



Centre for Asian Studies



## CALL FOR PAPERS:

### Academic Conference “Civil Society in East Asian Countries: Contributions to Democracy, Peace and Sustainable Development”

October 26-27, 2017

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

The conference is dedicated to research about civil society in East Asian countries. The organizers are inviting scholars to present their insights on what role civil society is playing in East Asia, in what ways non-governmental sector is organized, what challenges and opportunities civil activists encounter in each country, and what effects civil society has on democracy, peace, international cooperation, sustainable development and other spheres on the global, regional, national and local scale. Approaches from the perspective of political science, history, sociology, economics, anthropology and other sciences are welcome.

The organizers are expecting presence of three renowned scholars of civil society in East Asia who will deliver their keynote speeches: Koichi Hasegawa (Tohoku University), Sunhyuk Kim (Korea University) and Julie Gilson (University of Birmingham).

Please submit an abstract of individual presentation (up to 300 words) or panel (up to 500 words), together with your name, position, institutional affiliation and a short (one paragraph) biographical statement to [conference@asc.vdu.lt](mailto:conference@asc.vdu.lt) by **June 30, 2017**. All proposals will be peer reviewed by a board of experts, and the selection results will be announced by July 15. Selected presenters will be asked to submit full paper of their presentation by the beginning of the conference to be published as conference proceedings.

The conference is partially supported by the Japan Foundation and Taipei Mission in the Republic of Latvia. Selected early career scholars will be able to receive travel grants.

Civil society is often considered to be one of the cornerstones of a well-functioning democracy. As numerous cases from all over the world reveal, active engagement of citizens in checking and balancing the government and the market sector can strengthen implementation of human rights, lead to improvement in environmental protection, ensure better provision of welfare services, increase awareness about global issues, and build trust and sense of community among citizens.

Existing research also shows that civil society has plenty of regional variations influenced by historical experiences, cultural background and shared values. East Asia is an especially interesting case in this sense because of rapid societal and economic changes and globalization processes in the past few decades. The relatively recent boom in the number of non-governmental organizations that happened in East Asian countries and spread of activism and volunteering culture create a rich ground for scholars to test existing theories and create new hypotheses. The organizers hope that the conference will contribute to encouraging and strengthening of research activities in this field.