

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Rescue Memory - Activism, Arts and Public Remembrance – ReActMem
Participant:	Institute of Slavic Studies Polish Academy of Sciences (IS PAN)
PIC number:	999561818

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP 41
Event name:	International Seminar on Memory & Human Rights Activism II
Type:	seminar
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Poland, Świnoroje
Date(s):	27 February - 2 March 2025
Website(s) (if any):	https://reactmem.difficultheritage.eu/en/blog/event/international-seminar-on-memory-human-rights-activism-ii/ https://reactmem.difficultheritage.eu/blog/event/miedzynarodowe-seminarium-na-temat-pamieci-i-aktywizmu-na-rzecz-praw-czlowieka-ii/
Participants (some people declared more than one country)	
Female:	25
Male:	13
Non-binary:	-
From country 1 [Poland]:	16
From country 2 [Italy]:	7
From country 3 [Germany]:	5
From country 4 [Croatia]:	2
From country 5 [Slovenia]:	1
From countries 6 [Belgium]:	1
From country 7 [Bulgaria]:	1

From country 8 [Czechia]:	1		
From country 9 [Latvia]:	1		
From country 10 [Lithuania]:	1		
From country 11 [the Netherlands]:	1		
Total number of participants:	38	From total number of EU countries:	11
Participants from other countries (Switzerland, United Kingdom, Australia, Iran, Mexico, Serbia)	9		

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

An event “RESEARCHING, ARCHIVING, MEMORY-MAKING. METHODOLOGIES AND ETHICS OF RESEARCH (AND ACTIVISM) ON THE BORDER” was a 4 day seminar held on-situ with the accessibility for an on-line audience. It was organised in Podlasie region in the Polish-Belarusian borderland. The participants were scholars, civic society and unaffiliated activists, and PhD students. The aim was to discuss researching, archiving and memory making practices in the present with a closer look at the recent developments on the Poland-Belarus border. The seminar brought together researchers from 17 different countries who presented their respective empirical work and who responded to the invitation to join us in advancing critical dialogue on migration, border violence, social struggles and social justice. Speakers were selected based on abstracts submitted in response to an open call circulated through academic and activist networks.

The rapidly changing borderscape, not only in the European East, means the dire need for critical reflection on and re-evaluation not only of border research methodologies but also of hierarchies of knowledge and knowledge production, positionalities, knowledge sharing, and empowerment of researchers coming from within the regions. We were discussing our research practices and extractivism in research, and strategies towards recognition and validation of different ways of knowing. This postcolonial critique of research conducted outside of one’s own context or with groups with a background distinct from the one of a researcher is often associated with the Global South, but Europe’s East is not a stranger to these practices, what we particularly observe currently, when the new sites of border crises emerge.

The ongoing EU border crisis, full-scale war in Ukraine, natural disasters in border regions, etc. are shaping not only borderscapes but also ways of conceptualising, documenting, and acting. In this spirit, we were discussing the following topics: What are the new research methods to approach the processes of border production, externalisation and internalisation of the border, border violence, border struggles, and solidarities? How to address reflexivity and positionality and ethical dilemmas in the research context regarding the power dynamics between those involved in the research? How has control over knowledge production, particularly in semi-peripheries? What are the roles and dilemmas of the engaged researcher in social transformations and alterations of power relations? How to practice collaborative research and include people on the move, and other actors of crises, while having their safety as the priority? What kind of methods, strategies, and policies of archiving do we use? Why, who, and how documents in the context of the border crises? What to preserve? How and what kind of data to collect? What kind of memory-making practices and processes (collective, cultural, and individual) are present on borderscapes? Who, how, and why memorise what? What are commemorative practices in the case of border deaths, and how various communities grieve and heal from the losses?

The seminar contained 22 presentations as well as additional events (only for onsite participants): an ethnographic walk in the border area, discussion ‘Solidarity Infrastructure: Emergency Lines’, textile workshop ‘Strengths of Threads’, and guided walk in the Białowieża Forest. Apart from the discussion in the venue, the participants in situ had the opportunity to experience the border space and observe the consequences of the ongoing militarisation of the last primary forest in Europe. We were able to cover 8 travel grants. Food and accommodation was provided by local businesses that support activists’ networks.

