

**Leibniz Research Network
Central and Eastern Europe**
Expertise – Collaborations – Knowledge Transfer

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Central and Eastern Europe***

Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe

The Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe has existed since 2015. It brings together more than twenty of the Leibniz Association's institutes whose multidisciplinary work either focuses on Central and Eastern Europe or deals with the region in projects. The network thus constitutes the largest source of expertise on Central and Eastern Europe in German academia outside the universities. Current challenges in Eastern Europe include the expansion of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and increasing restrictions on academic freedom in some countries. As a result, in the coming years, the network will focus on disseminating knowledge to the wider public. The network's institutes also cooperate in the field of public policy and with respect to research, exchange and transfer activities as well as the provision of research infrastructures.

Regionally, the network's portfolio includes the eastern, north-eastern and south-eastern member states of the European Union; the eastern and south-eastern European candidate countries; the Republic of Moldova and the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia, with which close cooperation is maintained. Research is also being conducted on Russia, even though relations with this country have been suspended since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

In the last five years

515

*Visiting Scholars from Central
and Eastern Europe*

1794

*Events related to Central
and Eastern Europe*

1982

*Publications related to Central and
Eastern Europe*

104

*PhDs related to Central and Eastern
Europe*

Languages spoken at institutes

Albanian

Kyrgyz

Armenian

Latvian

Belarusian

Lithuanian

Bosnian

Polish

Bulgarian

Romanian

Croatian

Russian

Czech

Serbian

Estonian

Slovakian

Georgian

Turkish

Greek

Turkmen

Hebrew

Ukrainian

Hungarian

Uzbek

Kazakh

Yiddish

Greetings from the President

The Leibniz Association has unique scientific expertise on Central and Eastern Europe – expertise developed on an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary basis in close contact with partners in the region. Its institutions shape European research cooperation and share their findings with society, business and politics.

The hallmark of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe is excellent collaborative research on the region and its history, politics, languages and cultures. It brings together leading researchers whose in-depth knowledge of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe can provide guidance in times of geopolitical crisis and war, inform decision-makers and make our society more resilient. In addition to regional research, many of the network's Leibniz Institutes also work closely with partners in the region in the natural sciences, life sciences and environmental sciences. Joint research projects explore pressing challenges ranging from the fight against tuberculosis to the search for novel quantum materials. The collaborations make a decisive contribution to strengthening and integrating the European Research Area and testify to the great potential that lies in closer cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe.

We hope you enjoy reading this brochure and gain many new insights.

*Professor Martina Brockmeier
President of the Leibniz Association*

Concentrated Expertise and a Spirit of Trust

Conversation between Professor Maren Röger and Professor Peter Haslinger about the role of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe

Why do we need a Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe?

Maren Röger: The research network brings together 23 institutes from various disciplines, conducting in-depth research with Central and Eastern European partners or about Central and Eastern Europe. It serves as a space for transdisciplinary exchange concerning cooperation with this region, which is so crucial for Germany and an area where the Leibniz Association has enormous expertise. This kind of collaboration further strengthens our research and impact capabilities. Indeed, the network focuses on providing reliable information about Central and Eastern Europe. With this network, we are creating a central point of contact for anyone – politicians, the media or members of the public – who has questions about Central and Eastern Europe. This enables us to keep the conversation going about and with the region even beyond moments of acute political crisis.

Peter Haslinger: The Leibniz Association is particularly well-positioned to do this. When we launched the network in 2015, we were surprised how much expertise on Central and Eastern Europe existed within the Leibniz Association. This knowledge has become even more critical since February 2022. What is unique about the network is that it connects institutes with an Area Studies focus with other institutes working in other disciplines that collaborate with partners in the region in a range of ways. The network thus pools existing knowledge about this region. The aim is to make this knowledge visible and create synergies, not least in dialogue with our partners in Central and Eastern Europe.

“We are driven by the aim of sharing our expertise with society as well as with the worlds of science and politics.”

Professor Peter Haslinger

What are current tasks, and how is the network tackling these challenges?

Maren Röger: *There is no shortage of political and research-related challenges. A war has been raging in the region since 2014, and despite over 10,000 deaths, initially, few people here took notice of what was happening. This war's brutality has become all the more apparent since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It is destroying the research infrastructure of a large European country, which is why our institutes have put so much emphasis on hosting Ukrainian researchers. The Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research Dresden (IFW) is currently setting up a German-Ukrainian laboratory for quantum research; the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) is involved in the DAAD Centre for Interdisciplinary Ukrainian Studies in Regensburg, which will promote cooperation with scientists in and from Ukraine; and the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe supports the efforts of scholars in Ukraine to document the war. Many other institutes, including the one I head, the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), are trying to offer prospects to colleagues who have fled. Ukraine will, therefore, remain the network's focus for the coming years.*

We have also seen enormous restrictions on academic freedom: on a massive scale in Russia, where academics who are critical of the system are being persecuted; in Belarus, where most academic partners have gone into exile; and in Hungary, where politically unpopular findings are being suppressed. In Poland, critical research on the Holocaust and the Second World War has come under massive pressure in recent years.

Peter Haslinger: *It is therefore important to stabilise through cooperation. That is why we continue to research and deepen our collaborations in these countries – especially amongst the academic communities affected by war and political repression on the ground and in the diaspora. Another of our network's central tasks is directed at German society, where we would like our knowledge to have more impact. The region and its diversity should become more visible. We are driven by the aim of sharing our expertise with society as well as with the worlds of science and politics.*

What do you make of the state of research on Central and Eastern Europe in Germany?

