



Gümüşhane University, Türkiye

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
CONTACTS: BOUNDARIES,
BELONGING, AND MOBILITY

July 20-23, 2026

Venue: Karaca Hall,
Dr. Mustafa Çalık
Congress and Cultural
Center, Gümüşhanevî
Campus, Gümüşhane



Department of Social
Work and Counselling
at the Vocational
School of
Social Sciences,
Gümüşhane
University,
Türkiye



Balkan Ethnology
Department
at the Institute of
Ethnology and
Folklore Studies with
Ethnographic
Museum,
Bulgarian Academy
of Sciences, Bulgaria



Department of
Social Work
at the Faculty of
Health Sciences,
Gümüşhane
University,
Türkiye

“Social and Cultural Contacts: Boundaries, Belonging, and Mobility”

is an interdisciplinary conference that convenes scholars to examine how social relations and cultural life take shape through contact, negotiation, and movement. It provides a focused forum for presenting scientific research, testing concepts across disciplines, and building durable collaborations that advance both scholarship and applied practice. The conference will feature opening speeches, themed panels, and poster exhibitions designed to encourage well-structured debate and meaningful exchange. Sessions will be delivered in English and Turkish supporting inclusive participation and widening the reach of discussion across academic and professional communities.

The conference will be jointly organised by the Social Work and Counselling Department and Social Work Department at the Gümüşhane University, and the Balkan Ethnology Department of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The conference will take place on 20 – 23 July 2026, hosted by Gümüşhane University in Gümüşhane, Türkiye, at Gümüşhanevî Campus, and will be coordinated by the Scientific and Organising Committees.

All questions can be directed to Dr. Vildane Özkan (Email: vildaneozkan@gmail.com; WhatsApp: +905398430925) and Dr. Yelis Erolova (Email: yeliserolova@gmail.com; WhatsApp: +359885565302).



Scientific Committee:
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mila
Maeva (Bulgaria),
Assist. Prof. Dr. Artum
Dinç (Türkiye)



Organising Committee:
Assist. Prof. Dr. Vildane
Özkan (Türkiye),
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yelis
Erolova (Bulgaria)

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* NOTE: Environmental sensitivity will be integrated into planning in alignment with sustainability goals, with recommended measures including: optional carbon offsetting for travel-related emissions; robust waste reduction and clear separation streams; local and seasonal sourcing for catering and services; digital-first materials (programme, abstracts, certificates) to minimise printing; and encouragement of low-impact transport options where feasible.

July 20, 2026

13.00-13.30 **REGISTRATION**

13.30-14.00

OPENING CEREMONY

Gümüşhane Folk Dance Performance

Welcoming Address:

Prof. Dr. Oktay YILDIZ

Rector of Gümüşhane University

14.00-14.45

Keynote Lecture:

The American Dream Illusion for Immigrants

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ferhat ÖZBEK

Gümüşhane University

14.45-15.00 Discussion

15.00-15.30 *Coffee & tea break*

Poster Session

15.30-16.30 Presentation of research posters

Session 1: Mobility and Migration in Comparative Perspectives

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mila MAEVA

- 09.30-09.50 **Migration Processes in the Khotyn Raia at the Turn of the 18th-19th Centuries (Based on Data from the Tax Defters of 1802)**
Dr. Anna A. LEONTYEVA & Prof. D.Hist.Sci. Ilya V. ZAYTSEV
- 09.50-10.10 **Sociological Singularities and Everyday Negotiation: Living Together at the Boundaries of Migration**
Prof. Dr. Metin AKSOY & Neslihan KOÇ
- 10.10-10.30 **Between Inactivity and Mobility: Negotiating Belonging among NEET Youth in North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Türkiye**
Dr. Rubin ZEMON
- 10.30-10.50 **Changing Servers, Changing Worlds: Digital Migration in World of Warcraft**
Dr. Vasil BALTADZHIEV
- 10.50-11.00 *Coffee & tea break*

Session 2: Mapping US and THEM

Moderator: Dr. Inxhi BRISKU

- 11.00-11.20 **Ahmed Ziyaüddin Gümüşhanevi's Manuscripts in Russia**
Prof. D.Hist.Sci. Ilya V. ZAYTSEV
- 11.20-11.40 **A Pioneer of Knowledge and Wisdom in the Last Century of the Ottoman State: Ahmed Ziyâüddîn Gümüşhânevî**
Prof. Dr. Berat SARIKAYA
- 11.40-12.00 **Values of Inwardness: Socio-Cultural Boundaries of Terekeme Herders in Contact with Urban Life**
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Asghar IZADI-JEIRAN
- 12.00-12.20 **Navigating Ethnic Issues on Clubhouse: Digital Experiences of Autochthon Turks in Iran**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Artum DİNÇ

