

THE 20TH SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC POLICY IN ESTONIA

Overviews of the scientific conferences on economic policy which have been organised since 1984 have been published in 2002 and 2007 when the 10th¹ and the 15th² conference took place, respectively. The conference that will be held in 2012 will already be the 20th. Starting from the 15th conference, only Värskas has remained the venue of the conference (earlier, a half of the first day was spent in Tartu and then the conference was continued at Värskas). The essence of the conference has remained the same as in the earlier years: presentations on the first two days, divided into sessions (up to 6 sessions). Traditionally, the conference has included also a picnic and a cultural programme (on the first day), a sports and health programme (on the 2nd day)³ and a nature programme (on the 3rd day).

As the essence of the work of the 15th conference (2007) has not been discussed before in the chronicles (the publication appeared before the conference), a brief overview of that conference will also be provided below.

In 2007 (28–30 June) the **15th** scientific conference was held on the subject „Economic Policy of Estonia – Three Years in the European Union“. The first day of the conference was mainly dedicated to the policies of Estonian regional and local governments. Three presentations above all from specialists of local governments of the Põlva County had been planned for starting the discussions. The day ended with the presentation/discussion by Professor Emeritus *Peter Friedrich* (Munich-Tartu). The second day of the conference was divided into three sessions with 13 presentations in total.

The traditional picnic on the evening of the first day of the conference took place at the Seto Farm Museum. The participants listened to a concert there and looked at museum buildings and exhibits. The nature programme was changed and the Meenikunno Bog at Põlvamaa was visited already on the second day. Thus the

¹ An overview of the first ten conferences has been provided the papers published in Estonian and in English: **Raudjärv, Matti; Sepp, Jüri**. *Majanduspoliitika kümme konverentsi kui osa Eesti majandusteadusest ja akadeemilisest majandusharidusest / Ten conferences on economic policy as a part of Estonian economic science and academic economic education. – Euroopa Liiduga liitumise mõju eesti majanduspoliitikale / Die Integration der Europäischen Union und ihre Wirkungen auf die Wirtschaftspolitik Estlands / Effect of Accession to the European Union on the Economic Policy of Estonia*. Berlin, Tallinn: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz GmbH, Mattimar OÜ, 2002, lk. / S. / pp. 601–620.

² An overview of the 11th–14th conferences has been provided in the papers published in Estonian, German and English: **Raudjärv, Matti**. *Majanduspoliitika konverentsid kui traditsioon Eesti majandusteaduses ja kõrghariduses. – Eesti majanduspoliitilised väätlused/ Estnische Gespräche über Wirtschaftspolitik/ Discussions on Estonian Economic Policy*. Berlin, Tallinn: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, Mattimar, 2007, lk./ S./ pp. 97–112.

³ Before completion of the construction of the Värskas SPA Centre the cultural programme was in the evening of the second day of the conference, i.e. on Friday.

participants in the conference were able to see the 10th Youth Festival in Tallinn (the Song Festival 2007 and Dance Festival 2007 were held on 29.06–01.07.2007).

In 2008 (26–28 June) the **16th** Scientific Conference was held at Värskas on the subject „Economic Policy in the EU Member States – 2008“ and the work of the conference was planned to two days – two sessions on the first day and four on the second day. The conference was opened by Matti Raudjärv (University of Tartu) and Toomas Haldma, Dean of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Tartu who was also the President of the Estonian Economic Association at that time.

Two sessions were held on the first day, three presentations in each. The second day of conference consisted of four sessions and in total 12 presentations. In the 6th session which was also the final session of the conference a presentation was made by *Kalev Kukk*, Adviser to the Government of the Republic of Estonia, who gave a comprehensive overview of the life and fruitful research activities of the Estonian expatriate economist Ragnar Nurkse (1907–1959).

The evening of the first day was again spent at the Seto Farm Museum and its Tsäimaja (Teahouse) where both dinner and the cultural programme took place. As the construction of the new SPA Centre had been completed in the autumn of 2007 in the immediate vicinity of the Värskas Resort, a new annual tradition was started with the conference of 2008 – the evening of the second day, after the end of the conference work programme, is spent at the SPA where it is possible to take baths with natural mineral water and swim in a 25 m swimming-pool besides the different hydrotherapy procedures and saunas. Within the nature programme on the third day of the conference the participants visited Taevaskoja, took a motorised raft trip on the dammed-up Ahja River and had lunch in Põlva. In addition, an interesting 1-day trip to the Lahemaa National Park was organised for guests from Germany outside the programme with an entertaining ethnic lunch in Altja Tavern.

