



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

CEES
Center for Eastern European Studies



Conference Program

«Where is Russia Heading? 20 Years of Russian Analytical Digest»

International Conference, University of Zurich, 3-4 November 2026

Organised to mark the 20th anniversary of the *Russian Analytical Digest* ([RAD](#)), this conference brings together leading experts to discuss where Russia is heading. It examines key developments in Russian foreign and domestic policy, the economy, and society, with particular attention to the impact of the war against Ukraine and the forces shaping Russia's future. The conference is organised by the Centre for Eastern European Studies ([CEES](#)) at the University of Zurich, in cooperation with the Centre for Security Studies ([CSS](#)) at ETH Zurich.

Please register in advance at: <https://ema.uzh.ch/RUMRK>

Day 1, Tuesday, 3 November 2026

Venue: University of Zurich, room KOL-F-104

16:15-16:30

Welcome & Introduction

Andreas Wenger (CSS ETH Zurich) & Jeronim Perović (CEES University of Zurich)

16:30-16:45

On the history of RAD

Robert Ortung (Washington, DC)

16:45-17:15

Keynote "Where is Russia Heading?"

Gudrun Persson (Stockholm)

17:15-18:45

Panel discussion and Q & A

Gudrun Persson (Stockholm), Mikhail Troitskiy (Boston) & Heiko Pleines (Bremen)
Moderated by Jeronim Perović (Zurich)

19:15 Conference Dinner



Day 2, Wednesday, 4 November 2026

9:00-10:00

Panel 1: Foreign Policy & Ideology

Venue: University of Zurich, room RAA-G-01

Chair: Jeronim Perović

- Lisa Gauffmann (Groningen), “State Ideology and the Politics of Gender in Russia’s Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine”
- Mikhail Suslov (Copenhagen), “Russia’s Strategic Outreach: A Comparative Analysis of Messaging to the Global South and to Western Ideological Migrants”

10:00-11:00

Panel 2: Domestic Politics & Elites

Venue: University of Zurich, room RAA-G-01

Chair: Fabian Burkhardt (Regensburg)

- Andrei Yakovlev (Berlin), “Between Mobilization Model and Mafia State - Main Elite Drivers of Transformation of Putin’s System”
- Vladimir Gel’man (Helsinki), “The Great Involution: Reflections on Russia’s Responses to Post-2022 Shock and Beyond”

11:00-11:30 *Coffee Break*

11:30-12:30

Panel 3: Economy & Economic Policy

Venue: University of Zurich, room RAA-G-01

Chair: Heiko Pleines (Bremen)

- Michael Rochlitz (Oxford), “Building a Fortress: Does Russia have a Long-Term Economic Strategy?”
- Alexandra Prokopenko (Berlin), “Putin’s Broken Trilemma: The Russia-Ukraine War has Taken its Toll on the Russian Economy”

12:30-14:00 *Lunch Break*

14:00-15:00

Panel 4: War & Society

Venue: University of Zurich, room RAA-G-15

Chair: Robert Orttung (Washington, DC)

- Jan Matti Dollbaum (Fribourg), “Repression and Legitimacy in Times of War – Do Russian Citizens Like a Repressive State?”
- Svetlana Erpylova (Bremen), “Life During Wartime: How Russians Adapt to Russia’s War Against Ukraine”

15:00-16:00 Panel 5: The War and Russia’s Future

Venue: University of Zurich, room RAA-G-15

Chair: Vassily Klimentov (Zurich)

- Margarete Klein (Berlin) “When War Comes Home: Russia’s Veterans as a Challenge to Society and Regime Stability?”
- Aleksandr Baunov (Berlin), “Geopolitical Anxiety as a Factor of Cohesion for the Russian Regime”



List of conference participants with affiliations

1. **Alexander Baunov**; Senior Fellow, Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, Berlin
2. **Fabian Burkhardt**; Research Associate, Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg
3. **Jan Matti Dollbaum**; Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Fribourg
4. **Svetlana Erpylova**; Post-Doctoral Researcher, Research Centre for East European Studies and Public Sociology Laboratory, University of Bremen, Bremen
5. **Lisa Gaufrman**; Assistant Professor of Russian Discourse and Politics; University of Groningen
6. **Vladimir Gel'man**; Professor; Aleksanteri Institute, Finnish Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Helsinki
7. **Margarete Klein**; Head of Research Division Eastern Europe, Eurasia; Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin
8. **Vassily Klimentov**; Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of History, University of Zurich
9. **Robert Orttung**; Research Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs, Georgian Washington University, Washington DC
10. **Jeronim Perović**; Professor of Modern Eastern European Studies, University of Zurich; Director CEES
11. **Gudrun Persson**; Associate Professor at the Department of Slavic Studies, Stockholm University
12. **Heiko Pleines**; Head of the Dept. of Politics and Economics, Vice Director, Research Centre for East European Studies, University of Bremen, Bremen
13. **Alexandra Prokopenko**; Research Affiliate, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOIS), Berlin
14. **Michael Rochlitz**; Associate Professor in the Economies of Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia, University of Oxford
15. **Mikhail Suslov**; Associate Professor, Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen
16. **Mikhail Troitskiy**; Visiting Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Boston, MA
17. **Andreas Wenger**; Professor of International and Swiss Security Policy, ETH Zurich; Director CSS at ETH Zurich
18. **Andrei Yakovlev**; Research Fellow, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin

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