Churches and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe

The post-socialist transformation of Eastern and Central Europe challenges the identity of their Christian Churches as well. Despite decades of state-led marginalization of religion, when many people now search for meaning, they seek it mostly in the traditional Churches. At the same time, new demands by the states on Churches, a hitherto unknown religious diversity, and the growing pluralization of the societies, call for clear and theoretically substantiated answers. Although the Churches have developed different strategies for coping with this new situation, all are characterized by the search for their own ecclesial identity within their respective historical, theological, and political experiences. This conference, the biennial convention of the “Study of Religion” section of the German Association for East European Studies, will address the search of the Christian Churches in Central and Eastern Europe for identity in times of a massive social transformation. Case studies of single countries will analyze the commonalities and differences of the respective Christian traditions and of the different post-socialist contexts. The resulting variegated composite picture of the Christian identities in the region will provide an important contribution for a better understanding of the role of the Churches in current societal and political developments.

Conference Coordination
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Conference Language
English

Registration
office@dgo-online.org
Friday, 21 June 2019

2.00 pm  Welcome
Gwendolyn Sasse, Centre for East European and International Studies, Board Member German Association for East European Studies, Berlin
Regina Elsner, Centre for East European and International Studies, DGO-Section Religion, Berlin

2.30 pm  Lecture
Religion and Identity
Olaf Müller, University of Münster

4.00 pm  Coffee Break

4.30 pm  Panel I — Belarus
The Formation of a National Identity in Belarus: The Mission of the Catholic Church
Alena Kharko, University of Eichstätt

The Identity of the Belarusian Orthodox Church: Between Belarusian Political Regime, Russian Imperialism and National Revival
Natalia Vasilevich, Centre Ecumenica, Minsk / University of Bonn

6.15 pm  Dinner

7.30 pm  Public Lecture
Church and Identity after 1989
Bishop Johann Schneider, Halle-Wittenberg

Saturday, 22 June 2019

9.00 am  Panel II — Central Eastern Europe
Christian Identity. Its Universal Challenges and Local Traditions in Slovakia
Miro Kocúr, Theologian, Bratislava

Church Identity in Hungary
András Máthé-Tóth, University of Szeged

10.30 am  Coffee Break

11.00 am  Panel III — Churches from Eastern Europe in Germany
Orthodoxy in Germany
Nikolaj Thon, Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in Germany

Pastoral Work with Native-Speaking Communities in Berlin
Klaudia Höfig, Catholic Archdiocese of Berlin

12.30 pm  Lunch Break

2.00 pm  Panel IV — Ukraine
Orthodoxy and Ukrainian Identity
Sergii Bortnyk, Theological Academy, Kyiv

The Greek-Catholic Church and Ukrainian Identity
Natalia Kochan, Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies, Kyiv

3.30 pm  Coffee Break

3.45 pm  Panel V — Orthodoxy as Minority
Orthodoxy in Estonia
Irina Paert, University of Tartu

Overlapping Waves: Russian Orthodox Identity in North America
Nadięszda Kizenko, University of Albany

5.30 pm  Panel VI — Russia
Russian Orthodoxy and the Transformation of Society
Scott Kenworthy, Miami University

Protestant Communities After the End of the Soviet Union
Nadezhda Beljakova, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

7.00 pm  Closing Discussion