

## Dokumentation

Die EU-Wissenschaftsbürokratie lehnte die im Rahmen des Programms Horizon 2020 „Europe in a changing world“ – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies beantragte Förderung des nachstehend dokumentierten Forschungsvorhabens über Flucht und Migration im geteilten Europa ab. Der Antrag war als Kooperationsprojekt mehrere wissenschaftlicher Einrichtungen aus Ost- und Westeuropa eingereicht worden.

### **Migration in the age of divided Europe – Crossing guarded borders**

#### *Participating Institutions:*

Research Network „SED-State“ (Forschungsverbund SED-Staat, Free University of Berlin).  
Dr. Jochen Staadt (Project Coordinator), Prof. Dr. Stefan Appelius, Dipl. Pol. Enrico Seewald

Center für Digitale Systeme (CeDiS, Free University of Berlin).

Prof. Dr. Nicolas Apostolopoulos, Alexandra Taplick

Austrian Academy of Science, Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research.  
Dr. Maximilian Graf

Albanian Armed Forces Academy, Tirana.

Major Dr. Marenglen Kasmi M.A., Head of the Military History Section

Faculty of History, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

PD Dr. Romyana Marinova-Christidi, Associate Professor

Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia.

Dr Georgios Christidis

Institute for Contemporary History of Serbia, Belgrade.

Dr. Petar Dragišić

Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, Research Department ÁBTL, Budapest.

Dr. Krisztina Slachta

The planned co-operative research project shall investigate flight and migration flows from communistic governed Eastern European states into neighboring Western European countries. The refugees and migrants were primarily motivated by a categorical rejection of the political and/or economic conditions under communist governance. This has to be understood as a form of fundamental opposition. Flight and migration flows from communistic governed states in Europe has to be conducted in line with the following research guiding questions:

- Compilation of qualitative and quantitative analysis data relevant to the refugee- and emigration movement out of the communistic Eastern European states until the collapse of their communist dictatorships in 1989/90.
- Political and social realities in the former homelands causing migration flows and/or refuge seeking
- Social origin and motives of the refugees
- Repression measures by the communist regimes against their inhabitants suspected to contemplate leaving the country

- Country specific border laws, supplementing orders/instructions for border troops, border rules/regulations, border securing duties by police and military units
- Numbers of fatalities in attempted border crossings, by gender (male, female, children), exemplary samples of individual cases biographically
- Numbers of injured persons in such attempts, and account of all detained persons - including their treatment in their imprisonment by the authorities (border police, secret service, and judicial, court officials)
- Managing of admission, accommodation and integration for refugees from communist countries in Western Europe
- Activities of emigrants and political refugees in support of oppositional movements in their home countries
- Public reactions, campaigns and activities in support of political persecutes and refugees by western European organizations and networks
- Efforts in the diplomatic field and measures taken by institutions of EU-states to help political prisoners and persecuted opposition members in communist Europe

Note: Flight and Expulsion – which occurred in the context of World War II – considered as consequential results of the war in Europe – are not part of the planned research-project.

Following the establishment of communist regimes in the Eastern parts of Europe which – after the end of World War II – came under Soviet influence, millions of people left their home countries in order to start a new life in the West. Refugees even were prepared to risk their life in illegal border crossings – not only seeking political freedom, self-determination, but also to improve social and/or economic opportunities.

Profound research results are already available in context with the mass refugee flows out of the DDR (GDR) between 1949/50 until 1989/90. Almost 4 million East Germans defected from the GDR into the Federal Republic of Germany. In the month of January 1953 (official estimate by the West Berlin Senate) approx. 225.000 GDR refugees arrived in West Berlin – without official permission by East German authorities. On 23. February 1953 alone - more than 3.000 refugees arrived within 24 hours in West Berlin. The western Allies had to instantly increase their contingency of air transport seats for evacuations to 950 seats per day, to reduce the overfilling in the limited camp facilities in the western part of the city.

