

FE.P.I.B.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FEMINISMS AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR
BALKANS AND EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Conference Program

November 28-30, 2024

📍 Auditorium A, Faculty of Letters, University of Crete,
Campus of Gallos, Rethymno





The Theme of the Conference

The Conference “Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans and East-Central Europe” is part of the research project “Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans (1923-1939)”, which is run by the University of Crete and supported by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I.) under the “2nd Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to support Faculty Members & Researchers” (Project Number: 03050).

The conference aims to explore feminist movements in the region of Balkans and East - Central Europe in the uneasy interwar historical context, placing emphasis on transnational contacts and collaborations of feminist and women’s organizations, the entanglement of their activity with politics and diplomacy at regional and international scale, and the tensions emerged between national and international agendas.

The First World War was followed by an increased and intensive political movement aiming to eliminate likelihood of new wars and consolidate peace on a global scale. This movement was reflected in the foundation of international peace and diplomacy organizations, with the League of Nations prevailing among them, the signing of a series of treaties between states securing the new border status quo, minority treaties and amity and cooperation agreements, as well as in elaborated visions of forming “state federations” across Europe. In this context, the Balkan states with a long history of competing nationalisms, wars, and rallying to rival war camps, gradually shifted towards pursuing political rapprochement and mitigating national-political differences, while the new Central European states that had arisen from the dissolution of the central empires and the redrawing of national borders sought alliances to enhance security against presumptive revisionist attempts by neighboring countries. At the same time, the unsolved national-transnational political issues and the new ones created by the post-war treaties, most notably that of ethnic minorities, the rivalries of the victorious Great Powers in the region, the gradual dominance of totalitarian and bellicose politics and the risk of a new great war that began to loom on the horizon, prioritized national security and acted as centrifugal forces from ‘the transnational and international’ to ‘the national’, while the revisionist and anti-revisionist camps and politics began to form distinct.

In this context, feminist movement, reconstituted and increased in density and massiveness, found a fertile ground for linking its activity to international politics and diplomacy. International women's organizations (feminist, professional, peace organizations), national affiliated organizations, as well as regional associations emerged at the time, realizing that progress towards full political and social rights and security for women depends on a peaceful and stabilized world, declared it “their duty” to work for friendly international relations and humanitarian progress worldwide, and to support national and international agents working towards these ends. Thus, conferences, meetings, commissions, resolutions, memoranda, public events, and publications emerged dense in the service of these objectives.

The Conference “Feminisms and Politics in Interwar Balkans and East-Central Europe” will seek to explore and discuss this intensive and dense women's movement.

We warmly welcome you to Rethymno and look forward to a productive and inspiring conference!

