



Baden-Württemberg
Institute for Cultural Analysis
of the Germans of Eastern Europe

The “We” in Central and Eastern Europe

Mobilisation and Community Formation in
Minority and Diaspora Contexts

Annual Conference

30.09.2026
–
02.10.2026

Wednesday, 30.09.2026

from 09:00 Conference Registration & Arrival

09:30 Opening: Tilman Kasten,
Introduction: Jana Stöxen

Origin – Homeland – Future

10:00 Gábor Egry (Budapest)
How to become German? Entangled Hungarian-German visions of minority communities in interwar Central and Eastern Europe
James Koranyi (Durham)
Bonding with the homeland: The Transylvanian Carpathian Association, emigration, and international tourism

11:30 Break

12:00 Giustina Selvelli (Ljubljana)
Mining the Land, Mobilising the “We”: Extractive Conflict and Minority Activism in East-Central Europe
Bianca Bran (Tübingen)
“Children” and vampires. “We”, gender, generation, and the negotiation of field roles in the community surrounding HOG Hamroth

13:30 Lunch Break

15:30 Neighbourhood Walk through Freiburg-Weingarten
Sarah Wirschke, Tomas Wald (both: Freiburg)
Life Beyond Freiburg’s Public Urban Imaginary – Diverse Communities Living Under a Stigma?

19:00 Conference Dinner

Folklore – Heritage – Identity

09:30 Tomáš Korbelt (Prague)

The Image of the Homeland of the Sudeten
Germans: The Identity-Forming Role of Heimat-
Museums

10:15 Break

10:45 Laura Marie Steinhaus (Freiburg)

Mobilizing Cultural Heritage: Folk Songs and
National Identity in Ukraine

Tim Wenzel (Dresden)

Performing the “We”: Festival Practices and
Nation-Building in Gagauzia, Moldova

12:30 Lunch Break

Roundtable: Belonging & Crises of Displacement and War

**14:30 Keith Harrington (Dublin),
Ágnes Erőss (Bozen-Bolzano),
Olga Sasunkevich (Gothenburg),
Nino Aivazishvili-Gehne (Maastricht)**

In times of crisis, it is primarily minorities who are confronted with their own vulnerability and, in some cases, with their status as outsiders. By bringing together various examples relating to Eastern Europe, we aim to explore their experiences, practices of belonging and ways of coping with daily life, whilst addressing, in particular, the question of how a sense of “we” is formed, especially under pressure.

16:30 Break

**17:00 Johannes Müske, Tilman Kasten, Jana Stöxen
(all: Freiburg)**

Centralising the Songs of 'Volk'/Folk. Genealogies, hierarchical research practices and colonial style of thought in folklore collections in Freiburg

19:00 Dinner

Friday, 02.10.2026

Media – Literature – Press

09:00 Anja Wilhelmi (Lüneburg)

The Baltic Letters ("Baltischen Briefe") as a driving force for the reorientation of the German-Baltic community in (the Federal Republic of) Germany

Andreea Zamfira (Bucharest)

Constructing and Deconstructing a Historical Community at the Intersection of Mediatization, Politicization, and Commodification: The German Minority in Romania (1969–2019)

Anastasia Romanova (Chişinău)

Constructing "We" Abroad: Discursive Community Formation in Moldovan Migrant Memoirs

11:15 Break

11:45 Conclusion

12:30 End of conference

Why “We”?

The word “we” marks a clear distinction, creating an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’. Belonging to a certain group is a marker of assurance and identification, perhaps even a necessity for navigating everyday life. Nevertheless, it is challenging to define precisely the conditions under which a sense of community emerges and those under which it becomes fragile, in particular, when “we” are faced with crisis situations.

The concept of “we” can unite, but it can also divide, creating oppositions and frontiers; it possesses a compelling power that has historically made it attractive to totalitarian regimes, yet it also serves a valuable purpose when it comes to shared cultural heritage and memory culture projects.

With regard to minority and diaspora contexts, multi-ethnic regions and migration societies, questions therefore arise concerning the mobilisation and formation of groups, the negotiation of belonging, and the emergence of (unexpected) alliances. The focus here is on various aspects of “we” in and from Eastern Europe, subjected to analytical scrutiny through interdisciplinary discussion. Throughout the conference, we will thus examine these processes, their narratives and representations in terms of their entangled trajectories and dynamics.

Venue

Conference Room
Freiburg University Library
Platz der Universität 2
79098 Freiburg

The annual conference is open to the public.

Contact

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