



SÜDOSTEUROPA-
GESELLSCHAFT

in co-operation with the

 **Regional Research**
Promotion Programme | **Western Balkans**



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PROGRAMME

International Conference

«The State is Us...»

Protest against Large-Scale (Construction) Projects
in Southeast Europe

Munich, 4 / 5 November 2015

Conference Venue:

**IBZ München Internationales Begegnungszentrum der Wissenschaft
(IBZ Munich), Amalienstr. 38, 80333 München**

Conference Team:

Dr. Sonja Schüler, Seminar for Social Anthropology, University of
Fribourg / CH

Dr. Hansjörg Brey, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association

Conference Language:

English

Inquiries / Registration

Participation free of charge / number of participants is restricted

Please apply to info@sogde.org

Background

The region of Southeast Europe is home to manifold preserved cultural and natural landscapes including rare and endangered plant and animal species and an exceptional biodiversity. Touristic potentials, mineral and other natural resources are some of the reasons why the countries of this region became business locations increasingly sought after until the end of the socialist era. In former state monopoly sectors new domestic and foreign stakeholders / interest groups entered into profit-oriented competition. At the same time a big international environmental problem, the question of the management and the final storage of (hazardous) waste, is becoming increasingly topical in Southeast Europe. Besides questions concerning the disposal of the waste produced in the countries themselves problems in connection with the dumping of polluting substances by foreign actors surface.

Protest emerged to call attention to the perceived risks for humans and the environment and to put pressure on the project managers and the political decision making processes.

By means of selected country and case studies the conference will provide information on forms of resistance against different kinds of large-scale (construction) projects from an analytic and also from a practical perspective: In Bulgaria, large-scale construction projects of the tourist industry frequently provoke protest. In Romania protests against big mining projects have attracted public attention. In Albania projects concerning the construction of micro-hydro power plants as well as questions regarding the final storage of (hazardous) waste represent important protest issues.

The following questions will be the main focus of the contributions and the discussion:

- *Which actors / constellations of actors, which forms of mobilization, which forms of protest are identifiable?*
- *Which are the contents of the protesters` criticism and discourses?*
- *Which developments of the protests are traceable?*
- *Is it possible to assess the impact of the protests?*
- *In what way are country-specific and thematic characteristics visible, to what extent is it possible to draw conclusions as to overall patterns and commonalities of the resistance?*

A closing panel discussion has the aim of debating the international framework conditions and the transnational aspects of the criticism against the management of natural resources.

The aims of the conference are:

- The distribution of knowledge regarding a sphere of conflict and protest in the region of Southeast Europe which has been largely ignored
- A contribution to the networking of active / interested stakeholders
- The stimulation of critical discussions as to the framework conditions and the possibilities and limits of the handling of natural resources.

The conference is organized by the German Southeast Europe Association in co-operation with the Regional Research Promotion Program in the Western Balkans (RRPP) under the guidance of the University of Fribourg / Switzerland.

Wednesday, 4 November 2015

10:00 hrs **OPENING / WELCOME**

Dr. Wim van Meurs, Assoc. Prof., University of Nijmegen; Member of the Board,
Southeast Europe Association

Prof. Nicolas Hayoz, Department of Social Sciences, University of Fribourg;
Program Director, Regional Research Promotion Program (RRPP) - Western Balkans

INTRODUCTION

Moderator: Dr. Hansjörg Brey; Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

10.15 hrs Dr. Sonja Schüller, Seminar for Social Anthropology, University of Fribourg
Introduction to the topic of the conference

10.30 hrs Prof. Christopher Rootes, Director, Centre for the Study of Social and Political
Movements, University of Kent, Canterbury
Protest against large-scale (construction) projects: how much change is possible?

11.00 hrs Coffee Break

11.30 hrs Prof. Christian Giordano, Director, Department of Social Anthropology, University of
Fribourg
Protest in the social sciences: questions and controversies

12.00 hrs Dr. Anna Krăsteva, Director, Center for European Refugees, Migration and Ethnic
Studies (CERMES), Sofia
***Protests and new mobilisations in Southeast Europe: the emergence of
contestatory citizenship***

12.30 hrs Discussion

13.15 hrs Lunch Break

Panel 1 - Romania: large-scale mining projects / fracking

Moderator: Norbert Mappes-Niediek, Correspondent, Austria and the Balkans, Frankfurter
Rundschau, Graz

15.00 hrs Victoria Stoiciu, Project Coordinator, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Office Romania,
Bucharest
Protest against mining projects and fracking: protest actors and discourses

15.30 hrs Coffee Break

16.00 hrs Roxana Pencea, Mining Watch Romania, Campania Salvați Roșia Montană, Cluj-
Napoca
Protest strategies against mining projects and their impact

16.30 hrs Tudor Brădățan, Mining Watch Romania, Cluj-Napoca
***Report on the context and the development of the campaign "Save Roșia
Montană"***

17.00 hrs Discussion

17.45 hrs **End Day 1**

Thursday, 5 November 2015

Panel 2 - Bulgaria: Construction projects of the tourist industry

Moderator: Dr. Sonja Schöler, Seminar for Social Anthropology, University of Fribourg

10.00 hrs Petko Kovachev, Executive Director, Green Policy Institute, Sofia
Large-scale construction projects and the „green movement“ in Bulgaria

10.30 hrs Andrey Ralev, Balkani Wildlife Society, Sofia
Protest strategies for the protection of mountain regions

11.00 hrs Coffee Break

11.30 hrs Borislav Sandov, Member of the National Council, political party “Zelenite”, Sofia
Impacts of protest against big construction projects in Bulgaria

12.00 hrs Discussion

12.45 hrs Lunch Break

Panel 3 - Albania: Protected areas, hydro power and storage of c-weapons

Moderator: Dr. Johanna Deimel, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association, Munich

14.30 hrs Edvin Pacara, Executive Director, Institute of Environmental Policy, Tirana
Nature Conservation as a protest issue in Albania

15.00 hrs Dr. Emirjeta Adhami, Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA), Tirana
Protest strategies and impacts of protest against the construction of micro-hydro power plants

15.30 hrs Coffee Break

16.00 hrs Lavdosh Ferruni, MsC, Albanian Alliance against the Import of Waste, Tirana
Protest strategies and the impact of the protests against the storage of c-weapons in Albania

16.30 hrs Discussion

17.15 hrs End of panel 3, Break

17.30 hrs **Panel Discussion**

Protest against large-scale projects: *Which kind of change is wanted?*
Perspectives from inside of protest movements

Moderator: Dr. Hansjörg Brey, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association

Dr. Radosveta Krăstanova, Lecturer, New Bulgarian University Sofia; Chairperson,
“Štastliveca” Civic Association Sofia

Knud Vöcking, urgewald e.V., Sassenberg

18.45 hrs End of the Conference