**Central European Association for Canadian Studies**

**President’s Report on activities for the period 2012-2015**

The core objective of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies is to assist university teachers, researchers and students in carrying out work relating to Canada. In the past three years the CEACS and its members in the Central European region have continued to pursue a wide range of activities in support of this aim. This report discusses the following areas:

**The CEACS**

* Membership
* Research
* Publications
* Conference
* Relations with the ENCS and ICCS
* Grants, awards and services
* Young Canadianists

**Canadianists and Canadian Studies Centres in Central Europe**

* Research
* Conferences
* Young Canadianists
* Cooperation between associations and centres and with local Canadian Government missions
* Outreach

**The future**

**The CEACS**

***Membership***

The period under consideration was marked by the cancellation in 2012 of the Canadian government’s international Canadian Studies programme, which had been in place for 40 years and had linked over 7,000 Canadianists on all continents from 70 countries as far afield as Australia, South Africa and China. The demise of “Understanding Canada”, which was publicly denounced by Margaret Atwood, Neil Bissoondath, Jane Urquhart and David Staines in addition to a host of other well-known Canadian public figures, was possibly the leading factor in a sharp 30% drop in CEACS membership – from 294 members in 2012 to 205 in 2013. (It should be noted that the decline was even steeper for many Canadian Studies associations elsewhere in the world.) As of 2015 the association has 187 active and dedicated members, of whom 33 are students.

***Research***

The Translation Research Project, begun in 2010, examined the image of Canada created in Central Europe through translations into the eight languages of the CEACS member countries of books in the humanities and social sciences by Canadians or by authors setting their stories in Canada and reached the end of its first stage in 2012 with the publication of *Canada in Eight Tongues*, a selection of articles from a conference of the same name that took place in Budapest in October 2011. Since then it has moved to its second stage, an annual update of the comprehensive database of the translations with around 2,500 entries. The project will continue into the future, and in fact has already uncovered an additional language into which books were translated – Ukrainian, in the 1920s in the eastern part of the then Czechoslovakia known as Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia

***Publications***

Over the past three years, the CEACS has issued two publications**,** as follows:

* *Variations on Community: the Canadian Space / Variations sur la Communauté : l’espace canadien*,Lucia Otrisalova and Eva Martonyi (eds), Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2013*,* pp. 346

### ***Central European Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 9, Jason Blake (ed.), 2014**

### Preparatory to the publication of volume 9 of the CEJCS, the Executive Committee carried out a long internal discussion on whether the practice followed hitherto should be continued – that is, printing sufficient numbers to supply a copy to all members as well as to university libraries. This entailed the cost of printing around 300 copies and, even more importantly, of distributing the copies by post to members. In view of the association’s financial situation, it was in the end decided to print only enough copies to supply university libraries; the members would receive a graphically edited and user-friendly electronic copy. This was distributed to all members in February 2015; the response was very favourable. Copies for university libraries will be distributed at the triennial conference in Zagreb in October 2015.

### Volume 10 of the *Central European Journal of Canadian Studies* is currently being edited, and should appear before the end of the year, thus maintaining the three-year publication cycle decided on some years ago (that is, publication of material presented in its first form at the triennial conference in the year following the conference, followed by two years in which the journal is published).

***Conference***

The association’s 6th international conference, held in Bratislava from 12-14 October 2012, attracted a significant number of participants from outside the region (around 20 percent) and was notable for the general high level of the papers presented. One of the keynote speakers, Daniel Coleman, was inspired by the work of Central European Canadianists to organize a special conference on Canadian Studies and the importance of the “Understanding Canada” programme. This was held at McMaster University in Hamilton from 26-29 September 2013; among those invited to participate were six CEACS members.

***Relations with the ENCS and ICCS***

Due to the loss of funding from Ottawa, the period saw the demise of the regular meetings of the European Network for Canadian Studies as well as of the annual European Graduate Student Seminar, which it organized. However, two meetings of the ENCS did take place in the period 2012-2015, with the second, in November 2014, being highly significant in that proposed changes to the ICCS Constitution were discussed and a common European approach to these issues was agreed on. In addition, although the graduate student seminars stopped in 2011, it has been proposed to renew them in the spring of 2016.

In connection with the Annual General Meetings of the International Council for Canadian Studies in Canada, the Presidents of the European Canadian Studies associations continued to meet separately before the sessions in order to discuss and coordinate policies. This practice proved to be very useful, as could be seen in particular at the AGMs in 2014 and 2015, where the final form of the new ICCS Constitution was largely shaped in line with the recommendations of the European associations.

