

## Final Symposium

# Research and Higher Education in Central Asia and the Caucasus

**10 – 12 June 2024**

Symposium Programme

This version: 08 June 2024

### Venue

Herrenhausen Palace  
Herrenhäuser Straße 5  
30419 Hannover, Germany

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/QLd7Y3vRxTSgB3819>

**Aim**

The final symposium of the funding programme “Between Europe and the Orient – A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus” aims to take stock of 25 years of the Volkswagen Foundation’s commitment to the support of scientific research and capacity development in the countries of the region. In order to pave the way for further research, education and collaboration in the future, the event gathers researchers at various career stages, project administrators, funders, and other stakeholders to discuss the achievements of the funding programme, raise current issues of collaboration between Germany, Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC), and provide perspectives for future engagement in and on the region.

**Coordinator of the symposium programme**

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## Monday 10 June 2024

From 11.30	<b>Arrival and registration</b>
12.30	<b>Lunch</b> Seminar Rooms 5 & 6
14.00 – 14.30	<p><b>Opening words</b> Auditorium</p> <p>Welcome addresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Georg Schütte, Secretary General of Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover</li> <li>• Prof. Dr. Martin Petrick, Institute of Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Symposium Coordinator</li> </ul>
14.30 – 15.15	<p><b>Keynote 1:</b> “Leveraging Academia for Sustainability Transformations”</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Thomas Breu, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, Switzerland</p> <p>Chair: Prof. Dr. Andreas Vasilache, Bielefeld University</p>
15.15 – 16.00	<p><b>Keynote 2:</b> “Making an academic career in Central Asia: a young researcher’s perspective”</p> <p>Dr. Aijan Sharshenova, Crossroads Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and University of Warwick, United Kingdom</p>
16.00 – 16.30	<b>Coffee break</b> Foyer
16.30 – 18.00	<p><b>Panel: Volkswagen Foundation looking back at the CAC programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Kerstin Klenke, Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna</li> <li>• Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria</li> <li>• Prof. Dr. Hermann Kreutzmann, Department of Geography, Freie Universität Berlin</li> <li>• Dr. Vitya Vardanyan, Institute of Molecular Biology, Armenian National Academy of Sciences, Yerevan</li> <li>• Dr. Matthias Nöllenburg, Program Director CAC at Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Dr. Georg Schütte, Secretary General of Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover</p>
18.30	<b>Dinner</b> Seminar Rooms 5 & 6

## Tuesday 11 June 2024

Project presentations in three thematic tracks

- A. **Natural sciences and engineering:** Auditorium
- B. **Social sciences and humanities:** Seminar Room 3
- C. **International research collaboration and capacity building:** Seminar Room 4

9.00 – 10.30	<p><b>A1 Chair: Armen Nersessian</b></p> <p>Regional Doctoral Training Program in Theoretical and Experimental Particle Physics Ulf-G. Meißner, University of Bonn and Forschungszentrum Jülich, Germany; Akaki Rusetsky, University of Bonn</p> <p>Reintegration of Armenian-Georgian physics communities and VW Regional projects Armen Nersessian, Yerevan Physics Institute, Armenia; Mirian Tabidze, Tbilisi State University, Georgia</p> <p><b>B1 Chair: Thomas Will</b></p> <p>Building stones in the Armenian architectural heritage of Armenia Emma Harutyunyan, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia</p> <p>Blue Domes, Mahallas and Soviet Modernism Thomas Will; Durdona Kulmatova; Jens Jordan, Technical University of Dresden, Germany</p> <p><b>C1 Chair: Vitya Vardanyan</b></p> <p>An international structured program on ‘Democracy, Human Rights, and Religion’ – A cooperation between Ilia State University (Tbilisi) and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster” (2019-2024) Thomas Gutmann, Michael Quante, University of Münster, Germany</p> <p>Advancing research and higher education in Armenia with VW Foundation: a decade of achievements and challenges Vitya Vardanyan, Institute of Molecular Biology, Armenian National Academy of Sciences; Jürgen R. Schwarz, Matthias Kneussel, University of Hamburg, Germany</p>
10.30 – 11.00	<b>Coffee break</b> Foyer