Maren Röger: It is good and bad at the same time. What do I mean by that? On the one hand, it is worth noting again that research institutions outside the universities, such as those united in the Leibniz Association, have enormous expertise in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Nevertheless, some regions, such as Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, have received less attention, which, as ever, is related to politics. After a boom in research funding in the 1990s and 2000s, it was a political mistake to move Central and Eastern Europe down the list of priorities, even though it is such an important region for Germany. Expertise on Central and Eastern Europe is not a “pop-up store”; linguistic and cultural competencies and networks of trust cannot be built up overnight. The problem is also that our knowledge is not being called on systematically.

Does academia have a social and political role to play?

Maren Röger: Of course. Academic insights should not remain in an ivory tower, and they don't. On the contrary, our institutes work independently to disseminate their knowledge, teach Ukrainian history at schools and universities on their own initiative and design online learning tools. Experts from our circles have been urging us for decades to take seriously the experiences and fears of Central and Eastern European countries and to not always look directly to Russia, which is idealised by many in the public and in politics. However, the transfer of academic knowledge is taking place. The responsibility also lies with society, with various educational institutions and with political decision-makers to retrieve and fund this expertise.

“The network serves as a space for trans-disciplinary exchange concerning cooperation with this region, which is so crucial for Germany and an area where the Leibniz Association has enormous expertise.”

Professor Maren Röger

What are the prospects for the research network in the coming years?

Peter Haslinger: We are planning quite a few things. Internally, we want to intensify interdisciplinary exchange further and, above all, enhance our public profile in order to make our expertise easier for the media and politicians to find. This includes, amongst other things, Surplace Scholarships for journalists and high-profile events with representatives from science, society and politics.

“Expertise on Central and Eastern Europe is not a ‘pop-up store’; linguistic and cultural competencies and networks of trust cannot be built up overnight.”

Professor Maren Röger



Professor Peter Haslinger is Director of the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe (HI) – Institute of the Leibniz Association and Deputy Spokesperson for the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe.

Professor Maren Röger is Director of the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZ0) and Spokesperson for the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe.

Research – Interdisciplinary, European and Forward-Looking

The Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe brings together institutes working in various disciplines and using a wide range of methodological approaches. Some researchers investigate the histories, cultures, societies, politics and economies of Eastern European countries. Others research diseases, environmental conditions and climate change in the region or work together with scientists from Central and Eastern Europe to gain a better understanding of physics, chemistry or botany.

What are the causes of conflict in Central and Eastern Europe, and what strategies can we derive from history? What are the consequences of social transformations for land use and the climate's evolution? In their research, the institutes address social and political issues from a variety of scientific perspectives. In so doing, they cooperate closely with scientists from the region and bring Eastern European perspectives into focus.



A site from the late Viking Age in Ostriv on the Ros' River in Ukraine, where scientists of the Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA) and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine are conducting research.

Adjustment and Radicalisation: Dynamics in Popular Culture(s) in Pre-War Eastern Europe

Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL) / Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) / Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF) / University of Potsdam

What is the significance of popular culture?

As an indicator and booster of collective sentiments, understanding popular culture is crucial to making sense of socio-political developments. In Central and Eastern European countries, popular culture has been the vehicle of collective aspirations since the 1980s. It mediates Western trends and fashions while at the same time remodelling national and religious narratives and symbols. However, it can also contribute to radicalisation or an adjustment to authoritarian, populist or nationalist forms of government.

popular-dynamics.org

Leibniz Science Campus – Byzantium between Orient and Occident – Mainz/Frankfurt

Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) / Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA) / Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz / Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Why is the study of Byzantium so relevant for understanding Central and Eastern Europe?

The Byzantine Empire played a prominent role in the emergence of modern Europe. Between the 4th and 12th centuries, it had an impact on many aspects of life. Byzantium formed a bridge from antiquity to modern times and from Europe to the Orient. With the Orthodox Church, Byzantine legacies are still present in many countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, until today.

byzanz-mainz.de/en/

KonKoop – Conflict and Cooperation in Eastern Europe

Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF) / Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL) / Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IÖS) / Centre for East European and International Studies (ZöiS, leadpartner) / Friedrich-Schiller University Jena (FSU) / University for Sustainable Development (HNEE)

KonKoop is an interdisciplinary research network funded by the BMBF that connects six institutions. It examines conflicts and dynamics of cooperation in (South) Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. It aims to understand and explain interactions and connect the expertise available in Germany. The individual projects are intertwined, organised in six research strands and supported by a Junior Research Group, a Data Laboratory and a Visualisation Laboratory for Peace and Conflict Cartography.

konkoop.de

KlimALEZ – Climate Resilience via Agricultural Insurance: Innovation Transfer for Sustainable Rural Development in Central Asia

Leibniz-Institute for Agricultural Development in Transformation Economies (IAMO) / Humboldt University of Berlin (HU) / Tashkent State University of Economics (TDIU) / Kazakh Agrotechnical University / University of Central Asia (UCA)

The project aims to increase the resilience of the Central Asian agricultural sector to climate risks (especially droughts) through innovation in agricultural insurance markets. In cooperation with German and local insurance companies, the aim is to develop a demand-oriented, index-based agricultural insurance programme for various Central Asian countries. The findings will serve to implement a sustainable insurance scheme in each country.

klimalez.org

Reordering Yugoslavia, Rethinking Europe: A Transregional History of the Yugoslav Wars and the Post-Cold War Order (1991 – 1995)

Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) / Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) / Humboldt University of Berlin (HU)

How does your research make you and your partners rethink our continent?

The history of Europe and the European Union is often narrated through a Western European lens. According to this narrative, Central and Eastern European countries enlarged the European “core” after the end of the Cold War. This project shifts the perspective: Taking the post-Yugoslav states – the (supposed) periphery – as a starting point, it aims to tell an entangled transregional history of Europe as a whole.

Why is it currently relevant to examine Yugoslavia and the (post-)disintegration processes in the region?

