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Call for Papers

Workshop:

The Afghan/Iranian Diaspora in Eastern Europe: What We Know and What We Don't Know

Where: Freiburg, Germany – Pädagogische Hochschule/ University of Education Freiburg

When: 11 July 2026

Since the mid-2010s, migration from Afghanistan and Iran to Central and Northern Europe has attracted significant public attention and generated a growing body of scholarly literature. Yet the history and contemporary situation of Afghan and Iranian diaspora communities in Eastern European countries remain largely understudied.

Eastern Europe plays a crucial role as a transit region within the broader geography of Afghan migration to Europe but has generally remained peripheral to the formation of long-term diaspora communities. Countries such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states host comparatively small, settled Afghan populations when compared with countries such as Germany, Austria, Sweden, the United Kingdom, or the Netherlands. Migrants from Afghanistan and Iran often pass through these Eastern European countries on their way to Western or Northern Europe but rarely settle there permanently.

This workshop seeks to examine both the historical and contemporary dimensions of Afghan and Iranian diasporas in Eastern Europe from the end of the Second World War to the present. Particular attention will be given to migration trajectories, settlement patterns, and institutional frameworks during the era of the Socialist Bloc, as well as to developments following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the profound political transformations that followed.

By bringing together scholars working on migration, diaspora studies, and the modern history of Afghanistan, Iran, and Eastern Europe, the workshop aims to advance our understanding of these understudied migration contexts and to foster a scholarly network dedicated to the topic.

Possible themes include (but are not limited to):

- Migration from Afghanistan and Iran to Eastern Europe
- Afghan and Iranian students, workers, and political refugees in Socialist states
- Afghan and Iranian communities in Eastern Europe before and after 1991
- Afghan and Iranian communities in Eastern Europe: connections and overlaps
- Migration regimes and border policies in Eastern Europe
- Transit migration and mobility routes
- Diaspora networks, religion, political and cultural institutions
- Comparative perspectives on diaspora formation in Eastern and Western Europe





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Submission Guidelines

We welcome applications in **English** or **Persian**.

Please send the following documents in **PDF format**:

- A **short CV** (max. 1 page)
- The **title** of your presentation
- An **abstract** (max. 500 words)

Presentations should not exceed **15 minutes**.

Please submit your application by email to: **loy@orient.cas.cz**

Application deadline: 26 April 2026

Notification of acceptance: 4 May 2026

Practical Information

The organizing committee is unable to provide **visa support**, but an **official invitation letter** can be issued upon request. Unfortunately, **travel costs cannot be covered**. The organizers will attempt to provide **one night of accommodation in Freiburg** for accepted speakers.

This workshop is part of the two-day conference *Afghanistan: Shared Struggle, Shared Future – the Need for Global Solidarity*, July 10–11 2026, Pädagogische Hochschule/University of Education Freiburg.



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