It should be mentioned that one recent ICCS initiative has been the crowdsourcing campaign “Promoting Canada: Education, Leadership and Values”. The campaign was launched to demonstrate support for Canadian Studies and so far 8,350 CAN has been raised ([http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/make-donation.php](http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.iccs-ciec.ca%2Fmake-donation.php&h=bAQFTcMNvAQHubEZShfbAoLxXmYEi_V_dmdJI0lwZVTjtew&enc=AZOcXI00x0HtLTFOtn9XiBydyaKzYb7xPPzBLRhNHdlYEEWQBD6RDxEk9dSnVY4l_mmp_-zxxU7L6K36o9wMpFsYjdOVfgeoQc1DlT9pIoIFto34A6H2K7GiXP4uP3s04JcDS-MU7nsKTSl7GFqpuWZRMQLWcErF720Swhg8hAAuB2AGR_fCA3yUykcHlzZfliw&s=1)). The deadline for contributions is 12 October of this year. Members are encouraged to take part in this initiative.

***Grants, awards and services***

Between 2012 and 2015, CEACS Conference Grants were awarded to 24 members of the associations, helping them to defray the costs of attending conferences at which they were presenting papers.

In addition, in the same period 15 grants went to CEACS members to cover the cost of accommodation in Brno to do research at the Canadian studies library at Masaryk University.

The library in Brno is the largest collection of Canada-related books in the Central European region (around 5,500 titles). In connection with this, the CEACS Secretariat in Brno has offered a new service – to scan articles or chapters in books in this collection and send them to members.

Finally, it should be mentioned here that recognition – both personal as well as of the role of the CEACS internationally – came in 2004 with the awarding of the ICCS Certificate of Merit to our former President, and current Vice-President, Janos Kenyeres. Congratultions, Janos!

***Young Canadianists***

The loss of funding from the Canadian government had a particularly baneful effect on the youngest generation, since it entailed cancelling long-standing programmes designed for them (for example, the European Graduate Student Seminars, organized by the European Network for Canadian Studies, grants to do research in Canada for Master’s and doctoral theses, and so on) and making it extremely difficult if not impossible to create viable new initiatives (for example summer schools like the highly successful summer school on the environment organized by the CEACS in June 2012). All this, coupled with the need to increase membership fees in the CEACS to overcome the loss of revenue from Canada and maintain at least our essential services, meant that the number of student members of the CEACS dropped by over 50 percent. One of the side effects of this, unfortunately, was that there no longer remained a sufficient number of student members willing to take an active part in organizing our Young Canadianists section, with its own website, regular informational e-mailings, and so on.

We have tried to compensate for this by seeking out more information about events focused on students, and informing our members of these. Also, we have been more pro-active in reminding students of the possibility of conference grants for students, study stays in Brno, and so on. Finally, young Canadianists from the CEACS have been successful in the very stiff competition for graduate student scholarships from the ICCS.

The fourth and final EU-Canada Study Tour and Internship Programme took place in 2013 (the programme came to an end that year, despite highly positive evaluations, as the Canadian government was not interested in extending cooperation with the European Union). The tour, financed largely by the European Commision and organized by the CEACS as the grant recipient, took 32 students selected from the Member States of the European Union on a four-week study tour, first to Brussels and then to six cities in Canada (Ottawa, Québec, Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria). In 2013, eight of the students (one quarter of the total) were from CEACS member countries.

**Canadianists and Canadian Studies Centres in Central Europe**

***Research***

In view of the decline in CEACS membership, there has inevitably been a drop in the publication of scholarly articles, monographs, reviews, translations and edited collections by Canadianists from across the Central European region, which is reflected in the following figures:

* 2012 – over 120 publications by individual members
* 2013 – over 80 publications by individual members
* 2014 – over 60 publications by individual members

However, compared to previous periods, Canadianists from the region have published more in specialized journals outside the region – in Canada, Germany, the UK, Belgium, France, Spain and the USA – thus lending more visibility to research on Canada within Central Europe.

***Conferences***

Numerous Canadian Studies and Canada-related conferences, seminars and other scholarly fora are continually being organized in the Central European region by national chapters and by individual universities and departments. What follows is a selective list of the major such events in the past three years.