As well available are research results about refugee flows from or through Czechoslovakia. In previous years researchers from the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes worked e.g. on the project concerning illegal emigration Czechoslovakia from in the period of communist oppression between 1948 and 1989. The project called “Documentation of people who died on state borders 1948–1989” focused on trespassers of state borders who were murdered by border guards in order to prevent their escape from Czechoslovakia and on those killed on borders while entering the Czechoslovak territory by mistake. The project was significant in revealing life stories of the victims of Czechoslovak communist regime who were murdered on their way to freedom.

It is well known, that many opponents of the communist regime in Hungary escaped to Austria, West Germany and other western European countries after the oppression of 1956 peoples uprising. The western and southern borders of Hungary, the borders to Austria and to Yugoslavia were completely closed in 1949. Till this time people living

in the border area could freely move and have family life and/or economic contacts to villages in the neighboring countries. In 1949 the Iron Curtain as a real border regime was established, all connections to western countries were disrupted and traveling to other socialist countries became also almost impossible. After 1954 Hungary to deconstruct the fence on the borderline and disarm the mines across the border line to Austria. So almost 200.000 people could leave Hungary after the Soviet Union oppressed the revolution in November and December of 1956. In 1957 the border between Hungary and Austria border was mined again and strict border crossing regulations were implemented. After lot of accidents caused by mines in the border area, the minefield was disarmed again in the year 1965 and the so called electric defense system (SZ 100 EJR) was established. This was kept till May 1989. The accidents and activities on the western border of Hungary were documented by the Austrian-Hungarian Committee for Investigation of Border Incidences after 1955. The precise number of Hungarian people and of citizens of other socialist countries, e.g. the GDR, who manage to flee and of those who were arrested or killed by illegal border crossing from Hungary is still unknown.

A small part of the Hungarian emigrants of 1956 were intellectuals, writers, historians, philosophes, etc., who immediately started to organize the cultural and literary life of the emigration after leaving Hungary. Their centers were London, Paris, Rome, Vienna and in connection with the editorial office of Radio Free Europe, in Munich. The emigrants published journals (e.g. *Új Látóhatár*) and books, organized the translation of statements and opinions that could not be spread in Hungary. A network between emigration groups in Europe and in Overseas was established as well as the exchange of opinions with intellectuals and writers in Hungary. The publications of the Emigrants reached the Hungarian intellectuals and university students through broadcasting and smuggling and spreading samizdat papers. Any kind of organizations of the emigrants and contact between them and their relatives and acquaintances who stayed behind were consistently under control by the Hungarian state security and intelligence services. Heads and organizations were also under control, usually through non-official members of the informant network who tried to infiltrate the organisations.

‘Average’ emigrants were allowed to travel to Hungary by the second half of the 1960s, but visiting their relatives living in Hungary presented a serious threat just because they „endangered socialist lifestyle” through their western influence. Their presence also gained the attention of the Hungarian state security. A special group was the German speaking minority in Hungary, the Swabians, both the displaced and those who could stand in Hungary, as they were continuously perceived as a threat by the Hungarian state security.

The intelligence service considered as the “most dangerous group of tourists” the increasing number of former Hungarian citizens, e.g. members of the expelled German speaking minority and political emigrants visiting their relatives. These people entered the country already as foreign citizens. “The Westerners” claimed a special visa issued for family visits after the early 1960s when the country was re-opened to tourism, because they spoke the language and had knowledge of the local conditions.

The boundaries of the ‘Peoples Republic’ of Bulgaria with neighboring countries Greece and Turkey (both NATO countries as of Feb. 1952), as well as the “bloc-free” Republic of Yugoslavia, were utilized “illegally” by inhabitants of Bulgaria and other member states of the former East bloc countries, to seek refuge in the “West”, ever since the fall of the old, monarchist regime (09. Sep. 1944). This type of migration thus existed already before the “Iron curtain descended across Europe” (quote of fmr. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 05.09.1946) and therefore the southern border of Bulgaria

with Greece and Turkey (both considered hostile neighbors) were hermitically sealed. In the period of 1944/45 to 1961 – seen as a first phase of the “Cold War” evolution – it were primarily Bulgarians of Turkish descent who attempted to flee through the “green frontier” into Turkey. This ethnic minority had been methodically discriminated against since the Bulgarian independence from the Ottoman Empire (1878). It is still unknown how many refugees died during this early phase of the new border regime, no attempt to scientifically research it has yet been conducted. Supposedly – by contemporary reports – the fatality numbers had been considerable.

