

3. Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies

Network Leader: Viacheslav Morozov, University of Tartu

Main Participating Institutions:

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu, Estonia (main organiser); Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden; Global Europe Centre, University of Kent, UK; PONARS Eurasia (USA); participants from around 290 institutions worldwide.

The Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies is a venue for academic discussion of the fundamental cultural, social, economic and political trends affecting all aspects of people's life in Russia and Eastern Europe. Its key aims are:

- to provide a platform for a high-quality academic discussion involving scholars from Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, as well as participants from leading research institutions from all over the world;
- to provide opportunities for academic socialisation of early career scholars and other participants from within the region, many of whom do not have enough resources to travel to large academic conferences in Western Europe and North America.

Inaugurated in June 2016 as the flagship event of the Horizon 2020 UPTAKE consortium, the conference was initially supported by the European Commission, but became a self-standing academic event from 2019 onwards. Every year, the conference hosts more than 200 participants who come from all over the world. The greatest number, however, are scholars from Central and Eastern Europe and post-Soviet Eurasia, which reflects the conference's role in promoting high-quality scholarship. We estimate that around 25% of all proposals come from scholars who have taken part in the conference before, meaning that it does function as an established network in the region and beyond. There is also a significant presence of doctoral students and early career scholars, who use the conference as a testing ground for their research as well as for academic networking. The conference was initiated together with partners in Sweden and the UK, and the cancelled 2020 Conference was planned in collaboration with PONARS Eurasia.

Website: <https://sisu.ut.ee/tartuconference/avaleht>

Jury's comments: This network is relatively new and has very small number of members but has been successful in attracting a very high number of attendees from a very large number of institutions (292) in five years. The very low participation fee is noteworthy. The organisers' efforts in sustainability are amazing and deserve recognition.

The conference is already a well recognised event in the annual academic calendar. Particularly impressive is the range of reach of the conference, attracting participants from the former communist world and the West in equal measure.