July 21, 2026

12.20-12.40

**Language as a Social Boundary:
Ukrainian–Russian Language Practices in the Context of War**
Rositsa BALTADZHIEVA, PhD student

12.40-13.30

Lunch break

Session 3: Narratives of Survival and Humanity

Moderator: Assist. Prof. Dr. Vildane ÖZKAN

13.30-13.50

**Volunteering in Bulgaria: Institutional Development, Social
Participation, and Contemporary Challenges**
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mila MAEVA

13.50-14.10

**From Integration to Assimilation:
State Policies toward the Cultural and Religious Identity of Bulgarian
Turks under Communism**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Iliyana GANCHEVA-AKDAĞ

14.10-14.30

**The Name Change Process in Bulgaria in the 1980s. Case Study on
Crimean Tatars in Shumen Region**
Polina TRIFONOVA, PhD student

14.30-14.50

Bulgarian Medics ‘Rewarded’ with a Trip to Ukraine in 1986
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yelis EROLOVA

14.50-15.10

**The Contribution of Bulgarian Volunteers in Rescue Efforts
After the 2023 Earthquake in Turkey and Syria**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Plamena STOYANOVA

15.10-15.30

Coffee & tea break

Session 4: Between On-site and Online Contacts and Practices

Moderator: Assist. Prof. Dr. Artum DİNÇ

15.30-15.50

**Traditional Communication in Bulgarian and Balkan Families:
The Concept of Respect (Hatir)**
Prof. DSc. Irina SEDAKOVA

- 15.50-16.10 **Mawlid Rituals in Digital Contexts: Participation, Visibility, and Transformation of Religious Practice**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Behrin SHOPOVA
- 16.10-16.30 **The Digital Nomad Bubble: Spatial Proximity and Socio-Cultural Distance in a Bulgarian Ski Resort**
Dr. Petya DIMITROVA
- 16.30-16.50 **Challenges of Attending Online Lectures for Students of Public Universities in Albania**
Dr. Inxhi BRISKU
- 16.50-17.10 **The Educational Landscape of Post-Olympic Sochi: Revealed and Hidden Features of School Environments in a Resort Setting**
Dr. Anna Turchik

**Session 5: Living Landscapes:
Sustaining Heritage Through Ritual, Tradition, and Tourism**
Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yelis EROLOVA

- 10.30-10.50 **The Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage between Cultural Heritage and (Over)Tourism**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Julia POPCHEVA
- 10.50-11.10 **Tasting Continuity: A Sensory Ethnography of Kürtün Araköy Bread and Everyday Belonging**
Assist. Prof. Dr. Vildane ÖZKAN
- 11.10-11.30 **Cultural Symbol - Turkish Coffee in Estonia**
Prof. Dr. Mare KÕIVA
- 11.30-11.50 **The Influence of Social Processes on Ritual Life**
Tatiana MINNIYAKHMETOVA
- 11.50-12.10 **Tensions and Transitions:
Bulgarian Wedding Band Music in the Thracian Region as an Agent of Transition from Local to Global Sounds**
Tatyana CHURCHULIEVA-KNIGHT, PhD Candidate
- 12.10-13.10 *Lunch break*

Training Session

- 13.30-15.00 Workshop in the Digital Mining Museum, Gümüşhane University:
Driving Digital Transformation in Museums & Archives

Dr. Artum DİNÇ
Gümüşhane University

- 15.00-17.00 *Visit to İkizevler Kent Museum*

ON-SITE PLENARY LECTURE

09.00-10.30

Work trip to the city of Trabzon

10.30-12.00

**Keynote Lecture:
Trabzon Hagia Sophia Mosque**

Dr. Vildane ÖZKAN
Gümüşhane University

12.00-13.00

Lunch break

13.00-14.00

Conference closing remarks

14.00-15.30

Return to Gümüşhane

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. **Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ferhat ÖZBEK** (keynote speaker), Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Gümüşhane University, Gümüşhane, Türkiye. Email: mfozbek@gumushane.edu.tr

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