In 1992, officials of the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior claimed, that during the full course of the “Iron Curtain Divide” in central and southeast Europe, only some 330 Individuals of varying nationality died at all Bulgarian “exterior” borders altogether. Amongst them, Bulgarian and also Nationals of other East-bloc countries, notably Poles, Russians as well as East Germans (GDR).

However, initial screening of biographies (incl. names) of individual East Germans who chose Bulgaria as a “transit gateway” to the West German safe havens, indicate that the “official data” released so far, can only represent a first orientation about the full amount of all border fatalities from 1944/45 through to 1992. The wide variance suggests, additional research (specifically too in respect of Bulgarian Nationals) is required. Preceding research into Bulgarian migration flows (legal and/or illegal) peripheral information also shed light on “poverty – refugees”, who seems to have predominantly originated in Middle Eastern countries. Clearly some of these suffered fatalities too, attempting to enter Bulgaria illegally. No detailed data about this segment of migration – often involving human trafficking – has yet emerged.

The ‘Peoples Republic of Bulgaria’ – economically (particular in technological aspects) considered as an “underdeveloped” member of the Eastern-bloc countries (formed in 1955 as the “Warsaw Pact States”), succeeding the earlier “Council of Economic Co-operation”(Comecon), founded in 1949, still excluded any official (and tightly controlled) military defense “support” by the Soviet Union. Many potential migrants, at least throughout other bloc member states, viewed Bulgaria as a “simpler” or “less dangerous” territory, and “too poor” to afford costly controls stemming “illegal” migration flows.

On top it was well known to be geographically sparsely populated, and the mountain ranges along the southern frontiers with Greece and Turkey, hard to control. Overlooked, in this context, was the early introduction of enforced “co-ordination” of state secret security networks (under tight soviet “guidance”) in all bloc member countries incl. the national border “protection” regimes. Clearly East Germany(GDR) and its “Stasi” – after erecting “The Wall” in August 1961 – had been eager to support (financially and technologically) all fellow member states incl. Bulgaria, that developed into new, alternative “loopholes” after sealing off West Berlin.

The Bulgarian minister of the interior and the “Stasi” even created special operation teams who set up multi-national Informer networks and covert operation groups functioning as “early warning systems”. These highly qualified and experienced man-hunters were able to gradually reduce the numbers of successful flights of individuals (without support of professional aid organizations) noticeably towards the end of the 1960’s. Also modernized (as of the end of 1960’s) were monitoring methods of arriving tourists introduced also in all East-bloc countries. This bloc wide synchronized effort successfully reduced the use of falsified Passports, and overall illegal migration attempts. Whilst the news about these changes slowly spread, Bulgaria by no means changed its

attractiveness as a “gateway” option well into the 1980’s (specifically for the younger potential) of illegal migrants.

Migration from neighboring Romania in the north of Bulgaria practically sharing the Danube River as a natural border (from its most western corner to the most eastern corner) in its full length, and thus was a dual challenge or opportunity for the migrants, and the authorities. For Russians, Ukrainians and Moldavians Romania was a transit territory into Bulgaria, or Yugoslavia; and utilized as such for a long time not just by individuals but also by ‘Flight - Aid – Organizations’ ... how many refugees drowned in the Danube or were shot on the river banks – are not yet accounted for. Particular dangerous was the “neutral” gateway of Yugoslavia often sought for, because of a bi-lateral agreement with Bulgaria (most probable kept secret) that refugees identified and detained in Yugoslavia would be returned to Bulgaria. This agreement according to recent information was adhered to by both States until the early 1980’s. Refugees were in consequence only safe after reaching Austria or Italy.

The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (IICCMRE) has already set a focus of its researches on the Romanian exile. The activity in this field focuses on archival research, oral history and a comprehensive analysis of the Romanian exile that is materialized in publications, conferences, exhibitions and other scientific events that aim to raise awareness about the history of this phenomenon. The Institute is in the process of creating a public collection of historical documents that will include books, collections of magazines, newspapers, manifests, photographs and video recordings, as well as other sources related to the Romanian exile. Furthermore, the Institute analyses the transformation of the exile communities into diaspora and the inherent consequences of this process.

