

## TWENTIETH SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC POLICY AT VÄRSKA

The **20th** conference (that can probably also be regarded as a jubilee conference) was held on 28–30 June 2012 and traditionally again at Värška, on the theme “Economic Policy in the EU Member States – in 2012”.

The conference had been planned with a relatively broad range of subjects (actually, similar to earlier years). It had 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. Just like at earlier conferences, also some other areas of economic policy (this time e.g. the economic crisis) had been planned.

Opening of the conference was more special this time: after the opening address and a brief retrospect on the history of the series of conferences from *Matti Raudjärv* (University of Tartu) as the initiator of the series, the previous Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the University of Tartu, the current Head of the Institute of Business Administration *Toomas Haldma* took the floor and delivered the Honorary Address from the Rector of the University of Tartu *Alar Karis* to Prof. Dr. *Armin Rohde* (University of Greifswald, Federal Republic of Germany) for his merits to both the University of Tartu and the Estonian economic science. *Armin Rohde* has frequently delivered academic lectures in Estonia (incl. during the German-Estonian Week held at the University of Tartu every autumn to which colleagues from the partner universities of the University of Tartu have been invited). He has also been an opponent to doctoral theses of doctoral students of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the University of Tartu and has actively participated in the Värška Conference since 1999 together with his doctoral students.

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.

Besides the presentations and discussions, the jubilee conference had also cultural, sports and health, and nature programmes. A picnic with ample and delicious Seto food and drinks was held on the meadow by the lake next to the Värška SPA and the song ensemble of the Värška Culture Centre gave a wonderful concert for 45 minutes in Seto folk costumes. Afterwards, the Rakvere Town Orchestra conducted by the brass band music teacher *Jüri Takjas* gave a concert of a couple of hours and played background music. On the evening of the second day after the conference work the participants had an opportunity to boost their health in Värška SPA.

The nature programme consisted in an one-hour guided walking tour on Saturday, the third day of the conference, to the territory of the Northern Camp held each summer for officers of the Defence Forces of the first period of independence of the

Republic of Estonia (our three first scientific conferences on economic policy were held in the buildings there, by the way, namely in 1984, 1994 and 1995) where the participants got a thorough overview of the history of the place both before and after occupation of Estonia by the Soviet army. Then followed an interesting visit to the buildings of the Seto Farm Museum next to the Northern Camp, to see its exhibits with the help of the museum guide. The nature programme and the conference ended in a Seto lunch at the Museum Teahouse after which the Väraska SPA bus took most participants of the conference to Tartu.

As an additional bonus also a trip to the Pechora Monastery was planned for the participants of the conference as a part of the cultural and nature programme but as Russian visas are expensive (ca 70 euros!) and the guide was only available from Pskov (at a high price again!) and the organisation of meals was somewhat uncertain (an advance payment was requested without guaranteeing the lunch!), the organisers decided to cancel the trip to Pechora as not many participants were interested in it either (above all due to the high price of the visa!).

Besides Estonian participants, traditionally colleagues from universities of the Federal Republic of Germany but also from Austria, Latvia and Hungary participated at the jubilee conference.

As the conference has been held at Väraska for twenty times already, the next conferences will probably be held at some other place at the request of the participants. The 21st conference will most probably be held at Jänedä<sup>1</sup> (on 27–29

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<sup>1</sup> The first traces of human activities at Jänedä date from the 3rd millennium BC according to random findings – boat-shaped stone axes displayed in Järvamaa Museum in Paide. The ancient Jänedä Stronghold dates from the end of the 1st millennium and is the largest ancient defence structure in that area of the Lääne-Viru County. Jänedä Village was first mentioned in ancient documents in 1353 (*Gendel*) when the Bishop of Tallinn acquired the land from the Order. The manor which was later transferred to private ownership (and existed at least in 1510) has belonged to many Baltic German families, most recently to von Benckendorffs. They built the main manor house and other buildings of the manor which have been preserved until now.

The last landlady of Jänedä, Maria Zakrevskaja-Benckendorff-Budberg was a prominent figure in cultural history whose life was full of adventures and close relationships with famous men like R. B. Lockhart, M. Gorki, G. H. Wells etc, which has served as a good material for both authors and film producers. In summer 1934 the author G. H. Wells stayed at Jänedä and finished the third volume of his memoirs here.

The landscape at Jänedä is varied (Kõrvemaa Landscape Reserve includes Aegviidu-Jänedä esker, Jänijõgi River, Allikaoja Stream, several lakes) and old manor houses standing next to modern buildings of their time (in 1975 the study building of the Technical School was built as an annex to the main manor house) constitute one of the most beautiful landscape architecture ensembles of North Estonia. The oldest Estonian establishment of secondary specialised education was at Jänedä (established in 1918 in Tallinn as North Estonian Secondary School of Farming, transferred in 1921 to Jänedä Manor and operated under different names. Since 1964 it was a State Farm Technical School where the main fields of production were cattle breeding and seed breeding). During its 82 years of operation the school prepared 2308 agronomists

June 2013) at the manor house called Jäneda Castle built in 1915 and preserved as historical and cultural heritage. It is at the distance of 63 km by car from Tallinn along the Piibe Road – approximately one hour from Tallinn either by bus or by train (Tallinn-Aegviidu-Tapa line). This will surely make it faster for foreign guests to arrive (considering also flights to Tallinn). Travelling from the university city Tartu is not too far or time-consuming either (approximately 150 km by car and ca two hours by train). Another opportunity to see the beautiful nature in Estonia!

Looking forward to welcome you at the next, 21st international scientific conference on economic policy in 2013!

August 2012

Matti Raudjärv

Initiator and main organiser of  
the conferences on economic policy  
(At Pirita-Kose in Tallinn, in Pärnu and  
on Kaasiku Farm in Lääne-Viru County)

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(1918–2000), 51 distillers (1933–43) and 298 landscape gardeners (1981–99). The school was closed in 2000.

Rural Economy Research Centre is currently operating in the former school building, also a construction design company Agorek OÜ familiar to rural businesses, and the Jäneda Accounting and Advisory Office, also the non-profit organisation MTÜ Abiks Põllumehele, which is the only agricultural advisory service in Estonia which has been in operation since the time when Estonia re-established its independence.

The Jäneda Museum in the castle provides a thorough overview of the history of the settlement, manor and school. There has been a musical observatory in the castle tower where the composer Urmas Sisask worked and gave concerts and performed astronomical observations. (ENE, Vol. 4 Tallinn: Valgus, 1989, p. 161; Jäneda ajalugu. [<http://www.janeda.ee/ajalugu>] 24.08.2012)