Programme:

27 February 2025 (Thursday)

14:15 - 17:30 Ethnographic walk in the border area (only for onsite participants), Natalia Judzińska, Inga Hajdarowicz);

18:00 - 19:00 Researchers on the Border - opening and introduction: Natalia Judzińska, Inga Hajdarowicz, Kamila Fiałkowska, Mateusz Krępa); We Are Monitoring (WAM) - Monitoring pushbacks on the Polish-Belarusian border: Jakub Bieniasz, Piotr Winiarczyk

28 February 2025 (Friday)

SESSION I, 10:00-11:30

Sameer Arkawi, Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana: *The Autonomy of Migration (Refugee perspective)*

Justyna Straczuk, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology Polish Academy of Sciences: *Confronting the Border Regime: Ethical and Epistemological Insights from the Polish-Belarusian Border*

Priscilla Napuli Paul, Göttingen University: *The Lives and Challenges of Indigenous Grassroots Activists in Social Movements and Migration Advocacy*

SESSION II, 12:00-14:00

Ludek Stavinoha, University of East Anglia: *Epistemic Frictions: Tracing Border Violence in the Live Archives of EU Bureaucracies*

Francesca Fortarezza, University of Bologna: *Reclaiming Memory, Upholding Rights: Solidarity-driven Research as a Tool for Counter-Hegemonic Knowledge Production*

Ieva Raubiško, NGO "I Want to Help Refugees" (Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem): *Threat, Security and the Need for Refuge: Searching for Ways to Counter the Dominant Discourse on Irregular Migration in Latvia*

Maciej Grześkowiak, University of Warsaw: *Between Externalisation and Internalisation: Border Walls as a Manifestation of the 'Shifting Border'*

SESSION III, 15:00-16:30

Julija Kekstaite, Ghent University; Vuk Vukotić, Vilnius University: *Grief Activism and Solidarity with Migrants along EU's Eastern Migratory Route*

Annika Hille, Lisa Koerber, Helen Meyer and Carla Papendorf, Humboldt Universität Berlin: *Grieving as Decolonial Memory-Making: How Activist Mourning Challenges EUrope's Border Regime*

Emina Bužinkić, Institute for Development and International Relations, *Transbalkan Tribunal for Justice Initiative: People's Tribunal on Border Deaths and Disappearances: Justice Matters and Ethical Grapplings*

SESSION IV, 17:00-18:00

Mareike Gebhardt, Sarah Spasiano, Research Group "Navigating the Mediterranean: Search and Rescue Missions and the Dissensus on Democracy" (ZivDem), Universities of Bonn and Muenster: *Scenes from Lampedusa: A Conversation between Postcolonial-Feminist Theory and Critical Border Studies about the Mediterranean Deathscape*

Marta Troiano, University of Milan; Cecilia Siccardi, Researcher in Constitutional Law, University of Milan; Lorenzo Franceschetti, Researcher in Forensic Medicine, Labanof, University of Milan: *Identifying Unrecognized Bodies in the Mediterranean: The Italian Experience as an Operational Model*

19:30 Textile workshop: Strengths of Threads - 60-minute session, to be continued on Sunday (only for onsite participants), organisation: selma banich, Zagreb Solidarity City, Solidarityline Balkans, and For BREAD; Marijana Hameršak, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb

1 March 2025 (Saturday)

SESSION V, 10:00-11:30

Simon Campbell, Irene Quadrelli, Centre for Forced Migration and Displacement, Aston University: *Migration research-activism in the Balkans: a preliminary reflection on "field", "subject", "Other"*

Şeyma Saylak, University of Göttingen-Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology: *Navigating Through Ambiguities: Finding A Place For/Through Reflexive Activism*

Ophelia Nicole-Berva, Noemi Bergesio, University of Geneva: *How Does Everyday Activism Negotiate Practices of Hypervisibility and Strategic Silences in Border Cities?*

SESSION VI, 12:00-13:00

Roberta Gentili, University of Bologna: *Researching Border Control Mechanisms and Violence Beyond EU Territory*

David Suber, University of Oxford; A.D., Independent Researcher: *“Ask the Smuggler”. Risks and Ethics of Collaborative Research on People Smuggling*

SESSION VII, 14:00-15:30

Discussion: *Solidarity Infrastructure: Emergency Lines* (only for onsite participants): Moderation: selma banich, Zagreb Solidarity City, Solidarityline Balkans, and For BREAD; Marijana Hameršak, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb:

16:00-17:30 Guided walk in the Białowieża Forest

2 March 2025 (Sunday)

SESSION VII, 10:00-11:30

Mir Rodriguez, Fundación Almanaque Azul: *Navigating Boundaries: Research, Consent, and Narratives of Migration in Darién*

Lawrence Jabs, University of Bologna: *Border Spectacle(s) From Below*

Nina Khamsy, Geneva Graduate Institute: *Co-Producing Knowledge on Digital Practices, Violence and Solidarity in European Borderlands*

Mustafa Can Günay, Politecnico di Torino: *Heterotopic Ossifications: Scanning the Urbanism of Turkey-Syria Borderscape*

12:00-13:00 Textile workshop: Strengths of Threads - 45 -minute session, continuation and closure.

The posts promoting the event were published daily on such social media accounts of Researchers on the Border as: Facebook, X, Bluesky.

Websites:

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/BadaczeiBadaczkiNaGranicz>

X: <https://x.com/BGranicz>

Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/badaczkinagranicz.bsky.social>

Website of Researchers on the Borders: <https://www.bbng.org/>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).