

Lines that Cross: Migration and the Making of a European Space

Memorial and Educational Site, Reception Camp Giessen & Research Network on the History of the Idea of Europe (University of East Anglia)

1–3 July 2026, Giessen, Germany

Venue: Memorial and Educational Site, Reception Camp Giessen, Giessen, Germany

Organizing Committee: Sina Fabian, Humboldt University of Berlin; Florian Greiner, University of Giessen; Jan Vermeiren, University of East Anglia

Conference language: English

Submission: Abstract max. 500 words + short CV (1 page)

Deadline for abstracts: 20 December 2025

Notification of acceptance: 14 January 2026

Since (at least) the early modern period, migration, flight, and displacement have been central to European history—not only as forces shaping local and regional environments but also as processes that help define the spatial, cultural, political, social, and intellectual limits of what “Europe” actually means. We invite papers that examine migration in and across Europe (broadly conceived) over the centuries and explore how movements of migrants and refugees have contributed to the making of Europe as a geographical, cultural, and political space. How have notions of European identity, belonging, exclusion, borders, and community been shaped by the circulation of people, ideas, and memories?

By situating migration in a long-term historical perspective and exploring how it has shaped the very idea of Europe, the conference aims to advance both historical scholarship and current debates on migration, borders, identity, and memory. In doing so, it seeks to deepen our understanding of today’s challenges around mobility, inclusion and exclusion, and the uses of the past in shaping visions of Europe’s future.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Patterns of migration** into, through, and out of Europe since the early modern period: internal migration, emigration and immigration, seasonal labour, diaspora formation.
- **Forced migrations and refugee movements:** expulsions, asylum seeking, causes and routes, reception and integration, long-term legacies and memory.
- **Borders and territorial regimes:** the evolution of border controls, frontier zones, and checkpoints in response to Europe's changing political map.
- **Europe's external borders and their consolidation:** how migration and flight from outside Europe have shaped and fortified Europe's boundaries, including the role of institutions such as *Frontex*.
- **Refugee camps as "non-places" (Marc Augé):** from interwar camps for Eastern European Jews fleeing pogroms, to Displaced Persons camps after the Second World War, to Cold War camps for refugees from the Eastern bloc to reception centres at the EU's external borders during and after the 2015 crisis.
- **Migration and the making of European identities:** cultural, legal, intellectual, and religious dimensions; notions of 'otherness', cosmopolitanism, nationalism.
- **Transnational networks, migrant communities, and diasporas as vectors of exchange:** circulation of ideas, practices, remittances, and cultural artefacts.
- **Migration in European integration and rights debates:** its role in shaping concepts of citizenship, belonging, human rights, and social cohesion.
- **Memory, commemoration, and heritage of migration:** how societies remember and narrate past migrations; their place in public history, memory culture, and identity politics.
- **Representations of migrants and refugees:** artistic, literary, cinematic, and media portrayals; discursive framings — political, religious, cultural.

Selected papers will be considered for publication in a peer-reviewed edited volume or a special issue of a journal in the fields of European history or migration studies.

Subject to available funding, the organizers aim to contribute to travel and accommodation costs for presenters, particularly early-career scholars without institutional support. Applicants seeking reimbursement should indicate this in their application.

Please send your abstract (in English, max. 500 words) together with a short CV to:

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Late submissions or those exceeding the word limit may not be considered.