

Political Ecology and the New Political Environments in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

A Collective Search for Strategies

This one-day workshop will bring together politically engaged researchers in environmental studies and politics (political ecology, sustainability studies, climate (impact) sciences etc.) who aim at societal impact and work in/on countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia affected by the Russian war and further recent political ruptures. It aims at sharing and developing resources and strategies to continue and adapt our work under challenging new political circumstances.

We see a particular need for this kind of exchange concerning societies and ecologies most directly affected by Russia's war, namely in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, and other contexts witnessing "spillover" effects of these events, such as Kazakhstan. We are aware of these countries' fundamentally different roles in the current war and the histories foregoing it and recognize that coming to one table on ecological issues will not be for everyone. Yet, we believe that related developments across these countries provide an urge, and possibly a chance, for jointly advancing strategies. We explicitly welcome participants with close ties and affiliations with these countries.

Our main aims for this initial exchange are practical, strategic and political: Which are currently the most important issues to address in political ecology in the region? How have current circumstances shaped possibilities for such engagement? How can we adapt research and activist strategies? How have transnational collaborations been affected and how can we rebuild and strengthen them under current conditions? Which networks, funding schemes or technological tools can provide important resources? How can we extend societal and political impact? Do we want to extend this workshop into more permanent forms of collaboration?

FORMAT

Workshop

DATE

1 Sept 2022

VENUE

University of Bern/
online

ORGANIZERS

Alexander Vorbrugg
Angelina Davydova
Mariia Fatulaeva

DEADLINE

31 July 2022

WHO

Persons working along the activism-research continuum with an explicit focus on "the region". Advanced students thinking about conducting PhD research are welcome as well as tenured faculty, formal affiliation with research institutions is not necessary. Familiarity with (political) ecology in Eastern European/Central Asian contexts is required.

WHEN/WHERE

Thursday 1 September, 8.30 AM - 5.30 PM CEST. [Institute of Geography](#), University of Bern, Switzerland. Virtual attendance will be facilitated for certain parts of the workshop.

AIM

The workshop is aimed at developing strategies to move forward, in individual and potentially collective projects, given current (political) challenges. We will discuss options for extending our collaboration beyond the workshop e.g. through a mailing list or an informal or formalized network.

FORMAT

Hybrid parts open for online participation as well as more interactive parts that require on-site participation. Participation in both formats requires registration. The workshop organisers will collect topics beforehand (see next point) and ask participants to prepare brief inputs on specific issues. Sufficient time will be dedicated to moderated collective discussion.

On 2 September there will be a public event on questions of transnational collaboration and support in the work of NGOs and other civil society actors aimed at informing the broader public and establishing links with organisations in Switzerland. We'll circulate information on this event later, but you can let us know beforehand if you're interested to participate in this event, too.

HOW

Please indicate your interest by sending 1) a brief bio-note, 2) a short statement about which topics and concerns you would like to discuss, 3) a note on whether you want to participate online or in person, 4) a note on whether your participation requires financial or logistical support (max. 1 page total). Should you be unable to participate at the given date but generally interested in this kind of exchange, please let us know. Please send your indication of interest in one single file to mariia.fatulaeva@giub.unibe.ch and alexander.vorbrugg@giub.unibe.ch until **31 July 2022**. Alexander and Mariia will also respond to questions.

COSTS

Workshop attendance is free. Limited funds to cover travel costs are available for participants with difficulties to cover the costs through their home institutions. Please let us know.

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