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine shows that war, violence and refugee movements do not only take place outside Europe but are decisive aspects of Europe’s present and future. Historical research on the post-Yugoslav wars of the 1990s demonstrates that nationalism, the dissolution of states and war crimes are an integral part of recent European history. We must take this history seriously, especially given the ongoing accession negotiations between the EU and states in the “Western Balkans”.

Public Policy Consulting

The institutes in this research network contribute to solving pressing social and political problems. Their projects, initiated through targeted dialogue with politicians, businesspeople, the media and civil society in Germany, the EU and Central and Eastern European countries, range from analysing current socio-political issues to creating concrete models for economic and agricultural development.

Numerous institutes prepare policy briefs to convey their research findings to decision-makers. For example, the annual Peace Report of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) generates a broad public discussion on international conflicts and the feasibility of strategic peacebuilding measures. The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) assesses current political, economic, social and cultural developments in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia and publishes the results regularly in its country analyses.

Additionally, many Leibniz experts are involved in international advisory commissions and work with think tanks dealing with public policy issues. They participate in hearings of the German Bundestag and share their expertise on Eastern European issues with institutions such as the WHO or the Council of Europe. Also worth mentioning are popular event series such as “Leibniz in the Bundestag” or the Brussels “Crisis Talks” of the Leibniz Research Network “Environmental Crises – Crisis Environments”.

***“I believe that in the times we are living in,
there can never be enough advice on how to
secure and maintain peace.”***

***Professor Nicole Deitelhoff, Director of the Peace Research
Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)***

Agricultural Policy Dialogue

Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO)

What does the Agricultural Policy Dialogue that you are conducting with countries in the Western Balkans, Uzbekistan and Ukraine involve?

The dialogues constitute structured and institutionalized platforms and networks for exchange between the worlds of science, business and politics on (specific) agricultural developments and challenges in the countries concerned. They are financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

Why is agricultural development particularly important for these countries?

The agricultural and food sectors are essential drivers of economic, social and environmental development in these countries, especially in rural areas. This is especially true in light of climate change, demographic changes, migration movements and global food security.

Peace Report

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) / Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC)/ Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH)/ Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)

PRIF is the editorial and PR lead for the Peace Report, a joint, annual publication of Germany's peace research institutions (including BICC, IFSH, INEF). In the Peace Report, researchers from various disciplines investigate ongoing conflicts around the world and formulate policy recommendations for peace and security policy in Germany and Europe. The Russia-Ukraine conflict, as well as the German "Zeitenwende", have long been central themes of the reports.

friedensgutachten.de/en

What countries and which institutions does the IOER advise?

Our current focus is on Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Armenia. Depending on the topic, the emphasis is on advising local and regional stakeholders such as regional governments or municipalities.

What issues do political players approach you with?

In particular, we advise small and medium-sized towns on urban development issues and the revitalisation of existing urban structures. The energy transition and the associated transformations also play a major role. Our expertise in the circular economy in the construction sector and in evaluating ecosystem services is also sought after.

What tools are available to your institute in this process?

Our work requires transdisciplinary research settings, such as real-world laboratories. This involves direct exchange between very different stakeholders from the fields of research, politics, administration, business and civil society. This collaborative approach leads to the creation of cross-sectoral knowledge networks that benefit everyone involved. In the specific case of the circular economy in the construction sector, the transfer of knowledge on digital regional material cadastres plays a major role.

Research Infrastructures and Knowledge Resources

Access to knowledge infrastructures and resources is a prerequisite for excellent research. This is something the network's institutions provide. They give access to some of the most important resources for studying Central and Eastern Europe, including extensive libraries, unique archival and document collections, databases and scientific surveys. The Research Data Centre of the Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH) hosts extensive databases with economic indicators for exemplary Central and Eastern European countries. The Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe (HI) – Institute of the Leibniz Association and the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) publish leading international journals such as the “Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung” and “Economic Systems”. Together with the Leibniz-Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), both partners are involved in OstDok, the central open-access platform for research on Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Defining common standards for quality management, sustainability, user research and career development is one of the network's key overarching goals.



Presentation of unique image collections at the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe (HI) – Institute of the Leibniz Association

ACTRIS – Aerosol, Clouds and Trace Gases Research Infrastructure

Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS)

The EU research infrastructure ACTRIS investigates the role of short-lived atmospheric constituents such as aerosols, clouds and trace gases for the climate in the atmosphere and air quality on the ground. The German branch is coordinated by TROPOS, which works closely with partners in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and Cyprus via ACTRIS. ACTRIS supports industry and the authorities with data and provides the EU with scientific advice on climate change and air quality. Integrating atmospheric research in Central and Eastern Europe into this EU-wide structure furthers the integration of these countries' research and development within the European Union. For example, in 2024, ground stations in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus conducted a validation campaign for ESA's new European Earth observation satellite EarthCARE, which was coordinated by TROPOS.

Archive for Spoken German

Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS)

The Archive for Spoken German (AGD) is a research data centre for corpora of spoken German in its various forms accredited by the Council for Social and Economic Data (RatSWD). Currently, it offers online access to 41 corpora for research and teaching purposes via the Database for Spoken German (DGD). These corpora also include corpora documenting German in eastern parts of Europe, to some degree historically and, in particular, as dialect corpora. In this connection, the corpus "German Dialects: Former Eastern German Territories (OS)" or the corpus "Russian-German Dialects (RUDI)" are particularly relevant as is, for example, the interview corpus "Stories of Flight from East Prussia (FGOP)".

MULTIMSPROD

Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH)

What is MULTIMSPROD, and how can it influence policymaking?

The MULTIMSPROD productivity microdata platform aims to improve the data basis for the policymaking decisions of participating National Productivity Boards (NPBs). To this end, two major constraints are being removed. First, the project provides the participating countries with harmonised data (micro-aggregated and comparable across countries) to conduct policy analyses and develop recommendations. Second, the project offers training so that the national central banks can fully exploit the potential of the micro-based data infrastructure.

