

DRAFT PROGRAMME
64th International Academic Week 2026

**Who Owns the Land? Property Relations, Land Use and Social Inequality
in Rural Southeast Europe**



Photo: Participants of the 63rd International Academic Week

Date: 5 – 9 October 2026

Venue: Akademie für Politische Bildung in Tutzing, Germany

Conference Language: English

Participation upon invitation only.

Conference Committee:

Dr. Judith Möllers, Leibniz-Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO)

Prof. Dr. Daniel Müller, Leibniz-Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), Geography Department, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

The International Academic Week is the Southeast Europe Association's (Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft – SOG) annual key event to bring together early-career researchers (MA/ PhD/ Post-Doc levels) and experienced scholars from all over Europe and beyond to present and discuss their research on the region. As always, it will take place in cooperation with the Akademie für Politische Bildung at the beautiful Lake Starnberg in Tutzing on 5 – 9 October 2026.

Across Southeast Europe, land remains a central arena in which historical legacies, economic interests, social hierarchies, and cultural meanings converge. Property regimes in Southeast Europe have undergone repeated transformations, from post-imperial land reforms and socialist collectivisation to restitution and post-socialist restructuring. These layered histories continue to structure contemporary land ownership patterns, land markets, governance arrangements, and land use practices. The consequences are far-reaching: persistent inequality, fragmented or concentrated ownership, out-migration, contested identities, and uneven socio-ecological change.

This conference is a forum for research that assesses the current state of knowledge on land, property relations, and rural inequality in Southeast Europe. It brings together senior and junior scholars from across disciplines to examine how land ownership, access, and property relations interact with power structures, institutional frameworks, belonging, and everyday practices.

From 15:30
Registration

16:00
Welcome Address

Christian Hagemann, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association

Michael Mayer, Akademie für Politische Bildung, Tutzing

16:30
Award Ceremony: Best Master Thesis in Southeast European Studies

Awardee: **Cosmas Tanzer**, Humboldt University Berlin

„Volksdeutsche“ als Wachmänner in deutschen Konzentrationslagern: Untersucht anhand der 4. Kompanie des SS Totenkopfsturmbanns Mittelbau und ihrer Mitglieder aus der Bačka

Laudation: **Dietmar Müller**, University of Leipzig

17:00
Welcome and Introduction

Judith Möllers, Leibniz-Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO)

Daniel Müller, Leibniz-Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), Geography Department, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

17:15
Opening Perspectives

Katarina Kušić, University of Rijeka

Planetary Land Relations in Southeastern Europe: Extraction, Conservation, Abandonment

Stefan Dorondel, Francisc Rainer Institute of Anthropology, Romanian Academy

What is Land? Ownership, Materiality and Shiftiness

18:15
Presentation of the Young SOG

Megan Nagel, Young SOG

18:30 – 19:15

Dinner

19:15
Networking Reception

08:00 – 08:45

Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30

Session 1: Land Governance, Reform, and Policy Instruments

Antje Tölle, Berlin School of Economics and Law (HWR)

Who Governs the Land? Property and the Conditions of Democratic Steering

Štefan Bojnec, University of Primorska

Rethinking Land-Use Planning: Why Landowners and Citizens Matter

Ana Simonovska, University of Skopje

Land Reform in North Macedonia: Impacts, Social Acceptance, and Future Challenges

Morten Hartvigsen, UN Food and Agriculture Organization

The Need for an Integrated Land Policy in Southeast Europe

Chair: **Edvin Zhllima** (tbc)

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30

Session 2: Land, Mobility, and Belonging

Thomas Dufhues, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO)

Agricultural Land Retention Revisited: Drivers of Reluctance to Sell in Albania and Kosovo

Miloš Rašić, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Houses for Return: Migration, Belonging and Spaces of Absence in Eastern Serbia

Alexandra Leca, University of Kassel

The land they leave, the knowledge they bring back: Romanian seasonal workers in Germany

Chair: **Štefan Bojnec**

12:30

Lunch

14:00 – 15:30

Session 3: Historical Transformations of Property Regimes and Agrarian Reform

Dietmar Müller, University of Leipzig

The State Speaks: Land Evidence between Territorialisation and Administrative Cultures in Europe (18th–20th Centuries)

Roumiana Preshlenova, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Agrarian Revolution in Bulgaria in late 19th and early 20th centuries? Public interpretations and historiographical perspectives

Savvas Karageorgiou, University of Thessaloniki

The Agrarian Reform and the "Enemies of the People" in Communist Albania (1945–1946)

Catherine Brégianni, Academy of Athens

Spatializing Agrarian Reform(s) in the Modern Greek State: Land, Refugees and the Post-imperial Condition

Chair: **Antje Tölle**

15:30 – 16:30

Poster Session with Coffee

Liza Beci, University of Gießen

The connection of the Flamingo protests and the Albanian government's property policy

Tamara Gajić, Naša Buljarica

Contested Coastal Commons: Property Relations, Top-Down Planning, and Socio-Ecological Resistance in Buljarica Bay, Montenegro

Alban Reli, European University of Tirana

Building the Socialist Countryside: Representations of Land and Modernisation in Albanian Socialist Realist Literature

