COST Action 23137

Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe (1500–1800) | PCPS CE

Call for Papers

International Conference
AGENTS OF CENSORSHIP AND THE CIRCULATION OF PRINTED MATERIAL IN CENTRAL EUROPE (1500–1800)

Important Dates

Deadline for applications: **15 November 2025**
Decision: **25 November 2025**
Dates of the Conference: **19–20 May 2026**

General information

We invite proposals for papers for a conference to be held on 19th–20th May 2026 at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski". This conference is organized by Working Group 3, Public-Legal Spheres, of the COST Action CA23137, Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe (1500–1800).

Conference Overview

In an age where state-led censorship, book banning, and press freedom are more than present in the public debates, a new look into censorship during the early modern period is more urgent than ever. For a long time, early modern censorship was seen as a rigid and repressive phenomenon, with laws being uniformly applied to cases. Recent studies have, however, shown important shifts not only from one territory to another, but also that measures of censorship could be heavily dependent on the people involved. This perspective allows us to look at the agency of authors and censors in the process.

To understand these complex and varied negotiations, it is crucial to investigate Central Europe, a region defined by changing borders and part of different empires. Apart from the political changes, the mere linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity of the region has hitherto made it challenging to study censorship as a general phenomenon. With this conference, we aim to integrate Central Europe into the scholarly debates on censorship in early modern Europe.

The conference seeks to move beyond viewing censorship merely as a repressive institution, since it was also a kind of challenge for the censored persons themselves. Instead, the conference will try to explore the diverse mechanisms, actors, motivations, and consequences of censorship practices across Central Europe, together with their indirect influence on society.

In line with our COST Action objectives, we especially welcome contributions that include a cross-border, multilingual, and/or different religious or institutional practices. The papers can touch one or more of the following axes and focus on a range of various genres of early modern printing (to give just a few examples: printed images,

catechisms, theatre plays, music, pamphlets, primers, newspapers, etc.):

1) **Agents of censorship**: secular and/or religious censors, authors, readers, printers, publishers, as well as other individuals involved in print production and institutions.
2) **Censorship practices**: individuals and their trajectories, implementation of censorship, different levels of censorship, ways to bypass censorship, etc.
3) **Evolution of censors and censorship** in diachronic and synchronic perspectives

The speakers are invited to include a broader reflection on censorship in their case studies.

Proposals (title and abstracts of max. 300 words) as well as a short biography (max. 150 words) should be sent to the organisers (baramova@uni-sofia.bg and dagenais@uni-trier.de) before **15 November 2025.** An answer will be provided before November 25.

We will publish a selection of the papers presented at the international conference in a peer-reviewed journal.

We particularly welcome papers from young researchers, as defined by the COST Association, specifically those under the age of forty. The transportation and hosting costs of the COST Action members will be covered.

Organising committee

- Maria Baramova (Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")
- Simon Dagenais (History Department, University of Trier)
- Nina Lamal (Humanities Cluster, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)
- Claire Madl (French Research Center in Humanities and Social Sciences (CEFRES), Prague)
- Doris Gruber (Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences)
- Mona Garloff (Department of History, University of Innsbruck)
- Marion Romberg (Department of History, University of Bonn)

For more information on the COST Action PCPS^{CE}, visit our website https://pcps-ce.eu/.

Acknowledgement

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