

## Advocating religious freedom in the Helsinki process

New research perspectives on the non-state actors in view of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act (1975–2025)

Online Workshop, Thu 14 October– Fri 15 October 2021

Registration and Zoom link: [marie.snedker@helsinki.fi](mailto:marie.snedker@helsinki.fi)



Silent demonstration in Zurich “for the persecuted Christians (in the Eastern Bloc)”, freeze-frame from *Bericht vor acht*, Swiss Television, 23.09.1975.

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) born of the Helsinki Agreements (1973-75) is often described as one of the main diplomatic achievements of the détente era, and a crucial milestone towards ending the Cold War. Yet not only diplomats played a part in the process. Non-state actors and NGOs also did their share by lobbying CSCE staff and conference attendees for human rights and Religious freedom violations behind the Iron Curtain. Drawing on the most recent research on this topic (Badalassi and Snyder, *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights*, 2019), this online workshop aims at further exploring human rights activists involved in the Helsinki process, at the interface between the Dissent and the Western public, and between state and other private networks. The focus of this workshop is on the religion, on religious networks and actors who advocate religious freedom and human rights in the CSCE process, particularly in the neutral States of Switzerland, Finland, and Austria.



## Thursday 14 Oct. 2021 (all times UTC+2)

10:00-10:30 : Katharina Kunter: Introduction

10:45-12:00 : New primary sources and archives

Moderation: Stéphanie Roulin

1. Eva Maurer: Does religion even matter? Religious actors and religious freedom in a Swiss anti-communist research centre. A look at the holdings of the Swiss Eastern Institute and the Swiss Library of Eastern Europe in Bern
2. Anne-Emmanuelle Tankam : The WCC Archive Holdings
3. Rüdiger Noll, The CEC Archive Holdings
4. Marcela Zarubova, The CSCE / OSCE Documentation centre

12:00-13:30: Lunch break

13:30-15:30 : Religious networks in support of the CSCE, Helsinki monitoring groups / Religious freedom and anti-communism

Moderation: Stefan Kube and Stéphanie Roulin

1. Roland Cerny-Werner : Austria as (Catholic?) Hub in the CSCE Process
  2. Ville Jalovaara: Test of religious freedom in Finland during CSCE conference
- Discussion

Break: 15 min.

3. Nadezhda Beljakova: G2W in International Networks for Religious Freedom behind the Iron Curtain
  4. Irena Vaišvilaitė (Vilnius University): Helsinki groups in Lithuania
- Discussion

## Friday 15 Oct. 2021

10:00-11:45 Religious actors and Helsinki monitoring groups and their perspectives (first-hand testimonies and retrospect assessments)

Moderation: Katharina Kunter and Stéphanie Roulin

Dr Marianne von Grünigen, retired Swiss Diplomat and former president of the Swiss Helsinki Association

Rev. Dwain Epps, retired director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) by the WCC executive committee

Break: 15 min.

12.00-12.45 Round Table Discussion: Feedback, how further on the way to Helsinki 2025, agreements for next steps.

Organisers

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