

## CALL FOR PAPERS

In March 2012, the postgraduate course of studies *European Cultural Heritage* at the European University Viadrina will host an international and interdisciplinary conference titled

### **Uncomfortable Architectural Heritage of Socialism**

#### **A comparison of social acceptance in Eastern and Central Europe**

*„Difficult heritage is a past that is recognized as meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive self-affirming contemporary identity.“*

Sharon McDonald

Parts of the uncomfortable heritage of the socialistic era are many buildings and places that remind us of the political ideology of socialistic regimes. Examples are the by now dismantled Palace of the Republic in Berlin, the House of the Soviets in Kaliningrad and the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest.

As a result of the transformational processes in Eastern and Central Europe, uncomfortable architectural heritage has to face significant changes: many buildings have been altered, converted or dismantled. Today, some buildings serve as memorial places or museums. Others have fallen into oblivion. How to deal with the socialistic regimes' biased legacies is a question that still remains problematic and up to date two decades after the political overthrows.

Since the socialistic epoch is subject to the ambivalent evaluations of different social groups, critical debates as well as nostalgic emotions, the conference will focus on the following questions:

For whom is such architectural heritage uncomfortable? How are political decisions concerning uncomfortable heritage prepared and carried out? What role does public opinion play? How does the media influence society's image of the building? Does an official heritage status or the intervention of international organisations contribute to a change in acceptance? How did the situation change during the past two decades?

For the purpose of the conference, the term "uncomfortable architectural heritage" shall be determined as follows:

- a building that reflects a part of the history of a country, a certain region, a society or a culture or respectively is or has been of importance for such
- Remembering this part of history is uncomfortable today. That means thinking about it is

stressful and painful for the society or respectively certain groups of society

- Preserving the architectural heritage is contested within the society or respectively politics (due to its uncomfortable connotations)
- It was either built during socialism or gained in importance during this era
- Furthermore, presentations shall not be centred on cenotaphs

The conference's object is to align research levels concerning uncomfortable socialistic heritage within Europe. It does not only address to scientists specialising in monument conservation but also to interested persons from other areas of expertise. You are invited to hand in abstracts of approximately 200 words for presentations in German or English. Each presentation is limited to 20 minutes. Deadline for abstracts is 30 September 2011. Please attach a short CV, stating your occupation and area of expertise. We also welcome critical and controversial inputs!

The conference will take place in Berlin in March 2012. A publication is planned subsequent to the conference.

Organisers of the conference are:

Eszter Takacs, Heiko Krueger, Kamila Palubicka, Katrin Westphal and Veronica Kölling

In cooperation with:

*Landesdenkmalamt Berlin* (state office for protection of historical monuments)

*European University Viadrina* in Frankfurt Oder

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 Berlin Landesdenkmalamt

Senatsverwaltung  
für Stadtentwicklung