

Fall Convention 2023

Bürgerräume West in der Bebelstraße 22, 70193 Stuttgart
18. November 2023 - 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

We are pleased to extend our invitation for our 2023 fall convention taking place on November 18th in Stuttgart.

The schedule for the day is full of exciting, insightful, and thematically diverse contributions.

The main talk for the day will critically examine the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In the following workshops you have the choice between the topics of detention prior to deportation, migration and escape from Turkey, and legal remedies within the social welfare laws for asylum seekers (AsylbLG).

Additionally, there will be two groups on racism; one providing a space for reflection for White participants, and one offering a space for empowerment and aimed at those affected and targeted by racism.

Lastly, there will be an expert talk on exclusionary and marginalizing dynamics after which the convention will find its conclusion.

There will be plenty of time throughout the event for participants to chat, network and discuss.

The convention is free of charge and is aimed primarily at those volunteering in refugee affairs.

We aim to offer a safe space for all participants and members at our event. We ask everyone to look at our agreed [framework for respectful communication](#). The document will be available to read in the reception area on the 18th and provides useful guidelines which we kindly ask to respect.

The convention is taking place within the context of the project “Aktiv für Integration”, supported by the State Ministry for Social Affairs, Health and Integration from state funds as decided by the state parliament of Baden-Wuerttemberg. UN Refugee Aid Germany and the German Postcode Lottery provide co-sponsorship.

Schedule

09:45 am: Registration and arrivals

10:00 am: Address of welcome

10:15 – 11:45 am: Workshop-session I

You may choose one of the following four groups at this time. Workshops 1, 2 and 3 are available in session II in the afternoon as well. Workshop 4 is only available in session I, workshop 5 only in session II.

Workshop 1: Detention prior to deportation – what now?

When someone is detained with the intent of deporting them everyone is frantic. In many cases, communication with the detained person is impossible. Those affected don't know what is happening to them as they are blindsided and overwhelmed – yet events are moving at a fast pace and support is needed fast. Everyone involved is hoping for a release of the detained and for the deportation to be cancelled.

This workshop examines the basics of detainment prior to deportation: What is this form of detainment and what is the legal and practical context? What course of events can be expected for those detained and their supporters? What legal avenues and practical paths for support exist? Are there any chances at all for someone to be released from detainment? Counsellors Dirk Keil and Theresa Kräling from the immigration detention centre Pforzheim and Anne Feßenbecker, attorney-at-law, will pursue these questions and concerns.

Contributors: Anne Feßenbecker (Attorney-at-law, Mannheim), Dirk Keil (independent counselor at the immigration detention centre Pforzheim, Caritas archdiocese Freiburg) and Theresa Kräling (independent counselor at the immigration detention centre Pforzheim, Diakonisches Werk Baden)

Workshop 2: Escape and migration from Turkey

Political, societal, and economic reasons have forced people to escape from Turkey and migrate to Germany for many decades. After the military coup and the bloodshed in the Kurdish areas, the 1980s marked the decade with the largest visible politically motivated migration movement towards Germany. This dynamic continues until today even if the specific triggers have changed as much as the makeup of refugee groups themselves.

The situation refugees from Turkey face in Germany can vary significantly. In 2022, 73% of claims for asylum by Turkish applicants were granted whereas this was the case for only 8,2% of Kurdish asylum seekers. Chances for political participation are not evenly distributed either. Kurdish people are generally suspected and thought to be linked to the banned PKK which leads to large parts of society avoiding them. Liberal Turkish people are welcomed more openly to the public (political) sphere.

In this workshop we will look at different groups within Turkey, their situation in Germany and the extent to which the Turkish intelligence agency exerts influence on them.

Contributor: Dr. Ismail Küpeli (Political scientist at the Universität of Cologne)

Workshop 3: ‘Am I really only getting this little money?’ Understanding and objecting to official decisions on benefits for asylum seekers (AsylbLG).

Refugees whose deportation has been suspended (Duldung) and those living in Germany with temporary permissions to stay (Aufenthaltsgestattung) receive social benefits according to the Asylum-Seeker Benefits Act (AsylbLG).

Often, these benefits are cut by the authorities and refugees receive only very little money. However, many of the decisions regarding benefits are incorrect and infringe upon refugee’s legal rights. Since cutting benefits touches on the legally sensitive area of the minimum subsistence level it is highly important and, in many cases, not too difficult to take action against benefit-cutting decisions.

Jörg Schmidt-Rohr, attorney-at-law, will explain the most common mistakes in authorities’ decisions, possible legal remedies and how you can write and enter an objection to such a decision yourself.

In order to participate, basic knowledge of the AsylbLG is required. Therefore, please read through the [basics of social benefits](#) on our website beforehand. You are invited to bring anonymized versions of real-life benefits decisions.

Contributor: Jörg Schmidt-Rohr (Attorney-at-law, Wiesloch)

Workshop 4: Space for reflection „Critical Whiteness“

This workshop is aimed at White people who have reflected on and thought about racism before. Utilising different stimuli we want to reflect our own role within the power relationship at the core of racism and discuss the tasks that follow from this.

As expressed by Tupoka Ogette:

“I wish that the fight against racism was viewed not as a burden but as a chance by White people. As an opportunity, to be a part of the change. Part of the solution and not part of the problem.”

Because of the format of the workshop, the number of available spots is limited.

Contributor: Susanne Belz (Office for discrimination-sensitive work Stuttgart)

11:45 am: Break

12:00 pm: Main talk: The borders of EU-Europe – Borders of democracy and human rights

The European Union intends to tighten rules for asylum procedures: By reforming the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), new detention centres at EU outer borders will be established. Refugees will be detained, people will be assessed and picked at the border to be detained to almost any country. Fair and humane asylum processes are made impossible under these conditions. Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess will shed light on current developments and examine the core dynamics at play within the border and migration regime since 2016. She will detail that what is being marketed as a reform of the CEAS is, in part, current practice already – and how it does not work. What does work is an authoritarian turn in European societies.

Contributor: Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess (Cultural anthropologist at the University of Göttingen)

1:00 – 2:00 pm: Lunch

2:00 – 3:30 pm: Workshop-session II

You may choose one of the following four workshops. Workshops 1,2 and 3 are being conducted for a second time. Workshop 5 „Space for Empowerment“ will only be held in the afternoon session.

Workshop 1: Detention prior to deportation – what now?

Workshop 2: Escape and migration from Turkey

Workshop 3: „Am I really only getting this little money?“ Understanding and objecting to AsylbLG-decisions

Workshop 5: Space for Empowerment

This space is aimed at people who have endured negative experiences with racism and/or antisemitism in Germany.

Those affected by racism and/or antisemitism are burdened in many aspects. Discrimination hurts emotionally and can make people physically sick. For this reason, it is important to have spaces in which people can share freely in a safe environment without their experiences and realities being questioned. We want to be together, listen to and empower each other, and discuss what resources we have in us.

Contributors: Eden Mengis and Anna Feldbein (Office for discriminaton-sensitive work Stuttgart)

3:30 pm: Break

3:45 – 5:00 pm: Expert talk: Dynamics of exclusion and marginalization

The last piece of insightful input for the day will be a discussion between Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess (University of Göttingen), Dr. Ismail Küpeli (University of Köln), Giuliano Ryll (Office for discriminaton-sensitive work Stuttgart) und Monzer Haider (Refugees Council BW).

The topic of discussion will be exclusion viewed from our experts‘ varying perspectives and theoretical backgrounds. Different levels of inclusion and participation processes as well as marginalization and isolation will be addressed.