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UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA'S LEADERSHIP OF THE CENTRAL NETWORK

2020/2024



Executive Summary



Overview

Since assuming the leading role within the CENTRAL Network in late 2020, the University of Vienna has expanded the network's reach, fostering academic excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and societal engagement. Key achievements include hosting over 20 workshops, launching a transformative leadership program for young researchers, and spearheading impactful outreach initiatives such as the Vienna Circle traveling exhibition and public debates. These efforts have strengthened academic and cultural ties among partner universities while promoting dialogue on critical regional issues.

Key Achievements

1. CENTRAL Workshops

Partners redefined the framework for CENTRAL Workshops to enhance collaboration and effectiveness. These workshops served as platforms for interdisciplinary research, joint training, and innovative teaching. The first call fully administered by the University of Vienna with the redefined rules was published in March 2021 and since then:

- 16 workshops were successfully conducted, with 8 more approved for the academic year 2024/2025.
- Workshops involved research groups from at least three CENTRAL universities, fostering joint projects and new partnerships.
- Topics ranged from humanities and arts to economics and technology, highlighting the network's interdisciplinary scope.

The workshops provided opportunities for young researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and Ph.D. students to collaborate across disciplines, advancing research and academic excellence.

2. CENTRAL Leadership Program

Launched in 2024, the CENTRAL Leadership Program was born out of the initiative of the Humboldt University to offer a three-week immersive journey across key Central European cities—Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, and Budapest. Designed for graduate students and doctoral candidates, the program:

- Combines academic rigor, cultural immersion, and leadership training.
- Features workshops, high-level discussions, and visits to diplomatic institutions, fostering leadership skills and regional understanding.
- Hosted 28 participants in 2024, equipping future leaders with insights into Central Europe's economy, politics, and culture. The next edition is scheduled for August/September 2025

Key program highlights include expert-led sessions on European integration, diplomacy, historical transformation, and contemporary geopolitical challenges, culminating in a comprehensive leadership development experience.

3. Outreach Initiatives

Under the theme "What Unites and Divides Us," the University of Vienna expanded public engagement efforts, reinforcing the network's role in societal discourse. Major initiatives included:

- Vienna Circle Traveling Exhibition: Showcasing the influential Vienna Circle, the exhibition toured Prague, Warsaw, and Berlin, promoting Central Europe's shared intellectual heritage and fostering academic dialogue.
 - In Prague, discussions highlighted the region's philosophical history and intellectual exchange.
 - In Warsaw, connections to Poland's contributions to logic and science were explored.
 - In Berlin, the exhibition emphasized the Vienna Circle's post-war influence on German academic thought.
- Podium Discussion on war in Ukraine (June 2022): A pivotal debate addressed the war's impact on Central Europe's relationship with Russia, featuring diverse expert perspectives and fostering critical regional reflection.
- Additional activities included podcasts, interviews, and debates, engaging broader audiences in cross-border societal and intellectual discussions.

Conclusion

The University of Vienna's leadership of the CENTRAL Network from January 2021 to December 2024 advanced interdisciplinary collaboration, academic innovation, and public engagement. By fostering workshops, launching leadership programs, and promoting outreach initiatives, the network has strengthened ties among partner universities and contributed to addressing key societal challenges in Central Europe. These achievements reflect a commitment to shared intellectual traditions and regional cooperation, setting a strong foundation for future growth and collaboration within the CENTRAL Network.

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CENTRAL Network Achievements in facts and figures (January 2021-December 2024)

CENTRAL Network Achievements

January 2021 - December 2024



Outreach Initiatives

- Vienna Circle Travelling Exhibition:
 - 3 Cities Toured: Prague, Warsaw, Berlin
 - Focused on:
 - Regional Philosophy History
 - Post-war Intellectual Influence
- Podium Discussion on War in Ukraine
 - Theme: Central Europe's Relationship with Russia
- Additional Initiatives:
 - Podcasts, Interviews and Debates



CENTRAL Leadership Program

- 28 participants touring Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna and Budapest for 3 weeks.
- Main focus:
 - Leadership Training
 - Cultural Immersion
 - Regional Understanding



CENTRAL Workshops

- 16 workshops conducted between 2021 and 2024.
- 8 workshops approved for the academic year 2024-2025.

Budget Overview



Each partner university contributed up to 30.000€ per year for the activities of the network.

1. CENTRAL Workshops

Each academic year, up to eight workshops can be funded. In the academic years 2021/2022, 2022/2023, and 2023/2024, the network funded 16 workshops with a total budget of €178,288. Workshops approved for the academic year 2024/2025 will receive a total funding of €75,571.

2. Central Leadership Program

€75,000 from CENTRAL Partners and additional funding from the Meyer-Struckmann-Stiftung, which was administered by Humboldt University und supported primarily Ukrainian participants as well as the Berlin part of the program.

3. CENTRAL Conference September 2024

€25,000 for hosting high-level panels, discussions, and events on the topic of Central Europe.

4. Traveling Exhibition „Vienna Circle“

€15,000 for curating and showcasing the Vienna Circle exhibition across Prague, Warsaw, and Berlin.

This carefully balanced budget enabled significant academic and cultural impact, maximizing collaboration, leadership growth, and public engagement across Central Europe.

Comprehensive Report



The CENTRAL Network represents a dynamic collaboration between five prestigious Central European universities based in Berlin, Budapest, Prague, Vienna, and Warsaw.

Its mission is to foster intellectual exchange and increase the visibility of research and academic dialogue across cultural, societal, and economic topics, both in Europe and beyond. By creating a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, CENTRAL seeks to position itself as a Network of Excellence, pushing forward academic and societal discussions from the Central and Eastern European region.

The network has cultivated deep-rooted regional partnerships, creating a formal platform for interdisciplinary projects. Through flagship initiatives like CENTRAL Workshops and the CENTRAL Leadership Program, CENTRAL empowers academic discourse, regional identity, and global leadership development.

CENTRAL Network: A Bridge for Academic Collaboration in Central Europe

The CENTRAL Network emphasizes interdisciplinary projects, fostering leadership, and promoting academic careers in Europe.

Each of CENTRAL's partner universities brings a unique blend of history, academic prestige, and research excellence to the network:

- Charles University (Prague): Established in 1348, it's the largest and top-ranked university in the Czech Republic.
- Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE): Hungary's oldest and largest institution, founded in 1635.
- Humboldt University (Berlin): Founded in 1810, it revolutionized academia by integrating teaching and research.
- University of Vienna: Established in 1365, it is the oldest university in the German-speaking world.
- University of Warsaw: Poland's largest university, ranking among the top 3% in the country regularly

What the CENTRAL Network Does

The CENTRAL network facilitates numerous initiatives focused on academic exchange and collaboration. These include diverse workshops, and leadership development opportunities. Among its flagship projects:

- **CENTRAL-Workshops:** These networking projects bring together researchers from partner universities to initiate and consolidate joint collaborations. The workshops are open to all disciplines and aim to foster innovative teaching and training, particularly for early-career researchers.
- **CENTRAL Leadership Program:** An immersive summer program that offers leadership training for graduate and doctoral students across five cities, combining academic seminars with cultural experiences. Participants explore diverse realms such as politics, diplomacy, and society, preparing them for leadership roles in Europe.
- **CENTRAL Conference:** took place in September 2024 to celebrate the network's 10th anniversary.
- **Diverse Outreach Activities:** Through its outreach and academic initiatives, CENTRAL creates a vibrant platform that not only supports research

CENTRAL WORKSHOPS



These workshops serve as a vibrant platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together researchers from member universities. Open to all academic disciplines, the workshops encourage joint research, training, and innovative teaching methods.

During the University of Vienna's leadership within the CENTRAL Network, the guidelines for organizing CENTRAL Workshops were redefined and reshaped. These changes aimed to improve the structure and effectiveness of the workshops. The updated rules focused on encouraging joint research initiatives and innovative teaching opportunities, particularly for young researchers, while ensuring that each workshop promotes active participation from multiple institutions. This redefinition strengthened the framework for interdisciplinary and collaborative projects across the CENTRAL Network.

CENTRAL workshops aim to either initiate new joint projects or strengthen existing partnerships, focusing on both research and innovative teaching or training opportunities for young researchers. CENTRAL-Workshop projects provide funding for one or two meetings, each lasting 2-3 days, which are held at one or more of the participating universities.