The subject of the **17th** conference held in 2009 (01–03 July) was „Economic Policy in the EU Member States – 2009“. The conference was opened with opening addresses by Matti Raudjärv (University of Tartu), co-organiser of the conference Manfred O.E. Hennies (Kiel University of Applied Sciences, Federal Republic of Germany) and Urmas Varblane, Vice-Dean of Research of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Tartu. Two sessions with six presentations were held on the first day and four sessions with in total 13 presentations on the second day.

The cultural programme of the conference took place at the Saatse Village in Värskas Rural Municipality at the state border where the local historical church and the cemetery were visited and a boarding house recently built with assistance from EU support funds, and the participants walked on the local hiking trail. This was followed by a picnic and the cultural programme in open air, on the hill next to the Saatse Museum, a traditional place of worship. The nature programme on the third day of the conference included a cruise of a few hours on the Värskas Bay and Lake Pihkva, organised by the local company Setoline.

The subject of the **18th** conference held in 2010 (01–03 July) was „Economic Policy in the EU Member States – 2010“. The opening of this conference took longer than usual: the opening address by *Matti Raudjärv* (University of Tartu), initiator of this series of conferences, was followed by a brief presentation by Professor Emeritus *Manfred O.E. Hennies* (Kiel University of Applied Sciences, Federal Republic of Germany), the meritorious long-term co-organiser of the conference. Then *Toomas Haldma*, Dean of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Tartu took the floor and presented the decorated citation of honour to *Manfred Hennies* from *Alar Karis*, Rector of the University of Tartu, for his services both to the University of Tartu and to the Estonian economic science. The next person to take the floor was *Henn Vallimäe*, Director of the Pärnu College of the University of Tartu, who presented the Golden Badge of Honour of the College to *Manfred Hennies* for long-term and substantial cooperation. Also *Sulev Mäeltsemees*, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Tallinn University of Technology and long-term co-organiser of the Värška Conference gave a speech at the opening of the conference. Two sessions with six presentations were held on the first day and four sessions with in total 11 presentations on the second day.

A picnic was held in the evening of the first day of the conference on the meadow by the lake next to Värška Spa with a concert by the Seto Song and Dance Ensemble from Mikitamäe. The nature programme consisted in visiting villages on the shores of Lake Pihkva and becoming familiar with the life of the local people. The participants made a longer visit to the Podmotsa Village and its tsässon (Orthodox village chapel in Setomaa) where also donations were made. The Podmotsa Tsässon was built in 1760 and has been reconstructed for several times (in 1893, 1932, 1995, 2003). The Podmotsa Village is situated at the distance of 6 km from the centre of Värška towards the Russian border (it is ca 200 metres from the village to the state border). There is a beautiful view of the Kulje Village in Russia and the church over the bay from the village. It is a well-known fishing site where also the legendary Estonian baritone Georg Ots liked to go fishing (21.03.1920 in Petrograd – 05.09.1975 in Tallinn). When walking on the nature trail, the participants climbed the watchtower at the edge of the Velna Bog where the fine expanses of bog landscape, lakes, forests and villages were admired. As the boardwalk over the bog could not be used due to the high water level, the hike had to be cancelled (on Pikalombi nature trails – with lengths of 3.8 and 9.1 km). We hope we can still take walking tours of about two or three hours on Pikalombi trails in the future in order to become more familiar with local wildlife and the bog landscape.

The **19th** conference held in 2011 (30 June – 02 July) was on the subject „Economic Policy in the EU Member States – 2011“ and the work of the conference consisted of six sessions during two days. The opening addresses of the conference were made by *Matti Raudjärv* (University of Tartu) and *Armin Rohde* (University of Greifswald, Federal Republic of Germany), a long-term co-organiser (since 1999) of the conference. Two sessions with seven presentations were held on the first day of the conference and for the second day, four sessions with 12 presentations were planned.

