BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Institute for Historical Studies

AND

THE EGYPTIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Damanhour University

In partnership with

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

Department of Arabic and Semitic Studies

Center for the Study of Religions

and

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO

Faculty of Philosophy

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET
Nikšić

ARE PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO THE

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

The European South-East and the Middle East: At the Crossroads of Entangled Regions, Cultures, and Religions

On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of
Diplomatic Relations Between Bulgaria and Egypt

13–15 July 2026, Sofia

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1 "15th November" Street

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

Marking the centenary of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Egypt, this conference brings together established and early-career scholars to explore the historical and contemporary experiences of the two countries within their broader regional contexts: South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Jointly hosted by Bulgaria's oldest academic institutions – the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – the conference seeks to trace the entanglements of these regions in the spheres of culture, religion, and politics from antiquity to the present. By doing so, it aims to stimulate scholarly debate and advance research on their historically significant yet comparatively understudied exchanges.

Inheriting one of the world's most ancient civilizations and situated at the heart of the Arab world, Egypt has long served as a bridge across the Middle East and North Africa, while also

functioning as a gateway to the African continent. As one of the major centers of classical Arab-Islamic civilization, Egypt – together with much of the Middle East and North Africa – subsequently shared aspects of the historical trajectory of the Balkan peoples during the Ottoman era. In the twentieth century, dramatic geopolitical transformations placed Bulgaria and Egypt in distinct yet once again entangled positions, shaping intersecting histories during the Cold War and beyond. These trajectories unfolded within larger geopolitical environment – the turbulent yet strategically pivotal Middle East and the heterogeneous region of Southeastern Europe whose interactions continue to invite critical scholarly reflection?

What are the specific dimensions of the interactions between the regions today known as the wider "Middle East" and Southeastern Europe? What can their exchanges reveal to us, both retrospectively and prospectively? How might interdisciplinary conceptualizations of the intertwined histories of the European South-East and the Middle East deepen our understanding of contemporary developments in both regions? What does the study of their historical and ongoing interactions reveal in an era increasingly described as one of *glocalization* – a multidimensional process in which the tension between universalizing and particularizing forces continuously shapes and reshapes modern politics, inherited cultural traditions, and patterns of ethnic and religious coexistence, while persistently drawing and redrawing established boundaries? What are the main aspects of Bulgarian – Egyptian relations, and how have global and regional developments affected them in the past and present?

We welcome paper proposals addressing the following fields and thematic areas:

- Micro-, Meso-, and Macrohistory
- Transregional Exchange among Social Groups
- Religion and Society
- Art and Cultural Production
- Language and Literature
- Technology and Knowledge Transfer
- Nationalism and Ethnicity, Nationhood and the Nation-State
- Shifting Boundaries and Migration
- International Relations and Geopolitics
- Transnational Movements and Networks

Submission guidelines

- Working language of the conference: **English**
- Please submit a **paper abstract of 300 words** (in English) and a short CV, including your affiliation (no more than 250 words long) to Assoc. Prof. Simona Samuilova (s_samuilova@yahoo.com) and Dr. Krustyo Yordanov (k.yordanov1975@abv.bg) **before 26 May 2026**.
- **Notification of Acceptance** will be sent by 1 June 2026
- Online attendance at the conference will be available

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadya Filipova (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Co-Chair
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- Darina Katsarska, PhD Student (Department of Arabic and Semitic Studies, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")
- Victor Varbanov, PhD Student (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

The conference is held within the framework of the joint research project "Beyond the Boundaries of Time and Space: Bulgaria and Egypt in the Dynamics of Transformations in the Middle East". The project is being implemented during the period 2025–2027 by the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Damanhour University under a bilateral agreement between the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Egyptian Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (*Project No. IC-EG/10/2025–2027*).