Each workshop project involves research groups from at least three CENTRAL universities, typically consisting of 2-4 researchers per university. The groups may be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and must include at least one established researcher (a post-doctoral scholar with a minimum of five years of research experience) who will serve as the group leader, as well as at least one Ph.D. student. Through these workshops, CENTRAL aims to promote cross-university collaboration and academic growth.

Between January 2021 and December 2024, over 20 CENTRAL Workshops took place. The topics of the workshops spanned a wide range, from "Innovation in Ancient Egypt" to "Collaborating for Excellence in Sport." While the majority of applications came from Social Sciences and Humanities, CENTRAL also hosted several workshops focused on economics and technology. This diversity of topics highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of the network and its commitment to fostering collaboration across various fields of study.

Academic Year 2021/2022

STS in Context: Provincialising STS from Central Europe

Contact Person: Sarah Davies, University of Vienna

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The Central European Languages Project

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Forgotten Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's Protrepticus and Aristotelic Magna Moralia

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Socialist (Dis)Connections

Contact Person: Thuc Linh Nguyen Vu, University of Vienna

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Mapping the Scenes: Digital Humanities in Cultural Studies in Central and Central Eastern Europe

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Memory Policy in Theoretical and Practical Dimensions 2022

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Towards a Central European Doctoral School: Workshop Summary

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Tradition and Innovation in Ancient Egypt

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Academic Year 2022/2023

3rd Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy

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Functional Translatology in Regional Contexts II (November 2022)

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Notion and Construction of Victimhood in Central East and Southeast Europe

Contact Person: Jelena Dureinovic, University of Vienna

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Commodities, Trade, and Materiality in the Global Cold War

Contact Person: Jannis Panagiotidis, RECET, University of Vienna

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Towards a Central European Doctoral School in Modern History

Contact Persons: Philipp Ther, University of Vienna

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Claudia Kraft, University of Vienna

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Queer Readings: Queer Theory in Transit and Literary Studies

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Email: tbasiuk@uw.edu.pl

Thinking the Border with Fink and Nishida

Contact Person: Hans Rainer Sepp, Charles University, Prague

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Wittgenstein and Hegel on the Foundations of Logic

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Alexander Berg, University of Zurich

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Academic Year 2023/2024

Does Europe Understand Ukraine?

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Functional Translatology in Regional Contexts III-IV

Contact Person: Márta Csire, University of Vienna

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Tradition and Innovation II: Traditional Customs and Creative Redefinitions in Ancient Egypt

Contact Person: Filip Coppens, Charles University, Prague

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Collaborating for Excellence on Sports Data Analytics and Technology

Contact Person: Juliana Exel, University of Vienna

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Women in Analytic Philosophy: Past and Present

Contact Person: Anna Brożek, University of Warsaw

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Transformation of Memory Cultures and Politics

Contact Person: Christian Voss, Humboldt University Berlin

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4th Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy

Contact Person: James Wilberding, Humboldt University Berlin

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Academic Year 2024/2025 (up to the end of 2024)

"Translating the Nation": Social Contexts of Translation in the 20th and 21st Centuries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe

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Mobility of People, Goods, and Ideas

Contact Person: Jannis Panagiotidis, University of Vienna

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Mosaics of Details: From Little Pieces to the Big Picture within an Interdisciplinary Framework

Contact Person: Roman Gundacker, University of Vienna

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Current Issues of Ukrainian Studies in Light of Multilingualism and European Diversity. Specificities of Central Europe

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Impact of CENTRAL Workshops

- **Strengthened Interdisciplinary Collaboration:**
 - Facilitated joint research and academic exchange across member universities.
 - Encouraged collaboration between researchers from diverse fields and institutions.
- **Enhanced Structure and Effectiveness:**
 - Redefined guidelines under the University of Vienna's leadership improved organization
 - Emphasized cross-university participation, ensuring diverse and active engagement.
- **Support for Young Researchers:**
 - Created opportunities for early-career scholars through mentorship and training.
 - Required participation of both experienced researchers and Ph.D. students to foster knowledge transfer.
- **Significant Workshop Activity:**
 - Over 20 workshops held between January 2021 and December 2024, with more planned for the following year.
 - Topics spanned a wide range, from social sciences and humanities, to economics, technology, and sports science.
- **Sustained Engagement and Long-Term Collaboration:**
 - Funding enabled universities to host multiple meetings, strengthening academic partnerships.
 - Workshops led to the development of new joint research projects and the reinforcement of existing ones.
- **Impact on Teaching and Research Innovation:**
 - Promoted innovative teaching methodologies and interdisciplinary research initiatives.
 - Increased visibility of CENTRAL research projects and academic contributions.
- **Expansion of International Academic Networks:**
 - Fostered cross-border cooperation, making CENTRAL a hub for research and knowledge exchange.
 - Strengthened institutional connections and facilitated long-term academic collaborations.

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



The CENTRAL Leadership Program is a new initiative for graduate students and doctoral candidates, aimed at fostering leadership skills and regional understanding.

The program is designed as an immersive journey to bring together approximately 30 students each year from five CENTRAL universities, as well as Ukrainian Catholic University, Ivan Franko University Lviv (Ukraine) and Andrásy Universität Budapest (Hungary). Participants have the opportunity to explore the cities of Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, and Budapest, gaining insights into the region's economy, politics, diplomacy, and society.

Through a combination of specialized workshops, cultural activities, and academic courses, the program equips participants with the skills and knowledge needed for leadership roles in Central Europe.

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM 2024 EDITION

Warsaw (August 26–29)

The program began in Warsaw with a warm welcome at the University of Warsaw's Tyszkiewicz-Potocki Palace. The welcome ceremony set the stage for an enriching program by introducing the CENTRAL Network and fostering group integration through a **workshop on intercultural communication** including interactive exercises engaging the participants. The official dinner at Syrena Irena provided a welcoming atmosphere and gave participants their first opportunity to network.

The next day's meeting with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** deepened understanding of **Poland's public and cultural diplomacy** efforts, while a thought-provoking lecture on political leadership shifts in the European Union added knowledge about the European Union Institutions and Affairs to the visit. Another highlight in Warsaw were the sessions with the **Education for Democracy Foundation** and **Adam Mickiewicz Institute**, where discussions centered around Polish cultural diplomacy and international engagement. The translation workshops later in the day gave participants practical skills in cross-cultural communication.

Berlin (August 29–September 3)

The second interrail stop took participants to Berlin's Humboldt University, where they arrived on August 29 and immediately engaged in a discussion on German politics with MP Ruppert Stüwe at the Bundestag, followed by an insightful parliamentary tour.

A highlight was the visit to the Foreign Office (AA), starting with a **Global Diplomacy Lab workshop** on misinformation and disinformation, attended by German diplomatic academy trainees for networking. Ambassador (ret.) Andreas Meitzner guided a Foreign Office tour, leading into a discussion on **20 years after the EU enlargement** with Ambassador Cullas, Director for EU Relations.

In the afternoon, participants explored **science diplomacy** in an interactive workshop at Humboldt University. The weekend featured a **cultural leadership workshop** on non-verbal communication and international leadership dynamics, complemented by a movie night.

Monday's **field visit** to ZOiS (Centre for East European and International Studies) included discussions with NGO representatives on democracy and journalism, followed by a **World Café** with ZOiS researchers.

The program concluded with the **CENTRAL Leadership Briefing** in Humboldt's Senate Hall, gathering experts from politics, research, and NGOs to debate: "As long as it takes: Does the West have enough staying power in the conflict with Russia?" Keynote speaker: **Ambassador Christoph Heusgen**, Chairman of the Munich Security Conference and former Foreign Policy Advisor to Chancellor Merkel.

Prague (September 3–7, 2024)

Prague offered participants a **historical lens on leadership** with discussions on Czechoslovakia's transformation between 1939 and 1989 at Charles University. Prof. Kuklík's lecture on the **1989 Velvet Revolution** was a standout, offering an in-depth perspective on how this pivotal year reshaped the country and its position in Europe.

A memorable networking lunch provided further opportunities to exchange ideas among participants, followed by a **guided tour of 20th-century Prague landmarks**, which brought to life the historical context of Czech transformations discussed earlier in the day.

The final academic sessions explored post-1989 developments in Czech and European law, bridging academia and the private sector, a critical intersection for future leaders in this globalized age. **The visit to Terezín**, a former concentration camp, added a poignant historical dimension to the Prague experience.