11.00 – 12.30	<p><b>A2 Chair Nils Hein</b></p> <p>Environmental research on Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan Georgiy Kirillin, Hans-Peter Grossart, Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB), Germany; Salmor Alymkulov, Kyrgyz State Technical University; Kubanychbek Zhumaliev, International Medical University, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>The Caucasus Leibniz Biodiversity Center (LBiC) Nils Hein, Ilia State University, Georgia; Bernhard Misof, University of Bonn, Germany; David Tarkhnishvili, Nino Doborjginidze, Ilia State University, Georgia</p> <p><b>B2 Chair Bidzina Lebanidze</b></p> <p>Post-Electoral Protests and Regime Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Beyond Agency and Structure Serik Beimenbetov, German Kazakh University, Almaty, Kazakhstan; Steve Schlegel, TU Dortmund University, Germany</p> <p>Impact of internal security services on democratic transformation and governance in Armenia and Georgia Shalva Dzebisashvili, University of Georgia</p> <p>EU in the South Caucasus after the "Zeitenwende": Balancing Conflicting Objectives of Resilience-Building and Enlargement Bidzina Lebanidze, University of Jena, Germany</p> <p><b>C2 Chair: Hendrik Meurs</b></p> <p>Position paper Central Asia by the German research, intermediary and funding organizations Ludwig Stroink, GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences; Christian Schaich, Center for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Germany</p> <p>Caucasus and Central Asia funding opportunities offered by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) Florian Frank, BMBF, Germany; Hendrik Meurs, DLR Projektträger project management agency, Germany</p>
12.30 – 14.00	<b>Lunch Seminar Rooms 5 &amp; 6</b>

14.00 – 15.30	<p><b>A3 Chair: David Tarkhnishvili</b></p> <p>Developing tools for conserving the plant diversity of the South Caucasus (15 min) Thomas Borsch, Nadja Korotkova, Eckhard von Raab-Straube, Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany</p> <p>Diversity of lichens and fungi in Armenia (15 min) Arsen Gasparyan, Institute of Botany, Armenian National Academy of Sciences</p> <p>DNA based evidence to support the conservation of flowering plants in Azerbaijan (15 min) Rashad Salimov, Sumgayit State University, Azerbaijan</p> <p>Species diversity of Georgian and Caucasian plants: implications of an integrative taxonomic approach (15 min) Konstantine Kereselidze, Ilia State University, Georgia</p> <p>University science and progress in biodiversity and ecological studies in Georgia (30 min) David Tarkhnishvili, Ilia State University, Georgia</p> <p><b>B3 Chair: Nodir Djanibekov</b></p> <p>15 years of interdisciplinary research on the ecology and socioeconomics of land use and climate change in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia funded by the Volkswagen Foundation Markus Hauck, Choimaa Dulamsuren, University of Freiburg, Germany</p> <p>The structured doctoral programme on Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia (SUSADICA): findings and lessons learned Nodir Djanibekov, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), Germany; Nozilakhon Mukhamedova, University of Giessen, Germany; Abdulkhakim Salokhiddinov, Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers – National Research University, Uzbekistan; Martin Petrick, University of Giessen, Germany</p> <p><b>C3 Chair: Armen Sedrakian</b></p> <p>Studying Institutional Change and Social Practice: Lessons learned from an international postdoctoral research and professionalization programme Nora Becker, Technical University of Dortmund, Germany; Marie-Sophie Borchelt Camêlo, Aziz Elmuradov, Bielefeld University, Germany</p> <p>The funding of astrophysics research and environment in Armenia through Volkswagen Foundation Armen Sedrakian, Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies, Germany; Arus Harutyunyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia</p> <p>Results of the external evaluation of the Volkswagen Foundation's Central Asia &amp; Caucasus program Matthias Nöllenburg, Volkswagen Foundation, Germany</p>
15.30 – 16.00	<b>Coffee break</b> Foyer