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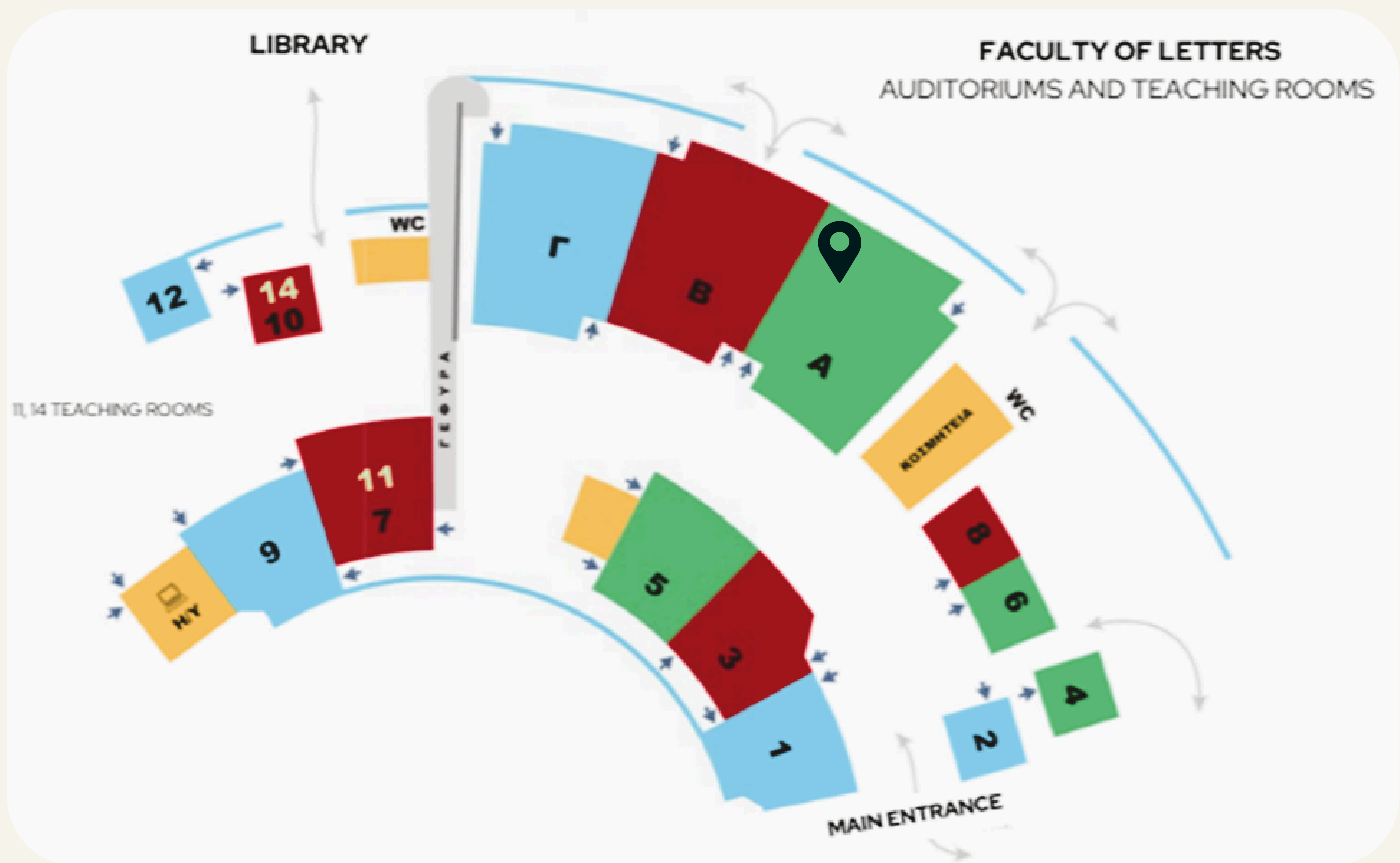
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Venue

The Conference will take place at Auditorium A, Faculty of Letters, University of Crete, Campus of Gallos, Rethymno.



Auditorium A



Keynote Speakers

Thursday, November 28 / 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Francisca de Haan

Professor Emerita, Central European University (CEU)



*Francisca de Haan is Professor Emerita of Gender Studies and History at Central European University (CEU) and currently Adjunct Program Head of the MATILDA MA in Women's and Gender History. She is also a Fellow at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Her research interests focus on transnational and intersectional women's and gender history, the histories of international women's organizations, socialist and communist women's political activism, women's work, and women's archives. In 2023, she edited *The Palgrave Handbook of Communist Women Activists around the World*, which has been published by Palgrave Macmillan.*

Expanding Our Research Agenda: Women From the Region in the World Women's Committee Against War and Fascism (WWCAWF, est. 1934)

Feminist historians are paying increasing attention to the World Women's Committee Against War and Fascism (WWC, also: Comité Mondial des Femmes or CMF) and its role as an international women's organization in the interwar period. We now know more of the WWC/CMF as co-initiator of "feminism for the Americas" (Katherine Marino, 2019), its role in France and some of its international outreach (Jasmine Calver, 2023), and its "substantial impact" on the Yugoslav women's movement of the interwar years (Isidora Grubacki, 2024). But this is only a beginning. The WWC/CMF was established at a congress in Paris in 1934. The existing historiography does not discuss all delegations of Western countries, although some of these were of considerable size. Nor does it discuss countries or member organizations from this region even though—according to the WWC/CMF's own sources—its founding congress was attended by women from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Yugoslavia.

In my lecture, I will first provide a short historiographical overview. What do we know of the WWC/CMF and its member organizations? Secondly, what can we find out about the WWC/CMF women and member organizations not yet included in the historiography? It will become clear that many of its participants were involved in well-known national and international women's organizations, then or later. Rather than seeing the WWC/CMF as a sort of anomaly in the international women's movement, as seems to have been the case until recently, I will argue that its history can help us better understand linkages between women's organizations, connections between women activists across Europe and through time, as well as the formative role of anti-fascism for a lot of women's activism.