Vienna (September 7–11, 2024)

In Vienna, the academic focus shifted towards **transformation and international organizations**. Key highlights included a welcome address at the University of Vienna, followed by a discussion on **Central European transformations** led by Dr. Rory Archer. An engaging briefing on disarmament and guided tour through the **UN Office in Vienna** provided participants with insights into global governance structures.

Another highlight was the visit to the **Diplomatic Academy of Vienna**, where Ambassador Emil Brix delivered a lecture and led engaging discussions on Central European foreign policy. Prof. Wolfgang Mueller offered an in-depth lecture on the war in Ukraine, further complemented by a compelling eye-witness account from Prof. Ihor Zhaloba, a historian from Kiev who fought on the frontlines. **The visit to the OSCE** offered a firsthand look at conflict prevention mechanisms, rounding out a day focused on international diplomacy.

Budapest (September 11–15, 2024)

Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Program (September 12 – 13 2024):

The program concluded in Budapest, starting with a **tour of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)** and a **panel discussion on women in leadership roles**, which sparked engaging conversations about gender dynamics in academia and beyond. Academic lectures ranged from ethical challenges in AI to intergenerational trauma, broadening participants' understanding of current global issues.

A visit to the Hungarian Parliament offered a political dimension, while the final days included workshops on the geopolitical implications of Russia's war against Ukraine, as well as a session on Changing conceptions of In-Between Europe from Jenő Szűcs to Timothy Snyder, led by András Schweitzer (PhD, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations and European Studies).

Andrassy University's Program (September 14, 2024):

The day began with a meeting point for **inspiring academic breakfast at Andrassy University's main lecture hall**, setting a collegial atmosphere for the day's events. Prof. Dr. Heinrich Kreft, Ambassador (ret.), delivered a welcome and introduction, followed by his insightful lecture on "The EU and the Geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe under the Hungarian EU-Council Presidency." This session provided a deep dive into the geopolitical landscape and the role of the EU in the region. After a coffee break, Dr. András Rácz, Senior Research Fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), led a **thought-provoking discussion on "How can Russia's War against Ukraine end? Consequences for Central and Eastern Europe?"** This session offered critical insights into the ongoing conflict and its implications for the region. The day concluded with a barbecue and farewell party, allowing participants to reflect on their experiences and strengthen their connections.

Conclusion

The Central European Leadership Program was a journey rich in historical, political, and cultural experiences. Each city offered unique opportunities for learning, networking, and personal growth, preparing the participants to take on future leadership roles with a nuanced understanding of the complexities in Central and Eastern Europe. The program successfully blended academic rigor, cultural immersion, and hands-on leadership training, leaving participants with lasting memories, invaluable knowledge, and according to the feedback provided also an opportunity for personal development.

Impact of the CENTRAL Leadership Program

1. Impact on Participants

- 28 Master's and PhD students from various European universities benefited from leadership training.
- The program strengthened regional expertise on Central Europe and developed leadership skills in political and societal contexts.
- The Interrail-funded travel allowed participants to gain first-hand insights into different European cities.
- The program combined theoretical and practical learning, offering lectures, diplomacy workshops, and networking opportunities.

2. Networking & Career Impact

- The program facilitated networking with high-ranking experts from diplomacy, politics, and academia.
- Participants engaged with institutions like the German Bundestag, OSCE, UN, and various universities.
- The program created a sustainable alumni network, with former participants continuing discussions at their home universities.
- Experts from diplomatic services, academia, and NGOs were involved, enhancing the professional relevance of the program.

3. Institutional & European Impact

- The program strengthened cooperation among major Central European universities (Humboldt University, Charles University, University of Warsaw, etc.).
- The program contributed to enhancing European unity by fostering collaboration between Western, Central, and Eastern European students.
- A focus on Ukraine's role in Europe ensured support for scholars from war-affected regions.

4. Challenges & Future Outlook

- Lessons learned from the first year will be used to improve leadership training and city programs.
- The next edition in 2025 will refine its content based on participant feedback.
- The impact of Ukrainian participation highlighted the need for continued financial support.

Overall Conclusion on Impact

- The program significantly benefited young leaders, fostering international cooperation.
- External funding was essential for making participation, especially for students from Ukraine, possible
- The program increased diplomatic, academic, and political collaboration in Central Europe.
- The creation of an active alumni network ensures long-term impact beyond the initial program.

Finances & Program Feasibility

- 75,000 Euro total budget enabled the successful implementation of the program.
- Funding from the Meyer-Struckmann-Stiftung was critical for Ukrainian participants, covering travel and accommodation costs

CENTRAL Conference



In 2024, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the network with a special conference. This event not only marked a decade of successful collaboration but also set the stage for future academic cooperation and groundbreaking research.

Imagining Central Europe: (Re-)Shaping a Geopolitical Concept in Literature, Visual Arts, and Popular Culture

The conference aimed to critically advance the discourse on Central Europe within the cultural sciences and humanities, while also incorporating contemporary media and political transformations. Inspired by Milan Kundera's poignant words—"Central Europe is not a state: it is a culture or a fate. Its borders are imaginary and must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation"—the event explored several key questions:

- How have Central Europe's destiny, cultural identity, and heritage evolved?
- In what ways is Central Europe being culturally imagined today?
- What regional differences shape Central European identity?
- How does the increasing digitalization of cultural life influence this reimagining?
- What roles do arts and culture play in recent protest movements and geopolitical transitions in countries such as Belarus and Ukraine?

The conference featured five panel sessions with speakers from various fields within Central European Cultural and Media Studies, offering both historical and contemporary perspectives on the region's arts, culture, and media.

OUTREACH INITIATIVES



During the period when the University of Vienna coordinated the CENTRAL Network, the chosen theme was "What Unites and Divides Us." This cross-cutting theme aimed to spark dynamic, cross-border discussions across the CENTRAL partner institutions. By posing a question of significant societal and political relevance, particularly in Central Europe, researchers from various disciplines and countries explored complex, multifaceted answers. These efforts extended beyond academic discourse to engage the public, reflecting the growing need for universities to participate in societal debates, known as the "Third Mission."

As part of our response to the growing demand for universities to engage with society, we conducted a series of interviews, podcasts, and organized a debate centered around the theme "What Unites and Divides Us." These initiatives aimed to foster dialogue on pressing societal issues, encourage public involvement, and broaden the impact of academic discourse beyond the university setting. Through these platforms, experts and scholars from different backgrounds shared their perspectives, contributing to a rich exchange of ideas that addressed both historical and contemporary challenges in Central Europe.

Travelling Exhibition

Vienna Circle: A Central Pillar of Intellectual Tradition

From the very beginning of our coordinating role in the CENTRAL Network, we sought to align our initiatives with the spirit of interconnectedness that defines our organization. One of our first steps was showing an exhibition on one of Vienna's most influential intellectual movements—the Vienna Circle. This group of early 20th-century philosophers and scientists profoundly shaped logical positivism and the philosophy of science, influencing thought across Central Europe and beyond.

The Vienna Circle: A Tradition of Intellectual Exchange

Comprising figures like Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, and Otto Neurath, the Vienna Circle championed empirical and logical approaches to philosophy, pioneering modern analytic thought. Their influence extended far beyond Vienna, with members carrying their ideas across Europe and the world, particularly in the face of rising fascism.

Their commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration mirrors the mission of the CENTRAL Network today—fostering academic exchange across national and institutional borders. The Vienna Circle exemplified how intellectual progress thrives on dialogue, a principle that remains at the heart of our network.

A Shared Ethos: The CENTRAL Network and the Vienna Circle

In keeping with this tradition, the Vienna Circle exhibition traveled through key CENTRAL Network locations, including Prague, Warsaw, and Berlin. This initiative not only celebrated a pivotal chapter in Central European intellectual history but also reinforced the ties between our partner universities. By engaging academics, students, and the public, the exhibition underscored our mission to promote cross-disciplinary and cross-border collaboration.

A Continuing Legacy

The Vienna Circle exhibition was more than a historical reflection—it symbolized our ongoing commitment to intellectual exchange. Just as the Vienna Circle fostered collaboration across disciplines and nations, the CENTRAL Network continues to build bridges between universities, ensuring that shared knowledge remains a cornerstone of academic progress. Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to this spirit of exchange, drawing inspiration from the past to shape the future.