Next Generation Sequencing

Research Center Borstel, Leibniz Lung Center (FZB)

Each year, more than 10 million people contract tuberculosis (TB). Of these, more than 400,000 cases have become drug-resistant and this poses a significant global health threat. In Europe, the eastern half of the continent is most affected by this infectious disease. Treating TB effectively requires a rapid and individualised treatment of patients. Modern methods, such as Next Generation Sequencing, are essential for selecting the right drugs and tracing the outbreak's path. The Research Centre Borstel, Leibniz Lung Centre provides the infrastructure for successful TB monitoring and diagnostics thanks to state-of-the-art technologies. Every year, approximately 9500 samples from Germany and worldwide, mainly from Africa and Eastern Europe, are sequenced. In recent months, almost 4000 samples from Ukraine have been analysed.

Ukraine in Focus

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine strongly impacted the Institutes of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe. In response to the war, institutes within the network, such as the Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research (IFW), the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media (GEI) and many others, set up programmes for scientists at risk from the country under attack in order to guarantee the continuation of their research and to protect the life, liberty and freedom of their colleagues.

The institutes of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe have a long tradition of cooperation with Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war, they have intensified their efforts to establish joint research infrastructures. They continue to share their knowledge in schools and with the public and are involved in developing defence strategies and sustainable solutions, such as preserving Ukraine's cultural heritage. To bring current research findings and issues relating to Ukraine into the public debate, employees of the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) and the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) regularly publish the "Ukraine-Analysen".



View of Pedestrian bridge over the Dnieper River, Kyiv

LivArch – Documenting Russia's War Against Ukraine: The Challenges of Living Archives for Historical Knowledge Production

Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe – Institute of the Leibniz Association (HI, leadpartner) / Center for Urban History L'viv / Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) / Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) / Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media / Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences / Marburg Center for Digital Culture and Infrastructure / Giessen Center for Eastern European Studies (GiZo)

Since Russia's extensive attack on Ukraine, the events of the war have been recorded in real time in chat messages, social media, georeferenced satellite images and interviews with contemporary witnesses. So far, however, historians have paid little attention to this new dimension of archives. The project "LivArch" supports the development of methods and theories for recording, storing and enriching these war-related sources. It is dedicated to ethical questions of responsible representation, subsequent use and long-term archiving and aims to support projects and individuals who produce and curate such sources.

Centre for Interdisciplinary Ukrainian Studies – Think Space Ukraine

University of Regensburg / Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS)

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Ukrainian Studies – Think Space Ukraine or Denkraum Ukraine (DU) – at the University of Regensburg brings together expertise on Ukraine's culture, economy, politics and law. It aims to turn the previously loosely linked disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities on Ukraine-related topics in their European and global contexts into a coherent interdisciplinary teaching and research programme. Funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with over 2.3 million euros, the Centre's work focuses on four areas: Language and Cultural Heritage; War, Peace and the Post-War Order; Flight, Migration and Value Transfer; and Regional Diversity. The project manager and co-spokesperson of DU is Guido Hausmann, Head of the History Department at the IOS. The IOS is also closely involved in the project as a cooperating institution.

German-Ukrainian Center of Excellence for Quantum Materials

Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Material Research (IFW) /
Kyiv Academic University

The German-Ukrainian Center of Excellence for Quantum Materials GU-QuMat has been funded by the BMBF with 2.5 million euros for four years since 1st June 2024. It is dedicated to the theory-based search for novel quantum materials as the basis for future technologies. Eventually, the Center is to be based in Kyiv. Despite the current war, preparatory work is to begin now at both locations, and the partners in Ukraine are being supported. The project is based on a long-standing collaboration between IFW Dresden and Kyiv Academic University (KAU). A scholarship programme for young Ukrainian talent was running at IFW Dresden from 2018 to 2022. After the outbreak of the war, these experiences and contacts born from the existing collaborations formed the basis for an active Dresden initiative to support Ukrainian academics.
gu-qumat.ifw-dresden.de

The Forgotten Centre of Europe: Analyses of Ukraine and its Neighbours in Textbooks

Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI)

A working group consisting of four Ukrainian researchers is analysing how textbooks represent the subjects of geography, history and political education, as well as the historical images and narratives of Central and Eastern Europe that these textbooks contain. Based on a review of current Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian and German textbook content on the region's history in general and Ukrainian history in particular, the group is examining the development of these narratives since the 1990s. In addition to the narratives, the scholars are looking at historical-political strategies that may fulfil a legitimising function, serve national self-assurance, convey unquestioned assumed "truths", or may have been designed to stimulate critical thinking and encourage pupils to position themselves in the context of competing narratives about the past.

Kateryna Hubenko – Visiting Scholar at IFW

Dr. Kateryna Hubenko is a researcher at the Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research Dresden (IFW) and at the Institute for Scintillation Materials of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

What are you researching?

My research involves developing multifunctional luminescent nanocrystals for biomedical applications. I study the mechanisms behind the formation of luminescent and anti-/pro-oxidant properties in the nanocrystals of various structures and compositions. This includes determining the role of nanoparticles' defective structures, size and morphology, and the impact of external factors on their redox activity. These studies aim to provide strategies for creating nanomaterials with controlled pro- or antioxidant properties and developing methods to regulate the regeneration of the antioxidant action of nanocrystals.

What is the scientific community's responsibility towards Ukraine today?

In my opinion, the scientific community's political responsibility involves ensuring that scientific research and its applications are conducted ethically and transparently, emphasising the public good. And, of course, this responsibility involves promoting international cooperation, combating misinformation and participating in public debates. It is especially important for scientists to be informed and objective voices, helping to guide policy and public opinion based on evidence and rational analysis.

