

Contact: [konference.balkan@gmail.com](mailto:konference.balkan@gmail.com)

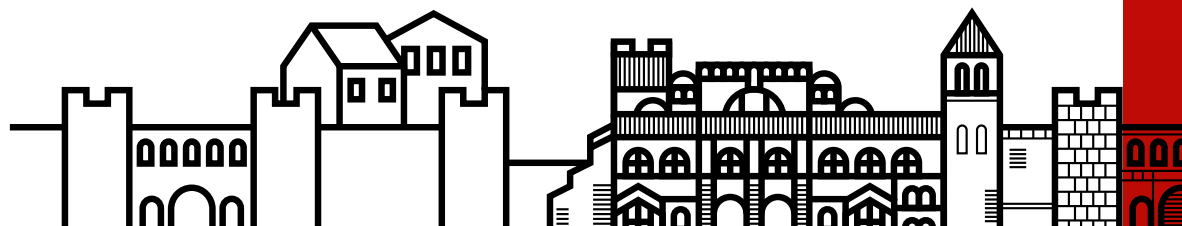
Information regarding acceptance: September 12, 2021

Organizing committee:

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Organizing institutions:

Faculty of Humanities, Charles University;  
Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences;  
Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences;  
Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social  
Sciences, Charles University; Czech Association for  
Slavic, Balkan and Byzantine Studies



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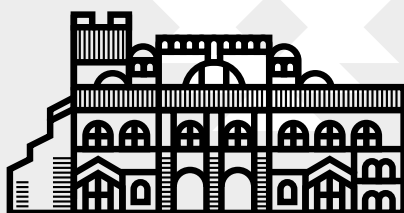
Dear colleagues and friends,

It is our honor to invite you to the 6th International Balkan Studies Conference “Balkan Express”. This year the conference will aim to rethink the Balkans through concepts and ideas of neighbors, neighborhood and neighborly relations. The central role of the notion of neighborhood (komšilik) in the daily lives of people in the Balkans and the importance of neighborly relations in Balkan societies in general seems to be beyond doubt.

On the one hand, the traditional Balkan notion of neighborhood, formed under Ottoman and Mediterranean social and cultural influences, tends to be conceptualized in an inclusive manner, emphasizing the special relations, respect and mutual assistance among close neighbors regardless of their faith and ethnicity. Neighborhood is primarily understood as an intimate space of deep bonds, affections, mutual help and tolerance. In this perspective, neighborly solidarity helps to neutralize the effects of the anonymous outside forces of modern state, nationalism, and economic exploitation of individual lives. In the extreme situations of military conflicts, ethnic cleansing and ideological clashes, many tended to save lives, property and dignity of their neighbors.

On the other hand, the Balkans are also frequently conceptualized as a region characterized by deep and long-lasting mutual animosity and repetitive violence among neighbors. Neighborhood is thus represented as a breeding ground of distrust, jealousy, hatred and conflict. In this view, Balkan neighbors simply kill, loot, rape and expel one another with greater frequency and fury than other Europeans.

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**#BalkanExpress2021**



The 6th “Balkan Express” conference would like to revisit the notions, practices and discourses of neighbors and neighborhood in the Balkans (historical, anthropological, political and economic perspectives). The conference adopts an interdisciplinary approach, enabling different fields of knowledge production and ways of understanding neighbors and neighborhood. This year the conference is going to take form of a hybrid event due to the coronavirus pandemics. It will be possible to attend the conference both physically and virtually. In addition to a rich academic program, the conference will also provide a glimpse into Balkan cultural and artistic production. We look forward to meeting you in Prague this November.

**Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:**

Komšilik (neighborhood) as an intimate space of special bonds in discourses and practical life

Other concepts describing neighborly relations and neighborhood in the Balkans (e.g. zavičaj, zadruga, zajednica or mahala – the physical neighborhoods in post-Ottoman Balkan cities and towns)

– “Neighbors killing neighbors” and/or “Neighbors saving neighbors”

– Broken Bonds and “Impossible Neighborhood”

– Absent neighbors (dead and expelled neighbors, neighbors living abroad, neighborhoods affected by negative demographic trends)

– Neighborhood in contemporary political discourses and practice (inter-state relations between ‘Balkan neighbors’, notions of good/bad neighborly relations between various ethnic groups, the project of EU enlargement progressively incorporating Europe’s ‘Balkan neighborhood’)