Podium Discussion on Ukraine War: A Pivotal Moment in Central Europe–Russia Relations

Vienna Circle: A Central Pillar of Intellectual Tradition

From the very beginning of our coordinating role in the CENTRAL Network, we sought to align our initiatives with the spirit of interconnectedness that defines our organization. One of our first steps was showing an exhibition on one of Vienna's most influential intellectual movements—the Vienna Circle. This group of early 20th-century philosophers and scientists profoundly shaped logical positivism and the philosophy of science, influencing thought across Central Europe and beyond.

Interviews

During the University of Vienna's coordination of the CENTRAL Network, we conducted several interviews exploring historical, political, and social dynamics relevant to our region.

- **Jean-Robert Tyran** (Former Vice-Rector, University of Vienna) emphasized Vienna's coordinating role in CENTRAL, highlighting its function as a facilitator of equal participation rather than a leader.
- **Friedrich Stadler** (Co-curator, Vienna Circle Exhibition) reflected on the historical significance of the Vienna Circle and its impact on empirical research and academic discourse across Central Europe.
- **Philipp Ther** (University of Vienna) explored the unifying and divisive factors within the European Research Area, emphasizing the role of academic cooperation in mitigating political tensions in Central Europe.
- **Barbara Prainsack** (University of Vienna) analyzed the unequal social and economic impacts of COVID-19, underscoring the role of trust, fairness, and structural reforms in crisis response.
- **Ambassador Emil Brix** discussed the impact of the Ukraine war on Central Europe's relationship with Russia, emphasizing the need for deeper European integration and continued cultural and academic exchange.
- **Zsuzsa Hetényi** examined Central Europe's fragmented response to the Ukraine crisis and the need for nuanced academic engagement with Russian scholars while supporting Ukrainian studies.
- **Dominik Stegmayer** (RECET) provided insights into the economic and social transformations following the fall of the Berlin Wall, highlighting the challenges and adaptations in East Germany's transition to a market economy.
- **Jakub Rákosník** (Charles University, Prague) reflected on how Czechs remember the Velvet Revolution and its lasting impact on society, including shifts in labor relations, social structures, and political culture.
- **Jannis Panagiotidis** (University of Vienna, RECET) discussed the fall of the Berlin Wall and its continued relevance, focusing on migration, the global liberal order, and post-Soviet immigrant communities in Germany.
- **Urmila Goel** (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) shared insights from her seminar on migration and identity in European Ethnology, highlighting how students' personal experiences enrich academic discussions on belonging, integration, and discrimination.

Artificial Intelligence – Friend or Foe?

Webinar Series on the Transformation of Science and Studies

In spring 2023, the CENTRAL Network launched the webinar series Artificial Intelligence – Friend or Foe?, providing a platform for academic and administrative staff to engage with experts on the rapidly evolving role of AI. The series explored both its risks and benefits, focusing on how to integrate AI effectively within academia.

AI/Chat GPT in Teaching and Research

On April 25, 2023, the CENTRAL Network hosted a webinar featuring Dr. Bernhard Knapp (University of Applied Science Technikum Vienna). The session examined the impact of AI tools like Chat GPT on teaching and research, fostering discussion on challenges and innovative solutions in academia.

Confronting Ethical Challenges of AI in Education

On May 25, 2023, Dr. Sheikh Faisal Rashid (German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence, DFKI) led a webinar exploring the transformative potential of AI in education. The discussion addressed key ethical concerns, emphasizing the need for responsible AI integration in learning environments.

AI and the Labour Market

This session, led by Dr. Wojciech Hardy and Dr. Joanna Mazur, examined the impact of generative AI on employment and work structures. It focused on two key themes:

1. The effects of past technological advancements on global labor markets.
2. The challenges employees face with the growing integration of AI in the workplace.

CENTRAL Staff Day 2021

At the beginning of our coordinating role, we organized a one-time event for university staff: an online staff day dedicated to onboarding services for new international employees.

Science and academic research are becoming increasingly international, a trend reflected in the diverse composition of academic staff. However, international staff, particularly those from non-EU countries, often face unique challenges during the pre- and onboarding process. These challenges include navigating visa and residence requirements, as well as practical issues such as finding accommodation.

To support institutional learning within the CENTRAL network, a webinar was organized to explore models of welcome services for international employees. The event featured two case studies: Charles University Prague introduced its new Welcome Centre, designed to streamline support for international staff, while the University of Vienna shared its decentralized system of "Liaison Officers" at the faculty level, highlighting their role in personalized support.

The program included insights from key speakers, including Barbara Good, Heda Kulísková, and Anna Huemer, as well as interactive Q&A sessions and group discussions. The event served as a platform for universities to exchange best practices and enhance their support systems for international academic staff.

Annex A CENTRAL Workshops 2021-2024

Academic Year 2021/2022

STS in Context: Provincialising STS from Central Europe

STS's central area of study is the nature of knowledge production itself. While the 'fact factories' (Knorr-Cetina 2011) of natural science have been its primary focus, it also seeks to incorporate a deep reflexivity regarding its own methods, findings, and modes of representation. How is its knowledge situated (Haraway 1988)? What 'method assemblages' are used, and what worlds do these enact or render other (Law 2017)? What new ways can be found to articulate academic arguments (Downey et al 2017; Mol 2002)? In recent years this reflexivity has been honed and developed through feminist and postcolonial approaches, which have further emphasised the situatedness and non-innocence of academic knowledge and practices. Abandoning historical assumptions concerning centres and peripheries of knowledge production, and expert compared to 'local' knowledge, such scholarship has argued that, ultimately, all knowledge is localized, with deep onto-epistemic and political implications. All (STS) scholarship is shaped by the contexts in which and actors by whom it is produced.

It was this idea that was the starting point for a workshop, held in Vienna but also involving participants from institutions in Berlin and Prague. Though framing us in terms of our institutional affiliations is, of course, a simplification: we all come from different countries (within and outside Europe), disciplines, and career points, and have different kinds of relations to the institutions in which we are currently located. The aim of the workshop, titled 'STS in context: Provincialising STS from central Europe', was to build on prior work that has sought to characterise how the institutional, geopolitical and other contexts in which we work shape our academic practices, and to discuss how we can and should intervene in these. The workshop organisers (Patrick Bieler, Roos Hopman, Fredy Mora Gámez, Tereza Stöckelová, and Sarah Davies) saw the event as an opportunity to build connections and relationships between ourselves and the sites at which we are based, whilst also reflecting on how the contexts in which we work are helping to constitute both the knowledge we produce and our experiences of academia. A central goal was to get to know each other, and to see what emerged from these new associations.

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The Central European Languages Project

The project "The Central European Languages in the World Atlas of Language Structures: Supplementing WALS Data" brought together three teams from Prague, Vienna, and Berlin. Each team worked collaboratively to enhance the representation of Central European languages in the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) and Grambank datasets. The participating teams consisted of:

- Team Prague: Viktor Elšík (team leader), Jiří Januška, Vít Ulman, Jakub Jehlička, and Adam Pospíšil.
- Team Vienna: Stefan Michael Newerkla (team leader), Agnes Kim, Maria Schinko, Katharina Tyran, and Tamás Tölgyesi.
- Team Berlin: Philipp Wasserscheidt (team leader) and Aleksej Tikhonov.

The project involved two major workshops and an interim meeting, all of which facilitated discussions on methodology, data collection, and the processing of linguistic features for various Central European languages.

Workshop I (January 2022)

The first workshop, organized by Team Prague, was held online due to the pandemic. The workshop began with invited talks by Martin Haspelmath and Robert Forkel, both creators of the World Atlas of Language Structures, who presented key concepts in linguistic typology and technical aspects of data sharing via the Cross-Linguistic Data Formats (CLDF). The Prague team introduced the scope of the project, including a detailed overview of Central European languages and their current representation in WALS. This was followed by discussions about the inclusion of specific languages, including minority and dialectal varieties, and the distribution of tasks among team members.

On the second day, participants engaged in practical exercises related to searching for WALS features in grammatical descriptions. They reflected on these exercises and discussed best practices for data collection and sharing, led by a tutorial from Jiří Januška. By the end of the workshop, agreements were reached regarding the format of datasets, deadlines, and future collaboration.

Interim Meeting (March 2022)

An interim meeting was held online in March 2022 to review progress made on data coverage for WALS. This meeting served as a checkpoint, allowing teams to align their efforts ahead of the second workshop.