Anastasiia Korokhina – Visiting Scholar at GWZO

Anastasiia Korokhina, PhD, is a researcher at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) and at the Institute of Archaeology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

What are you researching?

My research project is devoted to the archaeometric study of medieval amphorae from the territory of modern Ukraine and Poland. By applying the methods of archaeometry – the petrographic study of thin slices of ceramics under a microscope, analysis of their chemical composition and study the typology of amphorae – we can develop hypotheses about the origin and distribution of various amphorae and thus trace the economic, political and cultural contacts of medieval Europe's population.

What is the scientific community's responsibility towards Ukraine today?

I am very grateful for the opportunities provided to Ukrainian scholars – the opportunity to work in foreign institutions and receive comprehensive support for our research. I would like to draw attention to the researchers who remained in Ukraine and to the fact that these people are now doing incredibly difficult and important work. They also need support. We are very much hoping the grant funding opportunities will be expanded to include scholars and cultural activists who are now in Ukraine. Ukraine's rich cultural heritage is part of the world heritage, and, in my opinion, its preservation is our collective task.

“We need to learn what Ukraine actually is. We need to stop thinking of it as a buffer zone between our comfort and Russia's threat to disturb it. Because if it doesn't stop being a buffer zone on our mental maps, it will continue being a war zone.”

Dr. Olesya Khromeychuk, Director of the Ukrainian Institute London, while giving the Oskar Halecki Lecture at GWZO

Scientific Exchange

The Leibniz Association's institutions are closely involved in European and international research activities. The broad disciplinary and methodological spectrum of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe offers institutions a wide range of points of contact for establishing new partnerships. The exchange inspires new approaches and questions and, in turn, strengthens the development of pan-European perspectives and areas of focus.

The establishment of these international and national multidisciplinary research infrastructures ensures that all sides can benefit from existing resources. In addition, it creates opportunities to adopt new perspectives, both methodologically and locally. This occurs thanks to reciprocal research visits, collaborative research projects or the establishment of joint institutions. The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), for example, was able to expand its international partnerships by contributing to the establishment of a research centre for food and land use at the Kyiv School of Economics in 2021.



Excavations by the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) with the Göcseji Museum in Zalaegerszeg and the Balaton Museum in Keszthely in Keszthely-Fenékpusztja.

Transforming Anxieties of Ageing in Southeastern Europe: Political, Social, and Cultural Narratives of Demographic Change

Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) /
University of Graz / Sofia University / Hungarian Institute for
Demographic Research (HDRI)

Shrinking and ageing populations: Southeastern Europe is far more greatly affected by demographic change than other regions. The project analyses the consequences of ageing in the region, particularly with respect to their political implications and looks at how societies might better address the issue. The project's consortium, led by the IOS, includes the universities of Graz and Sofia as well as the Demographic Research Institute in Budapest. In addition to research publications, the consortium plans to develop a database and a comprehensive programme of guidelines for the public and politicians.

transforming-anxieties.ios-regensburg.de

Baltic Migrants at the Eastern Border of the Kievan Rus': The Late Viking Age Archaeological Complex of Ostriv on the River Ros' (Ukraine)

Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA) / National Academy of Sciences
of Ukraine

How and why did people from the Baltic region move to the border of the Kievan Empire in the 11th century, and what was life like in this border region at the intersection of different cultural spheres? This has been the subject of an interdisciplinary research project entitled "Baltic Migrants at the Eastern Border of the Kievan Rus': The Late Viking Age Archaeological Complex of Ostriv on the River Ros' (Ukraine)" and funded by the DFG since 2022. To this end, the scientists are analysing finds from a medieval burial ground around 100 kilometres south of Kyiv. The research results from Ostriv will provide new, tangible insights for discussing highly topical issues relating to forms of mobility, migration, integration and ethnicity.

JUSTIMINO – In Pursuit of “Legality” and “Justice”: Minority Struggles in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

What is the JUSTIMINO research project?

JUSTIMINO is an ERC-financed research group (2023–2028) that explores religious and ethnic minorities in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union (ca. 1861–1991) by focusing on the ways in which they invoked “justice” and “legality” to fight for their rights in highly authoritarian regimes. The research is conducted collaboratively in 6 subprojects and in constant exchange with visiting scholars and NGOs.

Which partners do you work with?

We cooperate closely with NGOs such as Memorial (Prague) and citizen science initiatives focusing on history and memory politics in Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan as well as universities in Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

What insights does the exchange with local NGOs offer, and how do you engage the wider public?

The systematic cooperation with NGOs from the region ensures discussion far beyond academic circles. It helps us frame the research and promotes a critical review of our findings in public “NGO talks” and in interviews with the media. The “Justice & Minorities” podcast, the JUSTIMINO blog and online discussion forums further support this process.

justimino.hypotheses.org/

Knowledge and Participation: Interface Leipzig-Prague

Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) / Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences (FLÚ)

What is “Knowledge and Participation: Interface Leipzig-Prague”?

The Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), based in Leipzig is opening a new department in Prague funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. This department's establishment in the Czech Republic will help cement longstanding collaborations with partners and create a new institutional fixture in East-Central Europe.

What will the new department focus on?

Our work is to focus on the topic of citizen science (CS). The aim is to analyse the relationship between academically and non-academically generated knowledge from a historical, contemporary and transnational perspective. In addition, the new department is to become a methodological laboratory for citizen science in the humanities.

Why is the establishment of the new department important?

The new department in Prague emphasises the importance of cooperation with the Visegrád states and Eastern Europe amid an increasingly tense political situation in Europe. It will consolidate academic exchange with the region on an infrastructural level.

Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference

Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) / University of Central Asia (UCA) / International Security and Development Center (ISDC)

The IGZ has been organising the “Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference” with various governmental, non-governmental and academic stakeholders since 2016. What have been the main topics in recent years?