Friday, November 29 / 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Fatmagül Berktaş

Professor Emerita, Istanbul University



*Fatmagül Berktaş is Professor Emerita of Political Science and Women's Studies and former Director of the Women's Research Centre of Istanbul University has been part of the Turkish Women's Movement since early 1980s. She acted as adviser to the state minister in charge of women's affairs and represented Turkey in various international forums including the UN 1995 Beijing Women's Conference. Her published books include *Being a Woman, Living and Writing* (in Turkish, 1991), *Woman in the Face of Monotheistic Religions* (in Turkish, 1996), *Women and Religion* (BlackRose Books, 1998), *The Gender of History* (in Turkish, 2003) which was also published in Arabic (Dar Kreideh, Beyrouth, 2009), *The Call of Politics* (in Turkish, 2010), *Loving the World in the Present, Hannah Arendt's Political Theory* (in Turkish, 2012) and *Ethics of Thinking* (in Turkish, 2021). She was designated as a leader in Education in Turkey and was part of "The Hope Brigade" of Women in the World (WOW) Festival (March 2021). Currently she is working on political ethics, political evil and feminist history.*

Women's struggle for rights is never ending

The interwar period in Turkey was a time of radical transformations. In 1923 a Republic was proclaimed ending the centuries old Ottoman Empire and the Sharia law which forbade the participation of women in the public space. Women and their social status were central to the reform agenda of the young republic which brought about the secularization of legal and educational structures. The new Civil and Penal codes replacing the Sharia provided for women's legal equality and enabled them to enter the public arena. In 1935 the 12th Conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance was held in Istanbul and also celebrated the recently introduced women's suffrage in Turkey. Secular laws indeed made a radical change in women's lives providing them with educational and career opportunities. However, discriminatory mentality, institutional structures and practices resisted to change as witnessed by the remaining biases in the secular civil and penal codes. Women's struggle for emancipation gained momentum after 1980's and especially in the 90's focused on the demand for abolishing those biases in the law. The struggle finally achieved its goal in 2001 when the said laws were amended in favor of gender equality.

However now, after more than two decades of this achievement and when the 100th year of the Republic is being celebrated, women are faced with a backlash putting secularism and women's gained rights in jeopardy. This bears witness to the fact that women's rights are always fragile and that struggle for gaining and keeping them is a never ending process.

Conference Program

DAY 1
Thursday, November 28

- 08.30 - 09.00 **Registration**
- 09.00 - 09.30 **Welcome & Introduction**
- 09.30 - 10.30 **Keynote Address 1. “Expanding Our Research Agenda: Women From the Region in the World Women’s Committee Against War and Fascism (WWCAWF, est. 1934)”**
Francisca de Haan, Professor Emerita
 Chair: Krassimira Daskalova, Professor
- 10.30 - 11.00 **Coffee break**
- 11.00 - 13.00 **Session 1. Feminism, National Politics, and International Diplomacy**
 Chair: Valentina Mitkova, Associate Professor
- 11.00 - 11.20 The Little Entente of Women: Feminist (Trans)Nationalism and Pacifism in ECE
Marijana Kardum, University of Zagreb
- 11.20 - 11.40 Feminism, Politics, and Regional Diplomacy: From the Little Entente of Women to the Balkan Conference (1923-1939)
Katerina Dalakoura, University of Crete
- 11.40 - 12.00 The Modern and National Turkish Woman as a Biopolitical Strategy in the Magazine Türk Kadın Yolu
Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, Beykoz University
- 12.00 - 12.20 The Turkish Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period: Reflections of the Past
Ioannis Charokopos, University of Crete
- 12.20 - 13.00 Discussion
- 13.00 - 15.30 **Lunch break**
- 15.30 - 17.00 **Session 2. National Associations, Transnational Collaborations: Nationalism and Internationalism**
 Chair: Ivana Pantelic, Senior Research Associate
- 15.30 - 15.50 The Lyceum Club of Greek Women: An Approach to its International and Inter-Balkan Collaborations in the Interwar Period
Eleni Fournaraki, University of Crete
- 15.50 - 16.10 Entangled Feminist Demands and National Priorities: Discourses on Women in the Romanian Women’s and Cultural Associations of Transylvania during the Interwar Period
Georgeta Fodor, “George Emil Palade” University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences and Technology of Târgu Mureş
- 16.10 - 16.30 National Aims, Transnational Recognition: Turkish Women’s Movement in the Early Republican Period
Hale Överoğlu, Koç University
- 16.30 - 17.00 Discussion
- 17.30 **Welcome Reception**