Workshop II (July 2022)

The second workshop, organized by Team Vienna, took place in person at the Department of Slavonic Studies in Vienna. Teams reported on their progress, presenting data processed for various languages including Burgenland Croatian, Polabian, Selice Romani, Viennese German, and Vilamovian. Methodological challenges were addressed, with a focus on how to represent linguistic features consistently across languages.

Participants also gave presentations on their research projects related to the Central European linguistic area. Topics included Agnes Kim's exploration of the Central European linguistic area and Viktor Elšík's study on the contact-induced development of vowel length in Selice Romani. Additionally, discussions on potential new languages to include in the project and options for data visualization were held, with input from invited technical experts.

The final day of the workshop focused on reviewing the overall results and planning future collaboration. Teams agreed on the next steps for data processing and division of work, ensuring continued cooperation beyond the workshops.

Post-Workshop Progress

Following the second workshop, the teams continued their efforts to process and supplement the WALS and Grambank datasets for Central European languages:

- Team Prague:
 - Viktor Elšík completed the WALS (186 features), Grambank (195 features), and URATYP (160 features) datasets for Selice Romani.
 - Vít Ulman processed 138 features of the WALS dataset for Vilamovian/Wymysiöeryś and 92 features for Czech.
- Team Vienna:
 - Processed 127 features of the WALS dataset for Viennese German.
 - Processed 122 features of the WALS dataset for Burgenland Croatian.
- Team Berlin:
 - Philipp Wasserscheidt processed 103 features of the WALS dataset for Polabian and 61 features for Serbian-Croatian.

Conclusion

The Central European Languages project has made significant progress in expanding the representation of this linguistic region in WALS and Grambank. Through collaborative workshops, practical exercises, and ongoing teamwork, the participating researchers have contributed valuable data on the linguistic features of Central European languages, helping to diversify and localize knowledge in the field of typological linguistics. Further cooperation is planned to continue this work, ensuring a more comprehensive representation of these languages in future updates to WALS.

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Forgotten Virtue Ethics: Aristotle's Protrepticus and Aristo-telic Magna Moralia

Contemporary moral philosophy had been divided into two approaches: one deontological and the other utilitarian. The most representative deontological approach was inspired by Kant's ethics, centered around the categorical imperative, which was viewed as the quintessential expression of a rationally deduced moral duty. On the other side, the utilitarian approach took the form of consequentialism in its various versions, all of which framed moral duties as the outcome of rational calculations aimed at achieving the most beneficial effects.

In this philosophical context, during the second half of the last century, philosophers began to renew a fundamentally Aristotelian approach to ethics, sketching out a new way of understanding moral commitments based on his moral treatises. This new approach became known as virtue ethics. Virtue ethics viewed moral duties as deeply rooted in our ways of life, giving the approach a more historical sense, while also offering new ways to interpret ethical norms in contemporary society.

These workshops focused on understudied roots of virtue ethics, particularly two important and problematic texts: Aristotle's lost dialogue Protrepticus, which survived in fragments within the works of later authors, and the Magna Moralia, an Aristotelian treatise of uncertain origin. These texts were studied to better understand the development and variations of virtue ethics in antiquity, as well as to gain insight into moral norms based on a normative understanding of human nature, virtues, and the good life.

The workshops continued the tradition of regional meetings of scholars associated with the South-East European Association for Ancient Philosophy (SEAAP). They provided an opportunity for doctoral and advanced graduate students to present their work and engage with leading experts in the field of ancient philosophy and ethics.

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Socialist Dis-Connections

In recent years, historians turned to global socialism to explore the complex and dynamic nature of the global Cold War and trace an alternative genealogy of the global world. As the socialist world was largely immune to regime changes, political tribulations, and postcolonial reconfigurations, this workshop explored new avenues for research on the role of the seemingly peripheral countries of Eastern and Southern Europe and their interconnections with decolonizing states and the globalizing world. Moving beyond the usual focus on the confrontation between two geopolitical and ideological empires, the contributions to the workshop discussed the meanings of socialist internationalism, the role of cultural, educational, and economic exchange, migration between countries as diverse as Czechoslovakia and Cuba, Poland and Vietnam, and China and Yugoslavia, and the repercussions of international developments within countries such as Hungary. This workshop took place on 27-28 June 2022 at the University of Vienna.

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Mapping the Scenes: Digital Humanities in Cultural Studies in Central and Central Eastern Europe

The project aimed to map the digital research landscape in Cultural Studies and Cultural Heritage Studies across various countries in Central and Central Eastern Europe. This task was long overdue in a fragmented field that spans multiple countries and disciplines. Scholars with expertise in Digital Humanities (DH), along with students at various stages of their training, examined the current status of DH in their respective countries, focusing on internationally relevant projects and sharing recent best practices in computational methods.

By fostering dialogue and collaboration between students, doctoral candidates, and experienced researchers, the project encouraged the development of new research and teaching projects with a transnational and transdisciplinary scope. It also aimed to advance the application of computational methods in Cultural Studies and Cultural Heritage Studies. One key aspect was reflecting on how computer technology and digitalisation had challenged traditional scholarship in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS). The project addressed issues such as accessibility, research ethics, and the increasing availability of data, while acknowledging the risks that the abundance and fragmentation of digital information could pose.

A critical goal of the project was to investigate how emerging digital methods were influencing traditional analogue scholarship. This exploration was vital for coordinating cross-disciplinary research agendas that sought to understand the broader history of digitalisation in Central Europe. The project also aimed to bring these research results into tertiary education, benefiting both staff and students by integrating digital practices into academic culture.

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Memory Policy in Theoretical and Practical Dimensions 2022

The event organized by dr. Ildikó Barna (ELTE) in cooperation with dr. Katherina Tyran (Uni Wien), doc. Kateřina Králova (CUNI), and dr. Marija Vulesica (HU) will give the opportunity to present research to both senior and junior academics, incl. PhD students. The workshop is dedicated to the still conflicting potential collective memory has in many countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This is due to the fact that different participants of mass violence de facto consciously or unconsciously form different memories that depend on their roles in conflicts (heroes, victims, bystanders, and criminals). The immediate participants of those events over time transfer the memories of the experiences, thus forming a communicative memory. Although it is subjective, communicative memory plays a significant role in forming memories of certain events. It happens so because of the peculiarities of its functioning (first of all, in the family environment and among those who had the same experience during national or ethno-confessional conflicts). Opposite memories are in conflict, which determines the relevance and urgency of reconciliation. It is an important step when addressing the consequences of mass violence.

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Towards a Central European Doctoral School: Workshop Summary

The workshop was based on presentations of ongoing Ph.D. research projects and explored topics related to the comparative and transnational history of Europe and the history of transformations. It had three main aims: (1) to raise the quality of Ph.D. programs in modern history by fostering the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and skills among Ph.D. students and senior researchers in the field; (2) to strengthen cooperation between three Central European universities—Charles University in Prague, the University of Vienna, and the University of Warsaw; and (3) to hold a kick-off meeting for the future establishment of a Central European doctoral school in modern history.

The two-day workshop took place in Prague and was attended by three senior researchers and nine Ph.D. students from each partner university. The event was organized by Associate Professor Ota Konrád (Charles University in Prague), Professor Philipp Ther (University of Vienna), and Professor Jerzy Kochanowski (University of Warsaw).

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Tradition and Innovation in Ancient Egypt

On June 16 and 17 2022, the Czech Institute of Egyptology organized a two-day international workshop dedicated to aspects of tradition and innovation in ancient Egypt. The workshop specifically focused on the confrontation between (local) customs and novel concepts that functioned as a catalyst for important social and religious developments, leading to various processes of modification and transformation within society. Particular attention was paid to different methods and strategies employed by individuals and/or communities when confronted with changes, and its subsequent reflection in the material culture of ancient Egypt (in architecture text and image).

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CENTRAL Workshops 2022/2023

3rd Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy (October 2022)

The Third Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy, hosted by the University of Vienna, continued a series of earlier conferences that had taken place at ELTE and CEU in Budapest (2017) and at Charles University in Prague (2019). The main aim of the conference was to bring together outstanding doctoral students based in the Central European region.

In response to their presentations, the students received feedback from excellent, well-established scholars who worked in their fields of research at one of the five CENTRAL partner universities. Each presentation and response was followed by an open discussion about the issues and questions raised. Not only did this connect scholars in the field of Ancient Philosophy throughout Central European academic institutions, but it also positioned them in an international area of research and current philosophical debates.