The annual conference “Life in Kyrgyzstan” (LiK) brings together national and international actors from academia, the field of development and politics in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, every October. It is the only recurring social science conference focusing on micro-level analyses in Central Asia, covering topics such as poverty, employment, nutrition, health, gender and climate change. The conference is part of the “Life in Kyrgyzstan” study, which has been investigating the behaviour and welfare of over 10,000 people since 2010 and of which the results are available in open access.

Why is the focus on Kyrgyzstan so important?

Kyrgyzstan represents a microcosm of developments in Central Asia. The data and research findings gathered here are often transferable to other countries in Central Asia and beyond. This makes Kyrgyzstan an important case study for understanding regional trends and dynamics. The country offers a liberal setting for data collection and conducting research. A thriving academic community and active civil society further enhance this environment and contribute significantly to the country's research and development efforts. In addition, many development agencies in Kyrgyzstan actively seek evidence on which to base their development programmes and policies.

lifeinkyrgyzstan.org

Public Engagement

One of the Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe's central tasks is to engage with society. The institutes make the region and its diversity – its challenges and questions, conflicts and aspirations – tangible and understandable. At the same time, they offer spaces for dialogue and debate with members of society. For example, the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media (GEI) is developing teaching materials for schoolchildren on Ukraine's complex history. The special exhibition "Peace I War" by the Germanisches Nationalmuseum – Leibniz Research Museum for Cultural History (GNM) and the international, European exhibition "Bellum et artes" on the Thirty Years' War, co-curated by the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) and shown in Brussels, introduced a wide audience to a set of crucial cultural and historical insights.

The Leibniz Association institutes also offer tools for self-learning and further education. For example, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) provides teaching materials for school teachers as part of the "Nachgefragt!" project. These materials encourage pupils to seek their own answers. The Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI) publishes information on Jewish life for teaching purposes and to broaden the image of Jews in society. Moreover, numerous institutes participate in the Leibniz Association's "Book a Scientist" or "Frag Leibniz" public engagement programmes.

Copernico: History and Cultural Heritage in Eastern Europe

Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe –
Institute of the Leibniz Association (HI) / Leibniz Institute for Jewish
History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI) / Leibniz Institute for the
History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZ0) / Leibniz Institute for East
and Southeast European Studies (IOS)

The portal “Copernico: History and Cultural Heritage in Eastern Europe” is a digital tool exploring new ways of transferring knowledge, preserving cultural heritage and conveying this heritage to the public. It includes a research module and a thematic magazine. The portal aims to present scientific findings to a wider public and offers a sustainable, modularly structured and technically compatible web portal using the cultural heritage sector’s established metadata standards.

copernico.eu/en

EUROPAST – Facing the Past: Public History for a Stronger Europe

Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF) /
Vilnius University / Lund University / University of Luxembourg

The project “Facing the Past: Public History for a Stronger Europe (EUROPAST)” brings together institutional partners with different academic traditions. Conceived as a capacity building project, it aims at strengthening the skills of the Vilnius team in the field of public history. The objective is to engage in a multidirectional and mutually beneficial learning process. This mutual benefit applies in equal measure to research, research communication and the organisation of events. This project has an important practical dimension and aims to forge links with partners outside of academia to explore new ways of doing history and understanding the past and thereby involve a wider range of actors. This exchange across countries and disciplines makes it easier to identify shared values and common goals and turn them into concrete actions for strengthening democratic values and promoting a critical examination of Europe’s past and present.

europast.vu.lt

Thematic Issues “Communicating Jewish Everyday Culture in Germany”

Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI)

What are the thematic issues “Communicating Jewish Everyday Culture in Germany”, and who are they for?