DAY 2

Friday, November 29

- 09.30 - 10.30 **Keynote Address 2. “Women’s struggle for rights is never ending”**
Fatmagül Berktaş, Professor Emerita
 Chair: Katerina Dalakoura, Professor
- 10.30 - 11.00 **Coffee break**
- 11.00 - 13.00 **Session 3. Feminist Activists: Shaping National Narratives in Interwar Period**
 Chair: Georgeta Fodor, Associate Professor
- 11.00 - 11.20 Feminism and Women’s Advocacy in Interwar Albania
Anna Batzeli, Democritus University of Thrace
- 11.20 - 11.40 Mira Kočonda Vodvarška - A Hidden Pioneer of Feminism in Croatia
Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak, University of Zagreb
- 11.40 - 12.00 “How Do You Desire Us?": Olena Teliha and Situational Militaristic Femininity in Twentieth-Century Ukraine
Anastasiya Novatorskaya, Northwestern University
- 12.00 - 12.20 Transnational Cooperation, National Tensions. The Criticism of Izabela Sadoveanu on Little Entente of Women
Giorgos Manios, Panteion University of Athens
- 12.20 - 13.00 Discussion
- 13.00 - 15.30 **Lunch break**
- 15.30 - 17.00 **Session 4. War and Peace: Women’s and Feminist Pacifism**
 Chair: Marijana Kardum, Dr. Assistant Professor
- 15.30 - 15.50 Feminism and Pacifism: Regional and International Women’s Conferences in Interwar Yugoslavia
Ivana Pantelić & Jasmina Milanović, Institute of Contemporary History, Belgrade
- 15.50 - 16.10 A Matter of Life and Death: War and Peace in the Political Thought of Feminist and Communist Women in Romania during the 1930’s
Alexandra Ghiț, University of Vienna
- 16.10 - 16.30 Poor Greek Women during the Long Great War: War Experience, Politics and Conflict, 1914-1925
George Chraniotis, Dr. Historian
- 16.30 - 17.00 Discussion



- 09.30 - 11.00 **Session 5. Socialist Feminisms' Agendas: Associations and Individuals**
Chair: Eleni Fournaraki, Associate Professor
- 09.30 - 09.50 Feminisms, Pacifism, and Politics in Interwar Balkans/Europe through the Personal Life of Zheni Bozhilova-Pateva
Krassimira Daskalova, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia
- 09.50 - 10.10 The Bulgarian Women's Social-Democratic Union (1921-1934): Entanglements and Specifics of Feminist Strategies in the Interwar East-European Context
Valentina Mitkova, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia
- 10.10 - 10.30 Greek Socialist Women in International and Regional Initiatives in the Interwar Period: Ambiguous Trajectories
Eleftheria Papastefanaki, University of Crete
- 10.30 - 11.00 Discussion
- 11.00 - 11.30 **Coffee break**
- 11.30 - 13.00 **Session 6. Researching Feminism and Politics: Methodological Issues - Approaches and Concepts**
Chair: Eleftheria Zei, Associate Professor
- 11.30 - 11.50 Feminist Political thought in Interwar East-Central Europe: The Case of Alojzija Štebi
Isidora Grubački, Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana
- 11.50 - 12.10 Connecting the Pieces: Documenting and Interlinking the History of Feminism with the Use of Comprehensive Information Management Systems
Pavlos Fafalios, Technical University of Crete & FORTH-ICS, Lida Charami, Konstantina Konsolaki, Chrysoula Bekiari, FORTH-ICS
- 12.10 - 12.30 Researching the Archives: The Silences of Marginalized Women Become Cries
Chryssa Kouliaki, Democritus University of Thrace
- 12.30 - 13.00 Discussion
- 13.00 - 15.00 **Lunch break**
- 15.00 - 17.00 **Session 7. Women's Rights in Regional Context**
Chair: Ida Gorenjak, Dr. Assistant Professor
- 15.00 - 15.20 The Little Entente of Women as a Multifaceted Feminist Association (1923-1929)
Dimitra Samiou, Hellenic Open University
- 15.20 - 15.40 Feminist Discourses on the Body in Interwar Greece 1923-1936
Kostas Tsampouras, University of Crete
- 15.40 - 16.00 Children's Protection: An Aspect of the Feminist Social Politics in the Interwar Period
Vaia Vanessa Geragori, University of Crete
- 16.00 - 16.20 *Women, Writing and Politics in Interwar Albania. Musine Kokalari's Life Writing, Political Involvement and Persecution in Communist Albania*
Bavjola Gami Shatro, Aleksandër Moisiu University & University of Mississippi
- 16.20 - 17.00 Discussion
- 17.00 - 18.00 **Closing Remarks**
- 19.30 **Farewell Dinner**