The conference format was explicitly interdisciplinary, which meant that submissions of abstracts from different scholarly perspectives were highly welcomed, including Classics, History of Philosophy, Byzantine Studies, and Paleography. The highlight of this international event was the keynote lectures and workshops given by two of the most notable scholars in Central Europe, Dr. Laura M. Castelli (LMU Munich) and Prof. Dr. Riccardo Chiaradonna (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre).

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Functional Translatology in Regional Contexts II (9-11 November 2022)

Focus on Literary Translation

Translating texts into other languages and/or Hungarian had long been an integral part of the Hungarian studies curriculum at all of CENTRAL's partner universities. These courses primarily helped students acquire language skills, but they also offered valuable insights into translation studies. From experience, it was clear that students showed great interest in translation courses, with many undertaking personal translation projects and applying the skills they had gained in their professional careers. However, within the framework of individual curricula, a comprehensive, cross-language, translation-scientific approach had only been marginally possible.

To address this gap, the workshop aimed to offer an expanded range of courses while raising participants' awareness of key issues in language typology, functional linguistics, and cultural studies. Preparations for the functional-linguistic aspects of the research project had been ongoing since the summer of 2019. The Comparative Functional Linguistics project had been developed with the participation of all CENTRAL partner institutes and other researchers, with its results forming part of the foundation for this workshop.

In November 2021, a three-day workshop titled "Functional Translatology in Regional Contexts" took place in Berlin, involving institutes dedicated to Hungarian studies from all partner universities. The scientific and didactic goals of that workshop were to establish the connection between functional linguistics and translation theories and to design teaching materials suitable for use in language and translation classes across the partner institutions. While the event and subsequent Zoom sessions successfully created the basic structure and presentation principles for these materials, the content itself had only been processed to a limited extent.

As a result, the coordinators decided to organize a second workshop in November 2022 to continue refining the content, make necessary conceptual adjustments, and begin editorial work on the teaching materials.

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Notion and Construction of Victimhood in Central East and Southeast Europe (Feb 2023)

As part of the CENTRAL project, in which the workshop organizers had been involved since 2016, they hosted an onsite academic workshop in the humanities and social sciences titled “Notion and Construction of Victimhood in Central East and Southeast Europe,” held at the University of Vienna from 8–11 February 2023.

The event, organized by Dr. Jelena Dureinovic (Uni Wien) in cooperation with Doc. Kateřina Králová (CUNI), Doc. Ildikó Barna (ELTE), Dr. Tomasz Rawski (Uni Warsaw), and Prof. Christian Voss (HU), provided the opportunity to present research by both senior and junior scholars, including Ph.D. students. The workshop was dedicated to the persistent conflict potential stemming from the notion of victimhood nurtured in national hegemonic narratives in many countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This occurred because different actors involved in discourses regarding the events of a troubled past created various memories depending on the roles (heroes, victims, survivors, bystanders, and criminals) they were ascribed or ascribed to themselves, both consciously and unconsciously. Over time, such memories were transmitted intergenerationally, creating the core of communicative memory.

Although communicative memory is subjective, it plays an important role in memory structures, reinforced in family settings and in communities that shared the same experience of national or ethno-confessional conflicts. While competing memories could have a negative impact and escalate conflicts, they could also channel public debate and urge reconciliation—an important step in addressing the consequences of atrocities and injustice.

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Commodities, Trade, and Materiality in the Global Cold War (April 2023)

How can the history of the Cold War and its aftermath be told through the goods and technologies that were traded at the time? This workshop brought global, social and economic historians into conversation with sociologists to ask what material objects could reveal about historical transformations, such as the ones that took place in Central and Eastern Europe around 1989. It mapped how commodity flows, as well as the people involved in the production and trade of these items, came to shape and be shaped by changing legal regimes, competing development models, and shifting transnational alliances. Moreover, it interrogated how such exchanges live on in the technologies and ideas that circulate today.

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Towards a Central European Doctoral School in Modern History (April 2023)

Following the success of the first trilateral graduate student workshop held in Prague in March 2022, the organizers decided to deepen their collaboration by publishing a call for papers (CfP) and slightly increasing the number of participants for the April 2023 workshop. This initiative responded to the growing demand for scientific cooperation among Ph.D. students in the humanities and social sciences across Central and Eastern Europe.

The program was modeled on the U.S. format, where short presentations were based on pre-distributed papers from individual Ph.D. projects, all adapted to a central theme. This structure allowed for ample time for discussion, encouraging deeper engagement and providing an opportunity for participants to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals such as *EEPS* (US), *Zeitgeschichte* (Austria), *Střed* (Prague), and *Przegląd Historyczny* (Warsaw). The workshop explored comparative and transnational approaches, with a particular focus on the post-1918, post-1945, and post-1989 transformations, employing a Polanyian perspective that extended the analysis beyond Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to global contexts.

The workshop had three primary aims:

- **Raising the Quality of Ph.D. Programs:** It sought to enhance the quality of Ph.D. programs in modern history and adjacent social sciences by fostering the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and skills among Ph.D. students and senior researchers.
- **Fostering Cooperation Between Central European Universities:** The workshop strengthened ties between Charles University in Prague, the University of Vienna, and the University of Warsaw, promoting deeper academic collaboration.
- **Preparing for a European Doctoral School in Modern History:** The event continued the discussions around the creation of a European doctoral school in modern history, paving the way for future developments in this area.

The two-day workshop took place in Vienna and was attended by four senior researchers and 12 Ph.D. students from the partner universities. The event was organized by Prof. Philipp Ther and Prof. Claudia Kraft (University of Vienna), Prof. Ota Konrád (Charles University), and Prof. Jerzy Kochanowski (University of Warsaw).

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Queer Readings: Queer Theory in Transit and Literary Studies (May 2023)

Queer theory had a profound impact on the study of gender and sexuality since the 1990s, focusing on deconstructing the binary gender system and challenging heteronormativity. It critiqued identity politics and identitarian logics, positioning "queer" as a critical force to disrupt normative structures while foregrounding those elements excluded by these frameworks. Over the span of more than three decades, queer theory itself underwent numerous transformations, boundary-crossings, and redefinitions.

One significant development was the rethinking of queer theory through the lens of intersectionality. Queer theory also left a noticeable imprint on literary studies, evident in the wide array of analyses that applied queer theoretical frameworks to texts. These diverse approaches, often termed "queer readings," were largely inspired by the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who delivered both incisive text readings and innovative reflections on the epistemological possibilities of such analyses.

In this project, the participants' various disciplinary backgrounds, as well as their national and local contexts, entered the discussions as key forces challenging the nearly exclusive reliance on U.S.-based sources in queer studies. This led to critical reflections on how queer theory engages with local contexts in different parts of the world.

The workshops included a range of activities, from longer presentations and short papers introducing seminal texts to brief discussion inputs for roundtable debates. A key focus was on integrating junior researchers, ensuring that both senior and junior scholars participated. PhD and MA students were selected based on the relevance of their dissertation projects to the workshop theme. These students either presented portions of their own work, introduced theoretical texts, or prepared short discussion statements.

The Queer Readings: Queer Theory in Transit and Literary Studies workshop served to conclude a collection of essays that grew out of previous workshops on similar themes.

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Thinking the Border with Fink and Nishida (June 2023)

The workshop "Thinking the Border with Fink and Nishida", held in June 2023, aimed to explore the multifaceted concept of the border, moving beyond its conventional association with territorial barriers and fences. Rather than focusing solely on notions of closure and exclusion, the workshop approached the border as a dynamic phenomenon that defines through differentiation—both separating and connecting the inner and outer. As a locus of encounter with the Other, the border was examined as a site for investigating possibilities of individual and collective self-realization.

The inquiry into the concept of the border provided a framework to address broader questions related to identity, non-identity, and social, political, and pedagogical coexistence, as well as ecological considerations. The border, as both a practical and theoretical construct, played a key role in discussions on intersubjectivity, interculturality, and interdisciplinarity.

The workshop emphasized the significance of the border in 20th-century philosophical thought in both Europe and East Asia. It highlighted how the German philosopher Eugen Fink redefined the border, moving it from a horizontal field within which humans live to a more encompassing and transcendent concept that shapes our living environment. Fink's ideas laid new foundations for social philosophy and pedagogy. Meanwhile, the Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida, founder of the Kyoto School, redefined the relationship between the individual and the general, illustrating how the two constantly interpenetrate in human experience.

