

# ESCAS VIII

The Eighth Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS VIII) attracted a large regional and international audience. Most notable was the large presence of scholars from Central Asia, above all from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

Report >

Central Asia

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Referring to the general theme of the conference ‘Central Asia in transition: models, disruptions, centrality’, five panels running in parallel sessions and covering numerous topics from different disciplines took place throughout the duration of the conference.

Topics such as the role of history and historiography in Central Asia today, the mythologization of the region’s history as a whole, and with specific historic periods were treated in ‘Questions of periodization: the centrality of Central Asia and the rewriting of history’.

The next session, ‘Economic and social models in the history of Central Asia’, concerned topics ranging from political movements and ideologies prevailing in the region during the last centuries, to questions of identity formation and (socio)economic problems.

‘Cultural and religious models’ presented the role of music and literature in today’s Central Asian societies, the shaping of multiple identities, reflections on the cultural heritage, and the role of religion in the region.

Various aspects of colonization were addressed in ‘Colonial and Soviet disruptions’. The effects that the first ‘sedentarization’ efforts had on the Kazakhs were tackled among other things such as the impact of the collectivization programme of 1928–1934 upon the nomads and peasants in Kazakhstan, the change of the political power structure due to Tsarist and Soviet rule in Central Asia, and the views of the Central Asians on the Russian conquest in the late nineteenth century.

Details on current political, economic, and ecological problems of the region were presented in the final panel ‘Post-Soviet transformations’. Among others, the situation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan, the question of rebuilding the Afghan state, changes in the priorities of the economic reform process in Kazakhstan, the ‘Aral Sea problem’, and aspects of international policies in the region were discussed. <

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ESCAS VIII was organized by Prof. Vincent Fourniau, Prof. Cathrine Poujol, M. Pasquet, and Dr Françoise Rollan, and was hosted by the University of Bordeaux.

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