

On 5 and 6 December 2022, the CELSA-funded project “**Émigré Europe**” is organizing an international research conference:

Civil Engagement Transfers between Eastern Europe and the Low Countries, 1933-1989

Agency and action in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish émigré communities during the Cold War

The past decade has seen a boom in research on historical and contemporary migrant communities. Next to the non-European migration in the postwar decades, there is also a growing body of research on Eastern European migration. However, further exploration of the contribution of these migrant communities to contemporary European culture is needed. Specifically, this project aims to stress the active agency of Eastern European migrants and ask how these émigrés affected the local communities they joined and what influence they had on social movements, civil society and community values.

“Émigré Europe” seeks to explore the means and methods through which Central and Eastern European migrants were able to engage new or existing civil society structures within their host countries to set or express their own agendas and interact with their host societies on a range of levels, from local grassroots initiatives up to institutional European organizations and decision-making bodies. By civil engagement transfers, we refer to various exchanges of practices of self-organization and engagement that occur between migrant and host communities or between two migrant communities, and between various layers of civil society.

Among the questions being assessed, we ask: how did migrants express their agency through self-mobilization in civil society? In what ways did they build networks between each other and among their fellow migrant communities and host societies? What kind of mobility existed between the stratified layers of civil society structures? How did intersectionality influence the personal and collective engagements of different migrant communities? How did they utilize or produce heritage in negotiating their presence and

purpose in society? How did both individual and collective memories of liminality translate into public action and diplomacy? And in what ways were their goals conforming or contrasting with the broader political climate of East-West relations?

The “Émigré Europe” team invites contributions to follow diverse strands of inquiry, from the cultural and community spheres, to humanitarian initiatives, and reaching up into the very foundations of the European institutions themselves. Eastern European migrants harnessed a range of familiar and unfamiliar structures from the transnational labour movement and the church, to heritage preservation and local committees of solidarity. Papers that address the issue of how Eastern European immigrants had a different impact on local societies in comparison to non-Europeans are particularly welcomed.

Through a fusion of the existing historiography on migrant mobilization and previously untouched and neglected archival and digital resources, “Émigré Europe” contributes to the fields of social history of emigration, international relations and public diplomatic history, history of cultural and academic exchange, history of science, public heritage, and digital humanities through means of data collection and visualization.

The conference invites scholars from different backgrounds to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion on the future potential of the research model for a wide-ranging study of European migration. We encourage contributors to think broadly about the porous geographical, temporal and political boundaries of European migration during and also immediately after the Cold War.

Partners

The academic participants of “Émigré Europe” are equal members of the Central Europe Leuven Strategic Alliance (CELSA) research initiative:

- KADOC-KU Leuven, Documentation and Research Centre on Religion, Culture, and Society (Belgium)
- Charles University, Prague (Czech Republic)
- Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (Hungary)
- Jagiellonian University, Kraków (Poland)

More information on “Émigré Europe” can be found on the KADOC-KU Leuven research website: https://kadoc.kuleuven.be/english/08_projects/2021/2021_04_emigre-europe

Organizing Committee

Kim Christiaens | Luke Dodds | Idesbald Goddeeris | Vera Hajtó | Peter Heyrman | Elżbieta Kuźma | Jessie Labov | Miroslav Michela | Dorota Praszałowicz | Tamás Scheibner | Michaela Šmidrkalová | Adam Żaliński

Scientific Committee

Kim Christiaens | Peter Heyrman | Miroslav Michela | Dorota Praszałowicz | Tamás Scheibner

Timing & Venue

The conference will take place on Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th December 2022, with a welcome for guests arriving on Sunday 4th also planned.

The conference will be hosted by the partners at Jagiellonian University Kraków (Poland) at the following address:

- Faculty of International and Political Studies, Jagiellonian University
33-332 Kraków, W. Reymonta St. 4

The conference will be conducted in English.

Online Participants

Participants are also encouraged to join and present digitally.

Paper Proposals

Please send your paper proposal to scheibner.tamas@btk.elte.hu and luke.dodds@kuleuven.be before **1 October 2022**

The single PDF document shall contain a clear title of the envisaged paper; a summary (max. 500 words), outlining the paper’s goals; methodology and sources; and the CV of the author(s).

The proposals will be selected by the Scientific Committee. Notification of acceptance will occur no later than 15 October 2022.

Please direct all questions about the call and the conference to Tamás Scheibner (scheibner.tamas@btk.elte.hu) and Luke Dodds (luke.dodds@kuleuven.be).