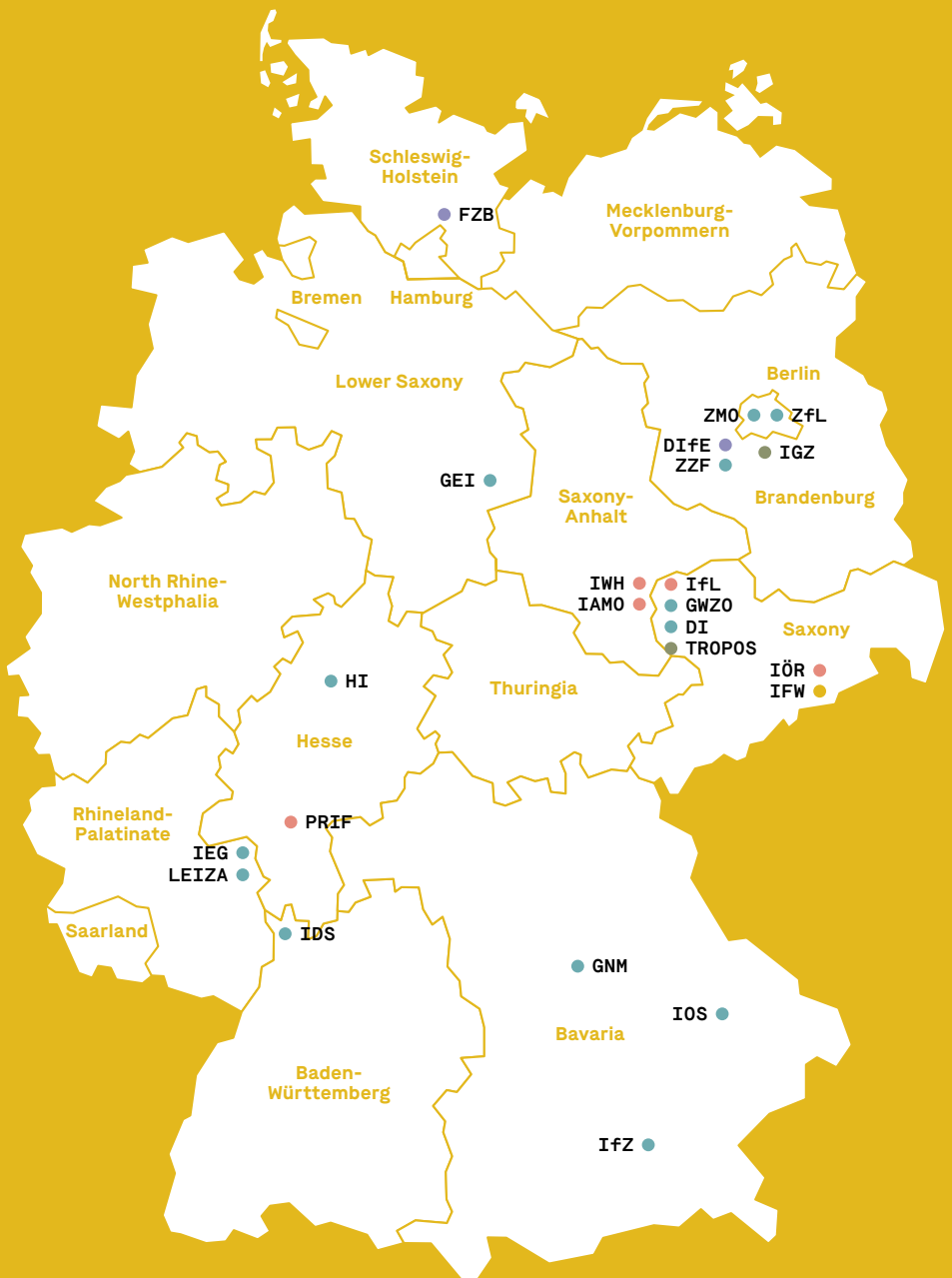
The Dubnow Institute’s thematic issues enable the discussion of various aspects of Jewish everyday culture in the school and adult education. The first issue was published in 2023 and concentrates on four main areas: the annual cycle, dietary laws, ritual slaughter and circumcision. These core components of the Jewish faith are often the topic of anti-semitic prejudices, which persist, among other things, due to a lack of knowledge and the inability to refute them. The second issue was published in September 2024 and deals with matters relating to Jewish life’s visibility in Germany. It also discusses the consequences of Hamas’ terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, for Jews in Germany. The third issue (planned for summer 2025) will focus on Jewish burial practices. All of the thematic issues are available on the project’s website and can be downloaded free of charge.

What role does Central and Eastern Europe play in this?

Until the 1980s, the FRG’s and the GDR’s Jewish communities were mostly small and ageing. It was not until immigration from the (former) Soviet Union picked up pace in the 1990s that the Jewish communities grew significantly. Jewish culture and Jewish everyday life gained a new kind of visibility in Germany. These thematic issues showcase the diversity of Jewish life in Germany. In this context, the personal backgrounds of Eastern European community members, their experiences of migration and their native tongue, Russian, play an important role.
alltagskultur.dubnow.de/

The Leibniz Research Network Central and Eastern Europe includes the following Leibniz Association institutes and research museums

- Section A *Humanities and Educational Research*
- Section B *Economics, Social Sciences, Spatial Research*
- Section C *Life Sciences*
- Section D *Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Engineering*
- Section E *Environmental Sciences*



The German Institute of Human Nutrition Potsdam-Rehbrücke (DIfE)

The German Institute of Human Nutrition (DIfE) conducts research to improve people's health and quality of life and seeks solutions to pressing social issues. Its mission is to understand the basics of nutrition-related diseases and use these insights for prevention and therapy. To this end, the DIfE is involved in various national, European and international research networks.

www.dife.de/en

Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI), Leipzig

The research of the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI) focuses on Jewish everyday life and experiences in the context of non-Jewish surroundings from the Early Modern Period to the present. With regard to Central and Eastern Europe as well as the main areas of emigration (USA, Palestine/Israel), the focus is on questions of political participation and exclusion, the struggle for legal and cultural autonomy and the experience of mobility, exile and violence.

www.dubnow.de/en

Research Center Borstel, Leibniz Lung Center (RCB)

The Research Center Borstel (RCB) – Leibniz Lung Center is the lung research center of the Leibniz Association. The focus is on chronic inflammatory lung diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and allergies, as well as tuberculosis and other infection-related inflammations of the lung. The overarching goal of the interdisciplinary research is to elucidate the causes and mechanisms of infectious and non-infectious chronic inflammatory diseases of the lung to infer from this new innovative concepts for their prevention, diagnosis and therapy.

www.fz-borstel.de/en

Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), Braunschweig

The Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute conducts research into the production, content and appropriation of educational media for schools in different socio-cultural contexts. It provides a unique infrastructure for research into educational media, both on-site and digitally, and offers services for a diverse range of target groups. Central and Eastern Europe is one of the GEI's main areas of focus.

www.gei.de/en

Germanisches Nationalmuseum (GNM), Nuremberg

Founded in 1852 to gather “all available source material for German history, literature and art”, the Germanisches Nationalmuseum (GNM) – Leibniz Research Museum for Cultural History owns and researches the largest collection pertaining to German-language cultural history. The GNM's holdings also illustrate the many forms of cultural exchange between Central and Eastern Europe and the German-speaking world, which have always shaped German art and culture and continue to have an impact until today.

www.gnm.de/your-museum-in-nuremberg

Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), Leipzig and Prague

The Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) researches the region between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic from late antiquity to the present day. Its hallmark is the diverse spectrum of humanities disciplines that work together on an interdisciplinary basis. The institute has one of the best libraries for research on Central and Eastern Europe and a dense network of partner institutions throughout the region.

