

Editorial

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Dear Reader,

The year 2025 brings significant changes to the editorial team of *Comparative Southeast European Studies*. After many years of dedicated service, co-editors Wim van Meurs (University of Nijmegen) and Ger Duijzings (University of Regensburg) decided that it was time for them to step down.

The Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, as the institution overseeing this journal, is deeply grateful to both Wim and Ger for their remarkable commitment, which was entirely pro bono. Both brought their unique (Dutch?) pragmatism and creativity to the journal, leaving a legacy that will endure. Over the years, they actively supported the Editor-in-Chief in expanding the journal's multidisciplinary and geographic scope, playing a pivotal role in transforming it into an internationally acknowledged, English-language, and Open Access quarterly. The latter, which also included the journal changing its name from *Südosteuropa* to *Comparative Southeast European Studies*, happened under the difficult conditions of the pandemic, entirely from the confinements of a home office setup, which deserves additional appreciation. Since 2021, the journal's transformation has earned it a respectable impact factor and a pivotal place in De Gruyter's humanities and social sciences portfolio.

Though we regret seeing Wim and Ger move on, we take great pleasure in welcoming Čarna Brković (University of Mainz), who is taking up her role as the journal's new co-editor starting with this issue. As an internationally renowned anthropologist, she will continue the journal's tradition of publishing under a multidisciplinary editorial team. After completing her studies at the University of Belgrade and her PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester (2012), Čarna was a postdoc at New Europe College in Bucharest and at the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg, as well as a lecturer and research associate at the University of Göttingen. Since 2023, she has been Professor of Cultural Studies and European Ethnology at the University of Mainz.

Čarna has been closely associated with the journal for many years. In 2009, she published "Floating Signifiers. Negotiations of the National on the Internet Forum Café del Montenegro" with us, which was not only her first scholarly publication, but also one of the first contributions to the journal to draw on Internet sources. In 2018, she contributed to a thematic section on *Urban Ethnography* coordinated by Ger Duijzings, offering insights into her research in a camp for displaced persons who had fled the war in Kosovo: "The Everyday Life of a Homo Sacer. Enclave Urbanism in Podgorica, Montenegro". In 2021, she guest edited the very first issue to be published

in the radically overhauled and newly renamed journal, now also Open Access. The issue, titled *In the Name of the Daughter. Anthropology of Gender in Montenegro*, substantially contributed to the journal's excellent start in its new format. She was thus something of a natural choice to succeed Ger and Wim, and we are very grateful that she accepted our invitation to return to Regensburg as co-editor of *Comparative Southeast European Studies*. Welcome back, Čarna!

We are entering the journal's 73rd year with yet another innovation: On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica and the signing of the Dayton Accords, we are inaugurating, for the first time in the journal's history, an annual theme: *The Yugoslav Wars and the Year 1995: Reflections. Resilience. Reverberations*. Publishing, in the course of this year, a number of contributions presenting new research on the Yugoslav Wars, we seek to acknowledge the anniversary of the year in which genocide returned to Europe. The year 1995 will forever "compete" in the European and global public space with the remembrance of 1945. By giving *Comparative Southeast European Studies* an annual theme for the duration of 2025, we seek, together with the publisher De Gruyter, to create the public forum and attention that the Yugoslav Wars deserve.

We close our Editorial on a sad note: In November 2024, Kathrin Sitzler, long-time expert and consultant for Hungary at one of the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies' predecessors, the Südost-Institut (Institute for Southeast European Studies), passed away at the age of 82. From the early 1990s onwards, Kathrin was the driving force on the then collective editorial board of the journal *Südosteuropa*. From 2006 to 2008, she served as its managing editor, at a time when the Institute's department of current affairs had been integrated into the new premises of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – Deutsches Institut für internationale Politik und Sicherheit (German Institute for International and Security Affairs), now in Berlin. Her tireless and steady commitment to maintaining the Institute's publishing efforts on current affairs in Southeastern Europe laid the groundwork for the journal as we know it today. Her firm belief in the relevance of knowledge about this region is just as salient today as it was then.

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Director of the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies

Sabine Rutar

Editor-in-Chief of *Comparative Southeast European Studies*

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