The evening of the first day was spent at a picnic on the meadow by the lake next to Värška Spa with ethnic music played by a Seto harmonic and accordion player. The evening of the second day had been the same already since 2008 – the sports and health programme at Värška SPA. On the third day the participants had the nature programme and visited also interesting restored buildings of the Mooste Manor at Põlvamaa and had also lunch there. Mooste Manor is one of the Estonian manors with the most fully preserved buildings. The buildings from centuries ago are standing in line on the southern shore of Lake Mooste and constitute an interesting full ensemble of manor buildings. With the support from the European Regional Development Fund, for instance, the building of the manor manager, the cattleshed and the horse stable were restored in 2011 into an art centre, a folk music chamber and a restorers' chamber. Some other buildings were still waiting for their turn to be restored.

In 2012 (on 28–30 June), the **20th** conference will be held (it can probably also be called a jubilee conference) and traditionally again at Värška, on the subject „Economic policy in the EU Member States – 2012“. ⁴ The range of topics that will be discussed at the conference is relatively wide (analogously with the previous years). It has been recommended to focus on the following areas of economic policy:

1. Entrepreneurship policy
2. Corporate strategy
3. Fiscal and monetary policy
4. Environmental policy
5. Regional and local government policy
6. Sectoral economic policy (for different sectors of national economy)
7. Social policy
8. Labour policy and income policy

Also other areas of economic policy have always been possible (e.g. the economic crisis, etc.). Also presentations (and papers) on business administration have always been welcome in all fields. In that respect, the condition has always been set authors that they should describe/write in their presentation/paper the effect of the national economic policy on businesses and/or the other way round – the effect of businesses on national economic policy. Thus, papers on business administration have to be related to economic policy, and any papers not related to economic policy have been rejected according to recommendations from reviewers!

The jubilee conference will certainly also have cultural, sports and health, and nature programmes. As an additional bonus, it is planned to add also a trip to the Petseri

⁴ This publication will not dwell upon the 20th conference in detail as it is planned to give just an overview to readers on the basis of this publication. The conference will also not have taken place at the time of receiving this publication from the printing office. But it is planned to discuss it in more detail next year, in 2013 when both the conference work and additional programmes have already taken place and become history. In reality the plans may change to a certain extent, after all.

(Pskovo-Pechersky) Monastery to the cultural and nature programme of the participants.⁵

In the course of the last five years, other participants of the conference besides those from Estonia have been mainly colleagues from German universities but also from other places – there have been participants (not all of them have given presentations, however) also, for instance, from Latvia, Poland, France, Czech Republic and in 2012 also from Hungary. In the earlier years we have had participants also from Belgium, Lithuania, Finland and several other establishments of higher education and research of the above-mentioned countries. In the future we can probably expect participants from universities of Russia, Ukraine and Georgia (at least the respective statements of quite a few representatives of the universities from these countries allow the undersigned to hope that).

Matti Raudjärv

Initiator and main organiser of the conferences
on economic policy

November 2011 – March 2012

(At Pirita-Kose in Tallinn, in Pärnu and
on Kaasiku Farm in Lääne-Viru County)

⁵ Petseri (in Russian: Petchora) and the Petseri County (also called Setomaa as the ethnic area) became a part of Estonia after the Estonian War of Independence, with the coming into effect of the Tartu Peace Treaty signed between Estonia and Russia (on 02.02.1920). With the formation of the Pskov Oblast of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic (on 23.08.1944) and forced alteration of the border between Estonia and Russia, a large part of the Petseri County (incl. the Petseri town) was included in the Pskov Oblast. Petseri town became the centre of the Pechora District of the Pskov Oblast. Based on the Tartu Peace Treaty which determined the Eastern border of Estonia, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Estonia deemed on 12 September 1991 the earlier legislative acts of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic regulating the border as null and void and requested that the issue on state border be solved by way of negotiations between Estonia and the U.S.S.R. (with the participation of Russia). Estonia recognises the state border between Estonia and Russia in Petseri County, established with the Tartu Peace Treaty in 1920, and regards the borders of the Põlva County and Võru County and the border of the Pechora District of the Russian Federation, established by the U.S.S.R. as the Eastern border of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1944 as being factually an economic and administrative border (see: EE (Eesti Entsüklopeedia), Volume 7, Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 1994, pp. 282-283).