www.leibniz-gwzo.de/en

Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe (HI) – Institute of the Leibniz Association, Marburg

The Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe (HI) – Institute of the Leibniz Association has unique collections and scientific resources on the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and Belarus. It leads research projects and develops digital infrastructures for historical and art historical scholarship, such as cultural heritage research. The institute has one of the best libraries for research on East Central Europe and an international network of partners.
www.herder-institut.de/en

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

The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) analyses economic, social and political transformations in the agricultural and food sectors as well as in rural areas. Geographically, its work covers the enlarging EU, transition regions of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Central Asia and China.
www.iamo.de/en

Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS), Mannheim

The Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS) is the leading non-university institution for documenting and researching the German language in its current use and recent history. The IDS also conducts research into the status of German as a language of science and as a minority language in Central and Eastern Europe.
www.ids-mannheim.de/en/

Leibniz Institute of European History Mainz (IEG)

The Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) researches the historical foundations of Europe in its cross-border connections from the early modern period to contemporary history. With its research and its international fellowship programme, the Institute brings together historical perspectives on all regions of Europe.

www.ieg-mainz.de/en/

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL), Leipzig

The transformation of spatial structures in Europe, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, is the focus of the interdisciplinary research of the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL). The institute's research emphasises the significance of spatially unequal processes such as the competitive development of metropolitan areas, the emergence of structurally weaker or "left behind" regions and patterns of transnational migration and mobility. The institute is known for its research on the history of geography as a discipline and its knowledge transfer activities using visual media, particularly maps and atlases.

www.leibniz-ifl.de/en

Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research Dresden (IFW)

The Leibniz Institute for Solid State and Materials Research Dresden (IFW Dresden) explores the physics and chemistry of new materials at the level of molecules, atoms and electrons. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach to quantum physics, the chemistry of materials and electrical engineering, its research enables the development of new functionalities and applications as well as sustainable materials and technologies.

www.ifw-dresden.de

Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ)

The Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) researches German history from the 20th century to the present in a European and global context. Special attention is paid to Germany's close and often conflict-laden entanglements with its Central and Eastern European neighbours. The institute's research focuses include the history of German-Soviet relations, Holocaust research, cultures of remembrance and the history of political transformations.

www.ifz-muenchen.de/en

Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ), Großbeeren

The Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) is developing the scientific foundations for an ecologically sound and economically efficient mode of plant production. The focus is on adapting to climate change, improving living conditions and promoting food security. Researchers from the natural sciences, engineering and economics are working on solutions specifically relevant to Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

www.igzev.de/en

Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER), Dresden

The Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) develops scientific principles, analytical tools and instruments for the sustainable development and transformation of neighbourhoods, cities and regions. To this end, it conducts cross-scale research into the interactions and feedbacks between the natural environment, people and technology, as well as options for stewardship and planning.

www.ioer.de/en

Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS), Regensburg

Understanding Eastern and Southeast Europe and creating, preserving and disseminating knowledge: These are the goals of the Regensburg-based Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS). Its staff includes historians, economists and political scientists with a particular interest in the former Soviet Union and Southeastern Europe. In addition, the IOS provides important research services.

www.leibniz-ios.de/en

Halle Institute for Economic Research – Member of the Leibniz Association (IWH)

The Halle Institute for Economic Research – Member of the Leibniz Association (IWH) analyses the determinants of long-term economic growth. Its research focuses on how the financial system can ensure capital (re)allocation, structural change, innovation and increased productivity and thus ensure efficient and sustainable economic development. The institute's expertise includes macroeconomic analyses and forecasts for countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

www.iwh-halle.de/en

Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA)

As a Leibniz Research Institute and Museum for Archaeology, LEIZA studies human beings and their development based on material remains that span three million years across time and space. The fundamental insights gained improve our understanding of human behaviour, actions and the development of societies. In this way, LEIZA enriches our knowledge of humans from an archaeological perspective and creates essential foundations for reflecting on the present and shaping the future. Eastern Europe is one of the research regions.

www.leiza.de

Peace Research Institute (PRIF), Frankfurt am Main

The Peace Research Institute (PRIF) – Leibniz Institute for Peace and Conflict Research analyses the causes of international and domestic conflicts and seeks solutions. The institute combines interdisciplinary and basic research with the transfer of academic knowledge to policymakers, the media and society. Regarding Central and Eastern Europe, research focuses include the dynamics of war, European security, the international order, autocratisation and democratisation.

www.prif.org/en

Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS), Leipzig

The Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS) was founded in Leipzig in 1992 to study the polluted atmosphere. It has a globally unique research profile, focusing on clouds and the smallest airborne particles (aerosols). These have a major impact on the climate, air quality and health. Air pollution from industry, forest fires and soil erosion, therefore, link TROPOS with Central and Eastern Europe.

www.tropos.de/en

Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL), Berlin

The Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL) is a humanities institute for literary research in interdisciplinary contexts that draws from a cultural studies framework. Its research uses interdisciplinary tools to fundamentally question the aetiology of various literary concepts, their potential for the future and the relationship between literature and other artistic or cultural practices.

www.zfl-berlin.org/zfl-english.html

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), Berlin

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) conducts interdisciplinary research into the history and societies of Islamic regions. It examines the entanglements of Eurasia, the Middle East, Africa and South and Southeast Asia with each other and Europe. With regard to Eastern Europe, research and knowledge transfer are primarily dedicated to the situation of religious and national minorities in Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and Soviet successor states.

www.zmo.de/en

Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF)

The Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF) is an institute that researches German and European contemporary history in the twentieth century and its relationship to the present. In addition to basic research, the provision of research infrastructures and the transfer of knowledge are central tasks of the ZZF, especially through its digital platforms. The history of communist societies under Soviet rule is a key focus of the institute's research, and it has a vast network of partner institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

www.zzf-potsdam.de/en

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