

The annexation of the Klaipėda (Memel) region to Lithuania, 1923: its international significance and legacy in the context of European borderland micro-regions

International conference
Vilnius and Klaipėda, 25–27 May 2023

Jointly organised by the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University,
the Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, and
the Centre for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge,
in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania and
the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Sponsored by the Municipality of Klaipėda, the Research Council of Lithuania and
the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

Final schedule (2 May 2023)

Thursday, 25 May 2023

Part 1, Vilnius, Venue: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

10:00 Welcome address

10:30 Opening keynote: Brendan SIMMS, University of Cambridge (UK)

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee

11:15 – 13:15 First Session

Moderator: Darius STALIŪNAS, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania)

Donatas KUPČIŪNAS, University of Cambridge (UK): Between civilisation and geopolitics: British and French plans for the future of Memel before January 1923

Joachim TAUBER, Nordost-Institut (Germany): The Significance of the Klaipėda Question for German Foreign Policy, 1919–1939

Julien GUESLIN, Strasbourg University (France): A barometer of ‘New Europe’? France and the question of the Memel Statute (1922–1935): between the defence of a democratic multicultural region, support for the Lithuanian state and European Realpolitik

Vilma BUKAITĖ, National Museum of Lithuania (Lithuania): France’s Interaction with Britain on the Issue of Klaipėda (1922–beginning 1923): Between Cooperation and Competition

13:15 – 14:15 Lunch

14:15 – 15:45 Second Session

Moderator: Tomas BALKELIS, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania)

Marta GRZECHNIK, University of Gdańsk (Poland): The importance of access to the Baltic Sea and control of one's own ports for the new states in post-First World War Europe. The case of Gdynia and the Danzig Corridor

Rikako SHINDO, Hosei University Tokyo (Japan): Königsberg's attempts to establish freedom of transit on the Niemen River in the 1920s: The regional interest of East Prussia and the international tensions between the riparian countries in north-eastern Europe

Klaus RICHTER, University of Birmingham (UK): Chaos Is a Ladder: The Great Depression and the Lithuania's Integration of the Klaipėda Region

15:45 – 16:00 Coffee

16:00 – 17:30 Third Session

Moderator: Tomas BALKELIS, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania)

Algimantas KASPARAVIČIUS, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania): From the 'insurgence' to the 'Ultimatum': the Dilemma of Klaipėda in the Foreign Policy of Lithuania, 1923–1939

Jerzy BORZECKI, University of Toronto at Mississauga (Canada): The Polish perspective on the Lithuanian takeover of Memel in 1923 in the context of the post-Riga diplomatic settlement

Magnus ILMJÄRV, Tallinn University (Estonia): Estonian foreign policy, public opinion and the question of Klaipėda, 1923–1939

Dinner

Friday, 26 May 2023

10:00 Departure to Klaipėda

Walk and dinner in Klaipėda

Saturday, 27 May 2023

Part 2, Klaipėda, Venue: Klaipėda University

10:00 Welcome address

10:10 – 11:10 Fourth Session

Moderator: Vygantas VAREIKIS, Klaipėda University (Lithuania)

Tomas BALKELIS, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania): Living by the border: the case of the interwar Vilnius region

Krzysztof BUCHOWSKI, University of Białystok (Poland): The conflict over the Sejny region in the years 1919–1920

11:10 – 11:25 Coffee

11:25 – 12:25 Fifth Session

Moderator: Vygantas VAREIKIS, Klaipėda University (Lithuania)

Ruth LEISEROWITZ, German Historical Institute Warsaw (Poland): Dreams about the future of Memel. Imaginations between the Free State and trade perspectives from the point of view of Jewish entrepreneurs

Jim BJORK, King's College London (UK): The Votes of Others: Considering the Mutual Influences of Postwar Frontier Plebiscites from the Perspective of Upper Silesia

12:25 – 13:25 Lunch

13:25 – 14:55 Sixth Session

Moderator: Donatas KUPČIŪNAS, University of Cambridge (UK)

Robert PYRAH, Oxford Brookes University (UK): Lwów: the lost 'borderland capital' as a cypher of national memory in 20th century Poland

Peter THALER, University of Southern Denmark (Denmark): Peace through Moderation: The Schleswig Question as a Bright Spot of the Versailles Order

Andrea GRIFFANTE, Lithuanian Institute of History (Lithuania): Otherizing Trieste: National and International Discourses, 1918–1923

Coffee

15:10 – 16:00

Closing reflections and discussion

Moderator: Vasilijus SAFRONOVAS, Klaipėda University (Lithuania)

17:00 at the latest Departure to Vilnius