



## **CAT-ference 2025: 11th International Urban Geographies of Post-communist States Conference**

**Tirana, Sept. 22-25, 2025**

### **CAT-ference-Theme and Call for Panels: “Cities after Transition: Innovative, inclusive, informal?”**

The overall theme of the 11<sup>th</sup>CATference – “Cities after Transition: Innovative, inclusive, informal?” – builds on CAT’s long-standing endeavour to intensify knowledge production in the field of contemporary urban studies. The main goal of the conference is to encourage conversations of a comparative nature regarding cities and urbanism in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as well as in other contexts frequently referred to as “post-socialist”. Fresh empirical and theoretical contributions at different scales, from different perspectives, and with different disciplinary vantage points are warmly welcomed.

Tirana is the perfect place to see, feel and study the spirit of a CAT. It is a City after (or stuck in?) Transition, not least due to the unique interpretation of socialism and the bumpy pathway of subsequent transition Albania took afterwards. The latter has led to urban dynamics that are visible in an incredible (horizontal) urban sprawl that started in the early 1990s. Since the Millennium these dynamics are accompanied by the inner city’s “explosion” into the vertical dimension which has reached a new level in the last years. Tirana’s urban dynamics are characterized by a high degree of informality, spontaneity and creativity – just to mention the most relevant features for Tirana’s “urbanism of exception”. Thus, the city is the ideal spot for CATs to discuss all facets of post-socialist urbanism between exceptionalism and the ordinary.

The scientific program of the conference will be complemented by an optional two-day field trip. We will explore Tirana’s urban sprawl and then delve into Albania’s mountainous periphery with a boat trip on lake Koman, visit small former communist new towns such as Fierza, Reps or Rubik as well as the cities of Prizren and Kukës. We will stay overnight in Valbona Valley, make a flying visit in Kosovo and head back to Albania.

The main **themes** we wish to focus on are:

- The place of CATs in urban theory
- The neoliberal CAT
- CATs and the smart city
- Left-behind CATs
- Migration and mobilities in CATs

This could include possible topics such as (not exclusively!):

- CATs as arrival cities
- CATs and the creative economy

- Global trends and local urban development in CATs
- Prospects for small and medium sized CATs
- Challenges of urban shrinkage
- Megaprojects and (authoritarian?) entrepreneurialism
- CATs and democratic backsliding/autocratization
- Urban movements and activism in post-democratic (?) societies
- CATs during and after armed conflicts
- CATs and critical junctures
- Urban geopolitics
- Socio-spatial patterns and processes
- Suburban and peri-urban patterns and processes
- Housing
- Gentrification and related processes
- Urban planning in CATs
- Urban informality
- Historical legacies and (urban) memory politics
- Commuting and urban transport development
- Urban resilience and climate adaptation
- Smart CATs: smart for whom?

The call for organized or open sessions (90 minutes each with 3 up to 5 presentations) will be open from March 1, 2025, until April 15, 2025. A call for papers will follow.

### **Organizing committee**

Michael Gentile (Oslo)

Dhimitër Doka (Tirana)

Daniel Göler (Bamberg)

Zaiga Krišjāne (Riga)

Matthias Bickert (Würzburg)

Gruja Bădescu (Konstanz/Paris)

### **Timetable**

Dec. 18, 2024: “Save-the-date” announcement and first information via CATs-list; launch of the homepage (<https://cat2025tirana.com/>)

March 1 - April 15, 2025: Call for panels

May 1 - May 31, 2025: Call for papers

June 30, 2025: Acceptance of papers, followed by program draft

June 15 - Aug. 15, 2025: registration

Sept. 10, 2025: Final program

### **Conference schedule 2025**

Day 0 (Sun., Sept. 21): Arrival at Tirana, early registration and informal gathering, guided city walks.

Day 1 (Mon, Sept. 22): Registration; opening ceremony; keynote; parallel sessions; reception and cocktail.

Day 2 (Tue., Sept. 23): Parallel sessions; Conference dinner.

Day 3 (Wed., Sept. 24, Sept. 25): Conference excursion.

Day 4 (Thu., Sept. 25): Conference excursion. Late afternoon: End of the conference.

The field trip leads via Kosovo. Please check the entry requirements for your nationality.

### Conference venue

The conference venue is in facilities of University of Tirana, Faculty for Philology and History, Dept. of Geography, Rruga e Elbasanit.

### Conference fee

Regular fee	170€
PhD-student fee	110€
Post-conference field trip – regular, twin room	+130€
Post-conference field trip – regular, single room	+160€
Post-conference field trip – PhD-student, twin	+110€

The conference fee covers admittance to all sessions, the book of abstracts, coffee and lunch breaks during the conference, free Wi-Fi and the city walks, reception and conference dinner.

Please note that the accommodation and travel expenses are to be organized and covered by participants themselves.

The field trip includes bus transport, ferry boat, and one overnight stay with half-board. A minimum of 40 participants is required for the excursion.

### Further

Hotel recommendations and travel information will be launched in the second circular in March 2025.

Further details about the CATference 2025 can be found at [www.cat2025tirana.com](http://www.cat2025tirana.com).

**For any questions and comments please contact us at: [catference2025@gmail.com](mailto:catference2025@gmail.com)**

**We are looking forward to seeing you in Tirana!**

