

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](http://www.liechtenstein-institut.li)

Interested scholars are invited to follow the conference online. A Zoom link can be requested at [info@liechtenstein-institut.li](mailto:info@liechtenstein-institut.li).

The registration deadline is October 15.



LIECHTENSTEIN-INSTITUT



## **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

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

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

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

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

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**Apéro riche**

## THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2025

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

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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*

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Marian Coman (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest)

*Weak Territorial Identities as Long-Standing Advantages. The Case of 16th-Century Wallachia*

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Vedran Stojanović (Institute for Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Dubrovnik)

*Demonization of Smallness: The Republic of Ragusa (1358-1808)*

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10:00 **Coffee Break**

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

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Sven Dittmar (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

*Small States and Big Politics? Prince-Bishoprics in the Holy Roman Empire*

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Matthias Schnettger (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

*The Resources of the Weak. Rooms for Manoeuvre of Small States in the Early Modern Society of Princes*

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11:45 **Coffee Break**

12:00 – 12:45

#### **Panel 4: Small States as Colonial Powers**

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Javier Francisco (University of Basel)

*Imperial Methuselah. A Theoretical Approach on European Long-Lived Rule in the Americas*

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#### **Lunch Break**

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14:15 – 15:45

#### **Panel 5: Small States in the Age of Empire**

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Alexandros Balatsoukas (Justus Liebig University Giessen)

*Patrons and Protégés: Greece as a Case Study in Small-State Agency*

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Johann Nicolai (University of Hamburg)

*The Free City of Cracow: Small Statehood and Sovereignty in the 19th Century*

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15:45

#### **Coffee Break**

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16:00 – 17:30

Anna Batzeli (Democritus University of Thrace)

*Small Statehood in Balkan Diplomacy (1878–1913)*

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Jean-Michel Johnston (University of Cambridge)

*On the Shoulders of Giants? Europe's Smallest States in the Age of Empire*

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17:30

#### **Coffee Break**

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17:45 – 18:30

#### **Panel 6: Small States and National Identity**

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Cornelius Goop (Liechtenstein Institute / University of Vienna)

*Redefining the European Small State in the Age of Nationalism: Liechtenstein's Efforts to Integrate National Identity into Small Statehood, 1850–1945*

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#### **Visit to Vaduz**

## FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2025

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08:30 – 10:00    **Panel 7: Small States in the First World War and Its Aftermath**

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Erkjad Kajo (Aix-Marseille University / Harvard University)  
*Surviving the Storm: The Albanian State in the Age of Empires, 1912–1920*

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Gábor Egry (Institute of Political History, Budapest)  
*Imitators or Heirs of Empire? Post-Habsburg Statehood, Imperial Rule, and the Question of Tiny Empires*

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10:00            **Coffee Break**

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10:15 – 11:00    Anna Ross (University of Sheffield)  
*At the Limits of Small States? International Zones and Small Statehood*

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**Coffee Break**

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11:15 – 12:45    **Panel 8: Ideas and the (Un)Making of Small States in Decolonization**

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Eraldo Souza dos Santos (University of California Irvine)  
*“Goa Must Be Kept Out of Cold War!”: Tristão de Bragança Cunha and the Politics of Decolonial Annexation, 1954–1958*

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Christian Cwik (University of Graz)  
*The Case of the Caribbean Island of Anguilla: From Leopold Kohr’s Small State Theory to Today’s Global Offshore Banking*

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12:45            **Lunch Break**

14:15 – 15:45

### **Panel 9: Small States Post-Colonial**

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Oge Samuel Okonkwo (University of Ghana, Accra / International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague)

*Micro-Nationalism and Fragility: Lessons from Biafra and African Secessionist Movements*

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Fareed, Mohamed W. (University of Sharjah)

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

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### **Coffee Break**

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16:00 – 16:45

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*

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### **Coffee Break**

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17:00 – 18:30

### **Panel 10: Small State Diplomacy in the Second Half of the 20th Century**

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Yves Schmitz (University of Hildesheim)

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

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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*

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### **Joint Dinner**

## SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2025

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### 08:30 – 10:00 **Panel 11: Small Welfare States**

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Teresa Huhle (University of Cologne)  
*Social Reformism in a "Small Model Country": Imagining Uruguay's Place in the "Civilized World" (1903-1933)*

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Machteld Venken (University of Luxembourg)  
*A History of Veteran Welfare for Citizens of Luxembourg: (Trans)national Perspectives*

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### 10:00 **Coffee Break**

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### 10:15 – 11:00 **Panel 12: Libertarian Projects of Micro-States**

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Raymond B. Craib (Cornell University)  
*Private Micro-States: History, Ideology, and Scale*

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### 11:00 **Coffee Break**

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### 11:15 – 12:15 **Final Discussion**