

December 15, 2011

Rektor der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn
Herrn Prof. Dr. Jürgen Fohrmann
Regina-Pacis-Weg 3
53113 Bonn
GERMANY

Dear Herrn Prof. Dr. Fohrmann:

I write to you as President of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies. ASEEEES, which has nearly 3000 members, is the largest international organization of scholars, educators and other specialists in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies, with a substantial participation from Germany. Our members range from experts on language and literature, to historians, political scientists, economists, anthropologists, sociologists, and specialists on international relations.

We are very concerned by the University of Bonn's proposal to close its Department of East European History. As you know, East European and Russian studies have long had an important place across the European and North American educational systems. German scholars have always played a prominent role in the field.

The importance of this world area is undiminished and in some ways greater than ever today. In a globalized world, we all intersect with Russia and Eastern Europe far more than we did during the Cold War. And for these interactions we need specialists and professionals, who have an awareness of the region that these university offerings make possible. Just as medical doctors need undergraduate courses in mathematics and the natural sciences, so lawyers, business people, diplomats and others who will have dealings with Eastern Europe need at least a first level of understanding of these important countries that have close historical and economic connections to Germany.

We all understand that these are difficult financial times, but such closure would weaken the ability of not only your students, but of all of us to be successful in the current world. On behalf of the association, we very much hope you will decide to retain your Department of East European History.

Sincerely yours,



Prof. Dr. Bruce Grant
President, ASEEEES
Professor of Anthropology, New York University

cc: Herrn Prof. Dr. Paul Geyer, Dekan der Philosophischen Fakultät
Prof. Dr. Dittmar Dahlmann, Abt. Osteuropäische Geschichte