Basri Saliu, South East European University

Rural Migration and Agricultural Land Abandonment in Pollog (North Macedonia): Transformation of Land Ownership, Land Use, and Socio-Spatial Relations

Eleonit Smajli, ETH Zurich

Nationally Led versus Internationally Led Land Privatization: Effects on Agricultural Land Distribution in Kosova and Slovenia

Andreas Sienz, Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies

The Village Peace in Danger. The Romanian Agrarian Reform of March 1945 as a War Experience of Social Change

16:30 – 17:15

Session 4: Traces and Representations of Disappearing Rural Landscapes

Claudia Mayr-Veselinović, Montanuniversität Leoben

From Abandonment to Extraction: Cultural Articulations of Land Loss and Belonging in Southeast Europe

Vesna Madžoski, SKVER Magazine

Between Art and Survival: The Beauty of Images of a Disappearing Land

Chair: **Thomas Schad**

18:30 – 19:15

Dinner

19:30

Movie screening “The Tale of Silyan” (2025, 80 minutes)

Followed by a short reflection on the film and an open discussion.

08:00 – 08:45

Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30

Session 5: Customary Law, Gender, and Property Relations

Nebi Bardhoshi, Academy of Science of Albania

Who Owns the Land in the Post-Socialist Albanian Village? Agricultural Land, Village Commons, and Legal Pluralism in Rural Albania

Alma Agić, University of Graz

Land, Gender and Economic Dependency: Property Relations in Rural Bosnia and Herzegovina

Thomas Schad, Independent Researcher

“Odrekle su se”: Inheritance renouncement by Bosnian daughters and patrilinear landownership

Hanna Stein, University of Graz

Places of Waste Disposal: Reflections on Environmental Pollution and Land Use in Yugoslav and Contemporary Croatia

Chair: **Ana Simonovska**

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30

Session 6: Land Insecurity, Farm Structures, and Rural Inequality

Edvin Zhllima, Agricultural University of Tirana

Land insecurity and influence on land long-term decisions

Lucy Carroll, Central European University

Land Tenure in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean: An Intersectional Analysis of Smallholding-Dominated Landscapes

David Saltamarski, University of Skopje

Small Farms, Big Constraints: Land Fragmentation and Rural Employment Dynamics in North Macedonia

Zlatko Chanevski, University of Skopje

Crop Composition as a Proxy for Land-Use Structure

Chair: **Roumiana Preshlenova**

12:30

Lunch

14:00 – 15:30

Session 7: Historical Perspectives on Land, Property, and Identity

Felix Jeschke, Collegium Carolinum Munich

Who Owns the Highlands? Imperial and Local Agency in the Hungarian Modernization of Carpathian Ruthenia

Ben Orendt, University of Jena

Land Use in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania through the Eyes of Roma

Şahin Yıldız, University of Gießen

Promised Land, Denied Land: Narratives of Land Inaccessibility among Greek–Turkish Exchange Refugees

Ivan Smiljanić, Institute of Contemporary History Ljubljana

Narratives and Perceptions of Peasantry and Land in Slovenia from Austria-Hungary to Independence

Chair: **Dietmar Müller**

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00

Introduction to the workshop day and group assignment

17:00 – 18.30

Lake walk (optional)

18:30 – 19:15

Dinner

Free evening

08:00 – 08:45

Breakfast

COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS

Participants will join one of two parallel workshops and work in moderated groups to transform the ideas, findings, and perspectives presented during the conference into concrete joint outputs.

One workshop will focus on **science communication**, exploring engaging and accessible ways of communicating selected conference contributions to wider audiences, most likely through short video-based formats. This group will be moderated by the journalists Leonie Beyerlein and Franziska Eckardt.

One workshop (in two groups) will focus on **collaborative scientific writing**, bringing together insights and results from across the conference to develop two new synthesis texts on agricultural land, property relations, land use, and inequality in Southeast Europe. The two publication groups will be moderated by Prof. Stefan Dorondel and Prof. Katarina Kušić, respectively.

Participant allocation should reflect career stage and expertise. As the publication groups require substantial research experience and subject knowledge, they are best suited to established researchers and advanced PhD candidates, while students and early-stage researchers will generally join the science communication group. Group allocation will remain partly flexible, allowing for exchange and contributions across groups.

09:00 – 10:30

Workshop Sessions Part 1

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30

Workshop Sessions Part 2

12:30

Lunch

14:00 – 15:30

Workshop Sessions Part 3

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee break

16:00 – 17:30

Finalisation of Results and Planning of Post-conference Publication Tasks

18:30 – 19:15

Dinner

FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2026

08:00 – 09:00

Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30

Panel Discussion (tbc)

10:30 – 11:00

Break

11:00 – 12:00

Closing: Looking back and looking forward

Presentations from science communication and writing teams & feedback round

Closing and Goodbye

Chairs: **Judith Möllers & Daniel Müller**

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

13:30

Departure

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Auswärtiges Amt

Institutionell gefördert
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*Institutionally supported
by the German Federal
Foreign Office.*