Bulgaria

* Student conference on “Canada: Trends, Perspectives, Challenges”, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, 2014

Czech Republic

* 10th International Brno Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, 2015

Hungary

* “Northrop Frye 100: A Danubian Perspective”, ELTE, Budapest , 2012
* 11th and 2th Conferences of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English, University of Debrecen and ELTE, Budapest; special Canadian sessions, 2013 and 2014

Romania

* International conference on “Crossing Boundaries in Culture and Communication”, Romanian-American University, Bucharest; panels dedicated to Canadian Studies, 2013
* 5th International Unconventional Conference of Young Canadianists, Baia Mare, 2013

Serbia

* 6th and 7th International Conferences of the Serbian Association for Canadian Studies, Belgrade, 2013 and 2015

Slovakia

* 2nd and 3rd Student Conferences on Inter-American Studies, Comenius University, Bratislava, 2013 and 2014

At these and many other conferences and scholarly events within Central Europe, the rest of Europe and countries further abroad in the period 2012-2015, CEACS members presented over 270 papers. Among the countries outside the Central European region were Austria, Canada, Estonia, France, Georgia,Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Poland, Puerto Rico, South Korea,Spain, Turkey, the USA and the UK.

***Young Canadianists***

New courses continued to be launched at the universities of the CEACS countries in 2012-2015, at both the Bachelor’s and the Master’s level. Subjects include literary themes (Canadian literature in the postnational era, modern Canadian drama, the Canadian short story), religious and First Nations issues (Inuit Shamanism, the Christianization of North America, Aboriginal rights) and questions of culture and identity, particularly in Francophone Canada. Well over 40 Bachelor’s theses and slightly under 40 Master’s theses dealing with Canadian Studies themes were defended, as well as 16 doctorates.

***Cooperation between associations and centres and with local Canadian Government missions***

In the past three years a number of collaborative activities took place between associations, centres, and local Canadian missions in the Central European region, including a great number and variety of cultural events, visiting lectures and film screenings.

In the period 2012-2015 Canadian Centres in the region helped to organize over 120 cultural events, often in collaboration with the local Canadian missions. Events included screening of Canadian films, lectures by Canadian Ambassadors at universities, Days of la Francophonie, Canada Days and even an Inuit Day, readings and musical performances. The awarding of the Nobel Prize for literature to Alice Munro led to Central European Canadianists being involved in an exhibition and literary reading of her stories, interviews on national television and radio, newspaper and magazine articles and various other activities. Rather unusually, an exhibition entitled “Images of Canadian Slovenians” was organized for presentation at the City Hall, Toronto.

CEACS academics continued the by now well-established practice of delivering lectures outside their home universities, in particular at universities in the Central European region but to an increasing degree elsewhere in Europe. Within the ERASMUS programme, these visits to foreign universities often take the form of intensive courses. Equally encouraging has been the large number of academics from across Canada, Europe and elsewhere who have come to give lectures and courses at universities in the CEACS region. They have been joined by a number of Canadian artists.

***Outreach***

As in previous periods, outreach has been a priority for the association. Some activities include the preparation and publication of material relating to Canada that is intended for the wider public; presentations in connection with highly profiled visits by Canadian authors, fil-makers and other creative artists; talks and presentations at secondary schools, workshops for teacher trainees and practicing teachers intended to promote the use ofCanada-related material in their schools;; interviews with Central European Canadianists (both in Central Europe and Canada) dealing with Canadian Studies as such; the holding of contests and competitions on Canadian topics at high schools; networking with corporate partners

In addition, CEACS members are often viewed by the media as resources; they are frequently approached by the media for comment on current events related to Canada. Local and national radio and television stations request Canadianists to talk about Canada and Canada-related topics, which are often linked to issues such as immigration and the development of non-homogeneous societies. Canadian media, too (such as the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, Radio Canada), have asked for the views of local Canadianists on specific occasions. In addition to this, during Canadian Studies conferences there have been TV and radio reports and interviews made with the organizers and participants on various Canadian issues, and announcements made in the press.

**The future**

The decision by the Canadian government to cancel support for Canadian Studies activities worldwide dealt a serious blow to the work of several generations of committed Canadianists on all continents. As dedicated members of the Canadian Studies community, some of whom have devoted their whole working life to Canadian topics, it is up to us to join our efforts and prove that academic enthusiasm, optimism and resourcefulness is the path to maintaining and expanding Canadian Studies in the region.

The General Meeting of our association, to be held in Zagreb on 10 October during the 7th Triennial International Conference of Central European Canadianists, will offer a forum at which the future path of Canadian Studies in the region will be discussed. We will share experiences, hopefully succeed in delineating priority areas and most importantly come up with ideas for feasible ways of raising funds. Some possible avenues, highlighted at the ICCS AGM held at Peterborough, Ontario, in May 2015, are grants and programmes offered by national governments, NGOs and the EU, as well as seeking cooperation and support in the business world.

At the joint CEACS Executive Committee and Advisory Board meeting that which will take place on October 11 in Zagreb following the end of the conference, these topics will be further discussed. It is hoped that agreement will be reached on various activities and projects involving both academics and students that will carry the association forward successfully in the coming years.

Diana Yankova

CEACS President, on behalf of the Executive Committee

1 October 2015