Through comparative analysis, the workshop confronted these independent conceptions of the border developed in East and West, exploring their relevance to contemporary pedagogical, social, and environmental issues.

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Wittgenstein and Hegel on the Foundations of Logic: Workshop Summary (September 2023)

Hegel believed that the purpose of philosophy was to comprehend its own era in thoughts. While Wittgenstein played a central role in 20th-century analytic philosophy, Hegel's philosophy encapsulated the essential discourses of the 19th century, evolving into the continental tradition by the 20th century. After this convergence, various philosophical movements began distancing themselves from Hegel's standpoint, leading to the development of the analytic-continental divide in 20th-century philosophy.

This outdated conflict, which had presumed an inherent opposition between Hegel and Wittgenstein, gradually gave way to a more nuanced progression and differentiation of authors, schools, and philosophical traditions. These movements guided themselves through subtle shifts in meaning and varying intellectual interests. However, the so-called 'split' between Hegel and Wittgenstein remained anachronistic and problematic. As such, many scholars argued that Hegel and Wittgenstein needed to be reconciled. Due to a lack of communication between these two hermetically developed spheres of thought, this philosophical division persisted into 21st-century scholarship. The schism largely stemmed from institutional loyalty to philosophical schools, yet there was growing interest in mutual impact and understanding between the two traditions.

The workshop aimed to foster a dialogue between researchers of Hegel and Wittgenstein and to bridge the gap between these philosophical traditions. It promoted research at the intersection of analytic philosophy and German Idealism, encouraging collaboration between scholars working across these fields.

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CENTRAL Workshops 2023/2024

Does Europe Understand Ukraine?

Integration of Ukrainian Culture in the EU (November 2023)

The interdisciplinary and intergenerational workshop addressed challenges facing the cultural integration of Ukrainians in the European Union following the 2022 Russian invasion. It brought together experts from various research centers to discuss topics related to cultural, linguistic, and legal integration, as well as the promotion of Ukrainian culture in Europe.

The first thematic block addressed the challenges of Ukraine's integration with the European Union, featuring presentations on legal communication and public perceptions of displaced Ukrainians. The second block focused on questions related to the Ukrainian language and its usage. The third block examined the role of institutions in the integration of Ukrainian citizens in EU countries, emphasizing the roles of universities, religious communities, and political communication. The fourth and final block concentrated on the popularization of Ukrainian culture in Europe.

The ultimate goal was to identify the most important topics and plan joint research to develop concrete solutions for the integration of Ukrainian culture into the European Union.

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Functional Translatology in Regional Contexts III-IV (November 2023 & March 2024)

Audio-visual translation, or the translation of media products, became one of the main channels of intercultural communication in recent years. Students used media products, movies, series, and online videos to gain a more in-depth understanding of other cultures and languages.

While students' interests tended to be more diverse, content from English-speaking countries dominated the scene. The translation of films from less widely used European languages into other (non-English) European languages was an important part of interaction between cultures and languages, but it received comparatively little attention.

Students of languages were always open to working with audio-visual products, and it was believed that by focusing on the translation of parts of a very successful Hungarian film, the participants' awareness of relevant language-typological, functional-linguistic, and cultural issues could be further raised.

In the preparatory phase, participants became acquainted with the movie as well as its cultural context and linguistic characteristics (dialects, slang, etc.). They also translated a few preselected extracts of the film from Hungarian into their languages, which highlighted the difficulties of and possible solutions for conveying a message that was both accurate and understandable for speakers of these cultures and languages. During the workshop, the groups discussed the translation processes as well as their proposed solutions, making use of the typology of translation operations established during previous workshops.

The most important added value of the workshop was that it enabled participants to explore ways of linguistic adaptation of a film (i.e., a culture-specific product by nature) into five different cultures and languages. Moreover, it provided an opportunity to analyze the types of issues and questions that arose during the translation process into different languages and to pinpoint specific structural differences between the analyzed languages.

The product of the two workshops was subtitles for the entire film in each language, as well as a publishable reader with a structured list of transfer operations and examples from each of the five analyzed languages.

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Tradition and Innovation II

Traditional Customs and Creative Redefinitions in Ancient Egypt (December 2023) Prague

The workshop, held at Charles University, Prague, in December 2023, aimed to bring together established researchers and Ph.D. and M.A. students focusing on different aspects of the development of ancient Egyptian society.

While ancient Egypt might have appeared as petrified as the many monuments that still dotted the Nilotic landscape and testified to the once illustrious past of the land along the banks of the Nile, it was anything but static and unchanging. Internal and external influences and stimuli, such as social movements, immigration, international trade, (civil) war, natural disasters, and technical advancements, incessantly resulted in processes of modification and transformation. These developments were continuously reflected upon and expressed in tangible ways through material culture, including architecture, texts, and imagery. Thus, one observed both the consolidation of ancient customs and the creative redefinition of traditional practices to remain relevant against the backdrop of major political, social, and economic changes inside and outside of Egypt.

In addition to individual presentations of specific case studies related to aspects of tradition and innovation, the workshop particularly focused on group discussions regarding the various methods and strategies employed by individuals and communities when confronted with changes in society and its reflection in the material culture of ancient Egypt.

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Collaborating for Excellence on Sports Data Analytics and Technology (December 2023 Prague, November 2024 Vienna)

The goal of this workshop was to provide junior researchers with an introduction to the use of data analytics in sports research, serving as an opportunity to participate in the expansion of the area. The workshop covered a range of topics, including data collection, cleaning, and analysis, as well as statistical modeling and visualization techniques. Gaining knowledge and wisdom from data was challenging and needed to be fostered to effectively develop the necessary skills of students and early-career researchers in sports technology and analytics. Thus, the workshop consisted of a mix of lectures, hands-on exercises, and group discussions. Participants had the opportunity to work with real-world sports datasets and were guided through the process of cleaning and analyzing the data using a variety of software tools.

The workshop was designed for junior researchers, including graduate students and early-career professionals, who were interested in using data analytics and technology to advance their research in the field of sports performance. It brought together researchers from Charles University, the University of Vienna, and Eötvös Loránd University, providing opportunities for collaboration and networking.

The workshop included strategies for promoting sustainability, including establishing clear goals and expectations, fostering open communication, leveraging existing networks and resources, promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building, and developing a long-term plan for the collaboration. Thus, “Collaborating for Excellence on Sports Data Analytics and Technology” was designed to better integrate and promote junior researchers and PhD students with opportunities to interact with and learn from senior researchers, helping them enhance the skills and connections they needed to succeed in their careers in sports science and technology.

Sports technology and analytics had recently become a whole field of research, market, and occupation. The need for information on the diagnostic performance of sports teams had overcome the barriers of team-club association walls, becoming a fundamental part of training optimization and an interest for general media, data analytics start-ups, higher-level sports management companies, and technology developers.

The workshop included strategies for promoting sustainability, including establishing clear goals and expectations, fostering open communication, leveraging existing networks and resources, promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building, and developing a long-term plan for the collaboration. Thus, “Sports Analytics 101: Sports Performance Analysis for Junior Researchers” was designed to better integrate and promote junior researchers and PhD students with opportunities to interact with and learn from senior researchers, helping them enhance the skills and connections they needed to succeed in their careers in sports science and technology.

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Women in Analytic Philosophy: Past and Present (February 12-13, 2024)

Women were present in all centers of early analytic philosophy, yet their contributions were often overlooked and underexplored by historians of philosophy. This situation affected the way analytic philosophy was perceived.

Susan Stebbing served as the editor of the journal “Analysis” and authored excellent logic textbooks. In Vienna, Rose Rand and Olga Hahn-Neurath regularly participated in the meetings of Schlick’s circle. The Lvov-Warsaw School became famous for its large percentage of female members and for promoting gender equality. Although the contributions of these thinkers to early analytic philosophy had been partially established, there was still much to do in order to analyze their output and the roles they played in their environments.

The aim of the workshop was to present the results of previous work on the achievements of women in early analytic philosophy and to discuss the forms of cooperation on documenting and popularizing these achievements.

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Transformation of Memory Cultures and Politics (March 2024)

Within the CENTRAL project, in which the partners participated since 2016 with annual workshops, an onsite academic workshop in the humanities and social sciences, entitled “Transformation of Memory Cultures and Politics,” took place at the Humboldt University Berlin in March 2024. The event was organized by Prof. Christian Voss (HU) in cooperation with Doc. Kateřina Králová (CUNI Prague), Dr. Jelena Dureinovic (Uni Wien), Doc. Ildikó Barna (ELTE Budapest), and Dr. Tomasz Rawski (Uni Warsaw). It provided an opportunity to present research from both senior and junior scholars, including Ph.D. students as the core group.