16.00 – 17.30	<p><b>A4 Chair: Arus Harutyunyan</b></p> <p>Identifying functional pollinator biodiversity and threats to its decline in Georgia George Japoshvili, Agricultural University of Georgia</p> <p>The way to a Smart-Digital-Development-Lab AUG – an extremely stony road Zaza Metreveli, Agricultural University of Georgia; Stefan van Waasen, Forschungszentrum Jülich, Germany</p> <p>Bulk viscosity and damping of density oscillations in neutron-star mergers Mark Alford; Arus Harutyunyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia; Armen Sedrakian, Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies, Germany</p> <p><b>B4 Chair: Aliia Maralbaeva</b></p> <p>The Functionality of International Criminal Justice - Modern Dilemmas and Juridical Standpoints Giorgi Dgebuadze, Tbilisi State University, Georgia</p> <p>Current problems of digitalization of higher legal education in the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhshillo Khodjayev, Samir Latipov, Tashkent State University of Law, Uzbekistan</p> <p>Impact of E-Justice on the Efficiency of Judicial Proceedings: the case of Kyrgyzstan Aliia Maralbaeva, Ala-Too International University, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><b>C4 Chair: Ihtiyor Bobojonov</b></p> <p>The Ph.D. in Eurasian Studies Program at Nazarbayev University Uli Schamiloglu, Funda Guven, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan</p> <p>Structured Education – Quality Assurance – Freedom to Think: The International Doctoral School (IDS) of Ilia State University Vakhtang Pataridze, Ilia State University, Georgia</p> <p>The German-Uzbek Chair on Central Asian Agricultural Economics (GUCAE) Ihtiyor Bobojonov, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), Germany</p>
17.30 – 18.00	<b>Break</b>
18.00 – 19.00	<p><b>Musical conclusion of second day</b> Auditorium Vivid Voices, Jazz Choir of Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media</p>
19.30	<b>Dinner</b> Seminar Rooms 5 & 6

## Wednesday 12 June 2024

9.00 – 9.45	<p><b>Keynote 3:</b> “How can academic partners enable international collaboration across cultures at eye level?”</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Ingeborg Baldauf, Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin</p> <p>Chair: Dr. Susanne Fehlings, Frobenius Institute, Frankfurt</p>
9.45 – 10.30	<p><b>Keynote 4:</b> “Crossing Boundaries: The Practitioner's View on Individual and Institutional Potentials of International Doctoral Education”</p> <p>Dr. Aleksandra Bovt, University of Göttingen &amp; Vakhtang Pataridze, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia</p>
10.30 – 11.00	<b>Coffee break</b>
11.00 – 12.30	<p><b>Panel discussion: The future of academic collaboration with Caucasus / Central Asia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Dr. Christopher Conrad, Institute of Geosciences and Geography, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg</li> <li>• Dr. Kirsten Kienzler, Department (non EU) Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, Central Asia, DLR Projektträger project management agency, Bonn</li> <li>• Dr. Nozilakhon Mukhamedova, Structured Doctoral Programme on Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia, Justus Liebig University Giessen</li> <li>• Prof. Dr. Giga Zedania, Centre for Advanced Studies, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia</li> <li>• Dr. Henrike Hartmann, Deputy Secretary General of Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Prof. Dr. Martin Petrick, Justus Liebig University Giessen</p>
12.30 – 12.45	<b>Final words</b>
12.45 – 14.00	<b>Lunch</b> Seminar Rooms 5 & 6
14.00	<p><b>End of symposium</b></p> <p>Guided tours of Hannover Old Town Centre or Royal Gardens of Herrenhausen (upon prior registration)</p>