In Albania, which had broken with the soviet controlled “communist block” in 1968, the repression measurements however continued – and in 1970 the still communistic regime set to go a “special independent way of socialism “. This in fact soon only worsened the longstanding weak and already precarious economic situation. The terror by the “old” regime against its own population relentlessly increased still, and thus the attempts to leave the country by illegal border crossing also increased. Sadly this also led to ever more detentions and fatality victims at the tightly watched borders. “Enhanced security measures” along the borders with Yugoslavia and Greece now included with high voltage, electrical fencing - in its total length. Killed refugees were not buried in regular grave, nor their relatives ever informed about the deaths and what happened with the remains. Until today no study (lest a scientifically supported one) about these tragic events, has ever been conducted in Albania so far.

The Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) is legally tasked with “promoting science in every way.” Founded as a learned society in 1847, it presently has over 770 members and about 1,300 employees dedicated to innovative basic research, the interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge and knowledge conveyance – with the goal to promote scientific as well as overall social progress. The ÖAW is Austria’s largest non-university research platform, it operates 29 institutes. The Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (INZ/ÖAW) is home to many of Austria’s leading and internationally recognized experts of Cold War Studies. Its International History Department carries out major projects on Austria’s role in the Cold War as well as the International history of the Cold War (for details, see <http://www.oeaw.ac.at/inz/forschungen-projekte/internationale-geschichte/internationale-beziehungen-im-20-jahrhundert-europa-im-kalten-krieg/>). Located in Vienna the researchers of the INZ have direct access to all relevant Austrian archives (i. e. Austrian

State Archive, Foundation Bruno Kreisky Archive, Archive of the Austrian Foreign Ministry). Of course their research is always multi-archival and international. Over the past few years several international projects on Austria's "Ostpolitik" in the Cold War, transnational relations of European communist parties 1945-1989, the revolutions of 1989, Europe and German reunification 1989/90 and the "Alps Adriatic-Region 1945-1955" have been carried out. Most of those projects are funded by grants of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

One of the INZ's major focusses of research is dedicated to the relations of Austria to the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe 1945-1989. The junior and senior scientists of the INZ have recently published monographs, collective volumes and a high number of peer reviewed articles on Austria's relations to Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland, and the Soviet Union. Austria's relations to Communist Eastern Europe have to be analyzed within the context of the Soviet policy concept of "peaceful coexistence" and the developments of "European Détente." Even though – at least for most of the period after 1955 – Austria managed to maintain good relations to the Socialist bloc, crises of détente and intra-bloc crises had undeniable repercussions on Vienna's "Ostpolitik." Many of those crises were in direct connection to flows of refugees (during the Sovietization of Eastern Europe, the crackdown on the Hungarian Revolution 1956, the crackdown on the "Prague Spring", the polish crisis of 1980/81, and the mass exodus of East Germans in 1989). Located directly at the "Iron Curtain" neutral Austria (not only facing those major refugees-crises) became a major destination for East Europeans willing to escape the communist regimes. A high number of incidents at the Austrian-Yugoslavian border until the early 1950s, at the Austrian-Hungarian border until the second half of the 1960s and at the Austrian-Czechoslovakian border until the 1980s are prove of that. Especially East Germans for centuries tried to flee to the West via Austria's Eastern border. Additionally Austria served as the (legal) emigration port for hundred thousand Jews from the Soviet Union and to a lesser degree from Poland and other Socialist countries. The same holds true for a number of dissidents from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia especially in the 1970s.

Research about migration flows in the divided Europe up to now has been limited to some individual countries in specific aspects of study. A comprehensive European research about these aspects of the European History has not yet been envisaged. The planned co-operative project presented herewith – we trust will underline the gap lingering. A comprehensive study of the complete intra-European History of migration in the 2nd half of the 20th century, also covering aspects like forced relocation, resettlements, expulsions, would also offer worthwhile understandings for the current, acute discussions about migration flow and integration into Europe.