This workshop followed previous CENTRAL workshops that focused on discourses and narratives of victimhood concurrence, public memory, and the institutionalization of memory. It centered on the perspective of memory in the context of dynamic and diverse transformations of societies in Central and Southeast Europe. The workshop involved discussions on the specificities of memory politics and cultures in post-conflict, post-socialist, and transitional contexts in these regions. Additionally, it aimed to situate the case studies within the broader transcultural frameworks of European memory culture and beyond. One of the core interests lay in the interface of cultural and communicative memories in these societies, where "memories of wars" continued to contest pluralistic views of the past. The workshop also focused on sociopolitical and economic transformation processes and how they affected memory cultures, as well as the role that memory politics played in them. It brought together contributions discussing the conceptual approaches and challenges of studying memory in Central and Southeastern Europe, including the exploration of concrete sites of memory, mnemonic agents, and commemorative practices.

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4th Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy (June 2024)

The 4th Central European Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy, hosted by Humboldt University Berlin, continued a series of earlier conferences that had taken place at ELTE and CEU in Budapest (2017), at Charles University Prague (2019), and at the University of Vienna (2022). While continuing the tradition, the organizers also aimed to broaden the scope of the conference by including not only ancient Greco-Roman philosophy but also its Arabic reception.

The main aim of the conference was to bring together outstanding doctoral students and early-career researchers based in the Central European region. The conference provided them with the opportunity to present their innovative projects in front of a distinguished audience. In response to their presentations, the speakers received feedback from well-established scholars who worked in related fields of research at one of the five CENTRAL partner universities. Each presentation and response was followed by an open discussion about the issues and questions raised.

This format connected scholars in the field of Ancient Philosophy throughout Central European academic institutions and positioned them in an international area of research and current philosophical debates. The conference format was explicitly interdisciplinary, welcoming submissions from disciplines such as Philosophy, Classics, Arabic Studies, and the History of Science.

In addition, two keynote speakers presented and discussed their current research: Prof. Mary Krizan (Bilkent University, Ankara) and Dr. Vojtěch Hladký (Charles University, Prague).

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CENTRAL Workshops 2024/2025 (conducted until the end of 2024)

"Translating the Nation". Social Contexts of Translation in the 20th and 21st centuries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe (October 2024)

In this workshop, scholars from Modern Greek Studies, a field constructed around Greek—a language with a long cultural tradition and at the same time one of the “small” languages of Europe—approached the issue of language and culture contact through their experiences of research and teaching in the context of the multilingualisms of Central European universities. We were specialists in migration history, translation theory and practice, and media.

The workshops focused on contemporary bilateral cultural relations and discussed national book markets and their importance for bilateral translation politics, the interaction between Greek communist political refugees in Eastern Europe after the Greek Civil War (1946–49) and literary and translation structures in former communist countries, and the relationship between translated literature and the acceptance of new genres in national canons.

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Mobility of People, Goods, and Ideas (December 2024)

Humans have always been in constant motion, and so were things and ideas. These two trilateral workshops in Vienna and Prague brought together junior and senior scholars working on human movement and migration as well as on the circulation of goods and ideas to explore the development of new transnational perspectives on the history of Central and Eastern Europe in its global context. They linked up and deepened existing collaborations between the partners on topics of connections and movement in the socialist world and on trade during the Cold War, integrating them with new formats of doctoral education at the University of Vienna.

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Mosaics of Details: From Little Pieces to the Big Picture within an Interdisciplinary Framework (December 2024)

On 2–5 December 2024, the workshop “Mosaics of Details: From Little Pieces to the Big Picture within an Interdisciplinary Framework” took place at the University of Vienna and at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Representatives of all CENTRAL partner institutions and the Austrian Academy of Sciences as a guest institution, Frank Kammerzell (Humboldt University Berlin), Tamás A. Bács (Eötvös Loránd University Budapest), Hana Vymazalová (Charles University Prague), Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz (University of Warsaw), and Roman Gundacker (University of Vienna and Austrian Academy of Sciences), organised this event which brought together students with early postdocs and experienced researchers to engage in an intense methodological discourse. All workshop participants presented papers focusing on their methodologies with the aid of which they conduct their research and how they develop and adapt their tool kit. At the same time, all participants presented the data or material which they investigate, how they apply their methodologies, and what new (preliminary) results they have gained so far.

On the evening of 2 December, E. Christiana Köhler delivered a keynote lecture on her latest discoveries at the royal cemetery of Abydos in Egypt. Through an impressive array of data from material culture, written records, and archaeological sciences, she presented a new assessment of Queen Meretneit, one of the first women to participate in ruling ancient Egypt (early 3rd mill. BCE). Thus, a coherent big picture grew out of a plethora of details to the result of an increasing understanding of processes of state formation, royal governance, societal consolidation, and of the status of women in the highest echelons of Egyptian society. This provided an excellent starting point for the further workshop.

The next three days were devoted to presentations of PhD students and some MA students, which were supplemented with presentations of some early postdocs and experienced researchers. They covered a wide and diverse range of topics which touched upon many different methodologies from archaeology to archaeometry, from history of arts to pictorial sciences, from (text) philology to linguistics, from mythology to religious studies, from cultural studies to social sciences, and from anthropology to the natural sciences. Among this broad spectrum, three thematic foci deserve special mention: First, texts and the media which bear them have been analysed in order to reveal the fundamentals of text composition, text pragmatics, and communication; the latter has received special attention within the framework of multimodality.

Second, material remains, written and pictorial sources have been evaluated in combination with zoology, palaeoclimatology, and ancient geography in order to determine the natural setting of ancient Egyptians and their perception of and reaction to their natural surroundings. Third, pictorial representations and objects have been discussed from various angles in order to detect the different layers of meaning they convey, and how this impacts their form, setup, and contextual embedding. Assembling details and piecing them together with the aid of a multitude of methodologies to form the big picture as expressed in the workshop title proved thus a fitting overarching and unifying motto.

This workshop was designed specially to allow plenty of time to engage in discussions and to foster the interaction of students with peers and with experienced researchers. Discussions covered additional aspects of data collection and sources evaluation, the combination of methodologies and the introduction of new approaches, but also the contextualisation and interpretation of data and interim results within different frameworks and theoretical models. All presentations have been assessed and discussed in great detail, and feedback was certainly to the benefit of all participants.

At the same time, this workshop demonstrated the necessity and the potential of future collaborations between the CENTRAL partner institutions and beyond. All participants agree that regular thematic workshops such as this one form the proper basis for more interaction between students and experienced researches and that a broad exchange of methodologies and special knowledge will stimulate scholarship and research. In particular, students profit from discussions with and feedback from peers and experienced researchers other than their supervisors. Further opportunities for joint research have been sounded and research ideas have been discussed in order to develop them into jointly submitted project applications. This may open new perspectives for the MA and PhD students of today who will shape tomorrow's Egyptology with new ways of searching, new ways of analysing, and new ways of thinking in order to get one step closer to what was at the core of ancient Egyptian culture.

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Current Issues of Ukrainian Studies in light of Multilingualism and European Diversity. Specificities of Central Europe (December 2024)

The workshop "Current Issues of Ukrainian Studies in the Light of Multilingualism and European Diversity. Particularities of Central Europe" was planned as an interdisciplinary workshop. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, Ukrainian scholars in Central Europe had been faced with many challenges. Scholars and teachers in Central Europe were confronted with a number of new problems, the understanding and solution of which required a deep understanding of the culture, history, traditions, and mentality of the Ukrainians.

The workshop was divided into four thematic blocks. The first block addressed questions related to the Ukrainian minority and the problems of propaganda impact on the image of Ukraine and its cultural integration into the European Union. The second block focused on questions of Ukrainian history, religion, and the media image of Ukraine in Central Europe. The third block dealt with questions related to the Ukrainian language and education. The fourth block addressed the popularisation of Ukrainian literature and culture in Europe.

One of the tasks was to engage young scholars and launch joint research programmes to address current issues in Ukrainian studies. The main goal was to exchange experiences and find ways to solve the problems of Ukraine's cultural integration into the EU.

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