

CONFERENCE

HISTORICAL SMALL STATES STUDIES: STATE OF RESEARCH AND PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER 22 – 25, 2025

Location:

Haus Gutenberg, Balzers, Liechtenstein

Organised by:

Stephan Scheuzger

Liechtenstein-Institut
St. Luziweg 2, 9487 Gamprin-Bendern
www.liechtenstein-institut.li

Interested scholars are invited to follow the conference online. A Zoom link can be requested at info@liechtenstein-institut.li. The registration deadline is October 15.



LIECHTENSTEIN-INSTITUT



HELMUTH M. MERLIN STIFTUNG
FÖRDERUNG DER RECHTS- UND STAATSWISSENSCHAFTEN



FÜRST FRANZ JOSEF VON LIECHTENSTEIN STIFTUNG

HISTORICAL SMALL STATES STUDIES: STATE OF RESEARCH AND PERSPECTIVES

In the roughly three-quarters of a century of its existence, small states studies have repeatedly asserted their relevance, but ultimately without leaving the fringes of academic and public attention. In recent years, various developments have led to an increase in the number of voices emphasizing the scientific and political importance of research on small states, with current geopolitical developments adding a sense of urgency to the discussion.

Small states studies constitute an interdisciplinary field of research. Due to its genesis, however, the field has remained strongly shaped by political science, to some extent also by law. It is true that research interests in the field have undergone a certain diversification, especially in the context of the end of the Cold War and the intensification of debates about globalization. Nevertheless, the continuing dominant role of political science and law has inevitably led to a certain thematic narrowing of research. The broadening of research perspectives has eminent scientific potential and promises significant political returns. Historical scholarship has an important role to play in increasing the knowledge potential and consequently the scientific relevance of small states studies through new research approaches.

The conference brings together scholars to examine the current state of historical small states studies and to discuss promising lines of research in the field. The invited guests will discuss their projects and exchange views on the profile of historical small states studies. The perspective is broad both spatially and temporally: it includes research on contexts in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia, from the early modern period to recent contemporary history.



PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2025

18:00 – 18:30 Stephan Scheuzger (Liechtenstein Institute / Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich)
Welcome Address and Introduction: State of Research and Perspectives

18:30 – 20:00 **Panel 1: Beyond the Discipline: Perspectives from Political Science and Law**

Baldur Thorhallsson (University of Iceland, Reykjavik)
Shelter-Seeking of Small States in the International System: Political Science Meets History

Patricia Schiess (Liechtenstein Institute / University of Zurich)
Legal Transplants and Hybrid Legal Systems of Small States

Apéro riche

THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2025

08:30 – 10:00 **Panel 2: SMALLST: Insights from a Research Project on Early Modern Small States**

Gábor Kármán (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest)
The Quest of Finding a Conceptual Framework for Small States in Early Modern South-Eastern Europe

Marian Coman (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest)
Weak Territorial Identities as Long-Standing Advantages. The Case of 16th-Century Wallachia

Vedran Stojanović (Institute for Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Dubrovnik)
Demonization of Smallness: The Republic of Ragusa (1358-1808)

10:00 **Coffee Break**

10:15 – 11:45 **Panel 3: Political Power and Resources of Small States in Early Modern Times**

Sven Dittmar (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
Small States and Big Politics? Prince-Bishoprics in the Holy Roman Empire

Matthias Schnettger (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
The Resources of the Weak. Rooms for Manoeuvre of Small States in the Early Modern Society of Princes

11:45 **Coffee Break**

12:00 – 12:45	Panel 4: Small States as Colonial Powers
	Javier Francisco (University of Basel) <i>Imperial Methuselah. A Theoretical Approach on European Long-Lived Rule in the Americas</i>
	Lunch Break
14:15 – 15:45	Panel 5: Small States in the Age of Empire
	Alexandros Balatsoukas (Justus Liebig University Giessen) <i>Patrons and Protégés: Greece as a Case Study in Small-State Agency</i>
	Johann Nicolai (University of Hamburg) <i>The Free City of Cracow: Small Statehood and Sovereignty in the 19th Century</i>
15:45	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	Anna Batzeli (Democritus University of Thrace) <i>Small Statehood in Balkan Diplomacy (1878–1913)</i>
	Jean-Michel Johnston (University of Cambridge) <i>On the Shoulders of Giants? Europe's Smallest States in the Age of Empire</i>
17:30	Coffee Break
17:45 – 18:30	Panel 6: Small States and National Identity
	Cornelius Goop (Liechtenstein Institute / University of Vienna) <i>Redefining the European Small State in the Age of Nationalism: Liechtenstein's Efforts to Integrate National Identity into Small Statehood, 1850–1945</i>
	Visit to Vaduz

FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2025

08:30 – 10:00	Panel 7: Small States in the First World War and Its Aftermath
	Erkjad Kajo (Aix-Marseille University / Harvard University) <i>Surviving the Storm: The Albanian State in the Age of Empires, 1912–1920</i>
	Gábor Egry (Institute of Political History, Budapest) <i>Imitators or Heirs of Empire? Post-Habsburg Statehood, Imperial Rule, and the Question of Tiny Empires</i>
10:00	Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:00	Anna Ross (University of Sheffield) <i>At the Limits of Small States? International Zones and Small Statehood</i>
	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:45	Panel 8: Ideas and the (Un)Making of Small States in Decolonization
	Eraldo Souza dos Santos (University of California Irvine) <i>"Goa Must Be Kept Out of Cold War!": Tristão de Bragança Cunha and the Politics of Decolonial Annexation, 1954–1958</i>
	Christian Cwik (University of Graz) <i>The Case of the Caribbean Island of Anguilla: From Leopold Kohr's Small State Theory to Today's Global Offshore Banking</i>
12:45	Lunch Break

14:15 – 15:45

Panel 9: Cartographies

Dorothea M. Hutterer (Rachel Carson Center, Ludwig Maximilian University Munich)

Small States Environments in Southern Germany – Episcopal Territories and Land Use Conflicts on Hand Painted Maps

Fareed, Mohamed W. (University of Sharjah)

The Border That Wasn't: Colonial Cartography, Unclaimed Territory, and the Historical Construction of Statehood in Bir Tawil

Coffee Break

16:00 – 16:45

Panel 10: Small States Post-Colonial

Rosemarijn Hoefte (University of Amsterdam / Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden)

Suriname: How a Small Postcolonial Nation Is Trying to Find Its Place in the World

Coffee Break

17:00 – 18:30

Panel 11: Small State Diplomacy in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Yves Schmitz (University of Hildesheim)

The Performance of Smallness. Luxembourgish Foreign Policy and Africa, 1950s to 1980s

Christian Methfessel (Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Berlin)

The Afro-Asian Group in the United Nations: Defending the Rights of Small, but not too Small States

Joint Dinner

SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2025

08:30 – 10:00

Panel 12: Small Welfare States

Teresa Huhle (University of Cologne)

Social Reformism in a "Small Model Country": Imagining Uruguay's Place in the "Civilized World" (1903-1933)

Machteld Venken (University of Luxembourg)

A History of Veteran Welfare for Citizens of Luxembourg: (Trans)national Perspectives

10:00

Coffee Break

10:15 – 11:00

Panel 13: Libertarian Projects of Micro-States

Raymond B. Craib (Cornell University)

Private Micro-States: History, Ideology, and Scale

11:00

Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:15

Final Discussion