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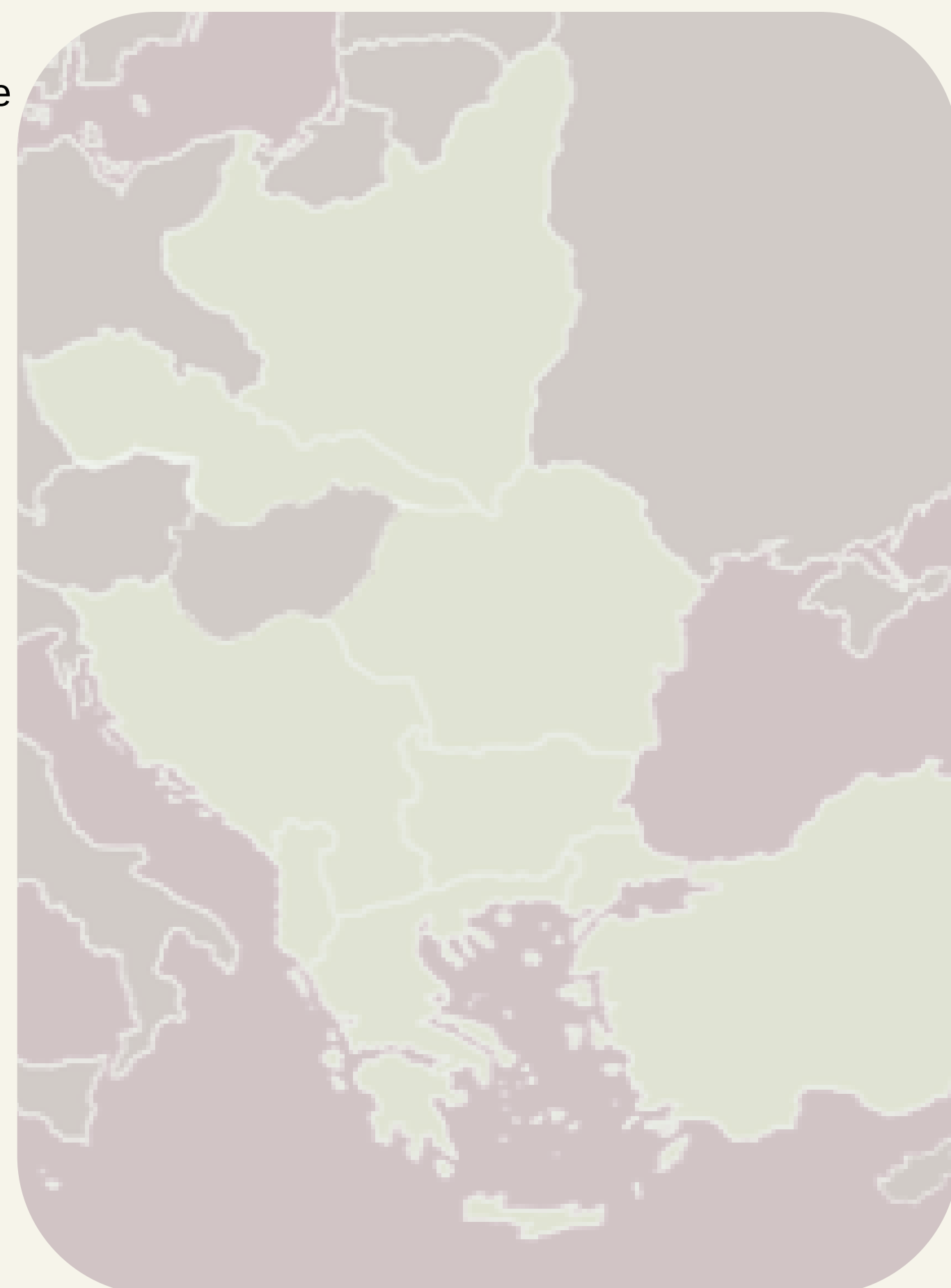
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