

Call for papers
(Deadline 2 May 2022)

Religious Actors advocating Human Rights in the Helsinki process

New research perspectives on the non-state actors in view of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act (1975–2025)

Online Workshop, 10–11 November 2022, p.m.

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) born of the Helsinki Agreements (1973-75) is often described as one of the main diplomatic achievements of the détente era, and a crucial milestone towards ending the Cold War. Yet not only diplomats played a part in the process. Non-state actors and NGOs also did their share by lobbying CSCE staff and conference attendees for Human Rights and Religious Freedom violations behind the Iron Curtain or they started political discussion processes in the public sphere of their respective countries. Drawing on the most recent research on this topic (Badalassi and Snyder, *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights*, 2019), this online workshop aims at further exploring human rights activists involved in the Helsinki process, at the interface between the Dissent and the Western public, and between state and other private networks. The focus of this workshop is on the religion, on religious networks and actors who advocate religious freedom and human rights in the CSCE process.¹

In 2021, a first workshop on this topic was held, from which a network of researchers was formed. A report on this has been published by Marie Snedker on HSozuKult.

In preparation for a larger research project and an international final conference in Helsinki in 2025, we are now organising a second, digital workshop.

The focus this year is on the following topics::

—History and Networks of the Helsinki Committees and Helsinki Groups since the 1970s (in Central- and Eastern Europe)

- Religious Negotiation Processes and Controversies around Human Rights in the Helsinki Process

- Contributions from the Neutral States and their NGOs and Religious Actors (Switzerland, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Ireland, Malta, Vatican, and others)

- Concepts of European Security Policy discussed by Churches, Ecumenical Organisations and other Religious Actors

¹ Conference Report: Advocating Religious Freedom in the Helsinki Process, 14.10.2021 – 15.10.2021 digital, in: H-Soz-Kult, 10.01.2022.

- “Division of Labour” between Ecumenical Organizations, Churches and other Organisations
- First-hand witnesses of journalists, who reported around the Helsinki- process at the time
- Other research topics that fit the general frame of the Workshop

To apply, please send a 300-word abstract of your proposal, along with a 100-word personal biographical statement. Abstracts may be submitted in either English or German. The working language of the workshop will be English.

The deadline for applications is **May 2, 2022**. Participants will be informed of the result until **July 1 latest**, and the workshop program will be published until **September 15 latest**.

We are looking forward to your contributions. Some contributions will be published as a special volume in 2024 in the peer-reviewed journal *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*. Deadline: **August 2023**.

Please send your suggestions to:

Katharina Kunter (katharina.kunter@helsinki.fi) and Stéphanie Roulin (stephanie.roulin@unifr.ch)

Organisers:

Dr. Katharina Kunter

Professor Contemporary Church History specifically in the Nordic countries and Europe

Faculty of Theology

P.O. Box 4 (Vuorikatu 3)

FI — 00014 Helsingin yliopisto / University of Helsinki

and

PD Dr.

Stéphanie Roulin

Lecturer, Département Histoire contemporaine

Université de Fribourg

Bureau 2 131

Rue du Criblet 13

CH-1700 Fribourg