

[CFP: Europe and the East: Self and Other in the History of the European Idea, Norwich, June 2017](#)

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Europe and the East: Self and Other in the History of the European Idea

**University of East Anglia, Norwich
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Throughout the centuries, Europe has constantly defined and imagined itself in opposition to or in conjunction with the East. From Montesquieu and Boulanger's Oriental despotism to Marx's Asiatic mode of production and twentieth-century fears of Soviet aggression, intellectuals, writers, and politicians have conceived of Europe as the place of liberty and progress in opposition to 'its' East. Edward Said (with a stronger focus on the Arab world), Maria Todorova (concentrating on the Balkans), and Larry Wolff, to name some of the most important scholars in the field, have investigated such othering processes and demonstrated their importance for notions of (Western) European superiority and dominance. As highlighted by Norman Davies with reference to Eastern Europe, such ideological creations and clichéd attitudes continued into the twentieth century, when during the Cold War Europe was once more identified with the free and ostensibly more advanced western half of the Continent.

To some extent, such notions have persisted beyond the fall of the Iron Curtain. Indeed, despite the Eastern enlargement of the European Union and increased exchange and interdependency, there still seems to be a lack of mutual understanding, preventing a true (re-)integration of Europe after decades of politico-ideological and socio-economic division. Even more recent histories of European thought and identity almost completely ignore Eastern European contributions and perspectives of intellectuals such as Comenius, Mickiewicz, Kossuth, Danilevsky, Masaryk, or Konrád. Moreover, in spite of the growing influence of Asian nations and the recent 'Easternisation' (Gideon Rachman) of international politics and trade, such an exclusively Western- or Euro-centric reading also still predominates our understanding of global history, and has only recently been challenged again by Peter Frankopan.

It is the aim of this international and interdisciplinary conference, organised by the Research Network on the History of the Idea of Europe (University of East Anglia), to bring the 'East' back in, i.e. to shed light on its role and significance, as a geopolitical and geo-cultural notion, in defining discourses and images of Europe from the seventeenth century onwards.

Topics might include - but are by no means limited to:

- The eastern boundaries of Europe
- Eastern Europe - the east within?
- Europe in danger - the great Asian threat
- European freedom vs. Oriental despotism?

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- European dynamism and the east as the 'place' of stillness
- Europeanizing Russia and the Slav world
- Europe's birth and re-birth: The Orient
- Reversing the gaze: Europe from the East

If you would like to present a paper (ca. 20 minutes), **please send an abstract (max. 300 words and in English) with a title and a short biography by 15 January 2017 to Dr Matthew D'Auria (m.dauria@uea.ac.uk) or to Dr Jan Vermeiren (j.vermeiren@uea.ac.uk)**. Please note that the working language will be English. There will be no fees for participating. Limited funding is available, although preference will be given to non-tenured scholars.