

13:45

Panel 7

Habsburg Consuls as Mediators

Chair: Tamara Scheer, University of Innsbruck

Michael Burri, Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies

The Expansion of the Consular Service and the Emergence of the Relief Society as a Feature of Austro-Hungarian Foreign Policy in the United States around 1900

Lida-Maria Dodou, University of Vienna
"The Austrian Consulate is as Important as the Governor's Palace": Habsburg Consuls in Southern Macedonia, 1876-1915

Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics, ELTE RCH Institute of History / Budapest
Imperial and Colonial Brokers of the Empire: Austro-Hungarian Consuls in Albania

15:15

Break – Tour of the Diplomatic Archives

Please be aware that the archives are unsuitable for persons with mobility issues or for those with a fear of heights

16:00

Coffee Break

16:15

Panel 8

Consuls in Ottoman Lands

Chair: Simeon Simeonov, American University in Bulgaria / Institute of Balkan Studies with Center of Thracology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Barbara Haider-Wilson, Austrian Academy of Sciences
Religion and Politics: How to be a Catholic Great Power in Jerusalem

Aristide Chryssoulis, University of Cambridge
Austrian Minor Consulates: The Case of Chios and Samos in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Aegean

Ninja Bumann, Justus Liebig University Giessen
Habsburg Consulates for the Periphery's Muslims: Mediating Marriage and Divorce for Bosnian Migrants in the Ottoman Empire and United States of America

17:45

Closing Remarks

Barbara Haider-Wilson, Jonathan Singerton and Simeon Simeonov

18:00

End of Conference

Consuls have long occupied an ambiguous place in the historiography of international relations. Ubiquitous in imperial infrastructures, yet largely overshadowed by ambassadors and high diplomacy, the historical role of a consular agent has often been derided as the manager of a 'red tape factory' or as playing second fiddle as the diplomat's sidekick; a Watson to their Holmes. Recent scholarship has begun to reevaluate the consular institution as central to the functioning of empire, commerce, migration, legal authority and diplomacy, particularly during the long nineteenth century when, it is now acknowledged, consuls enjoyed their 'finest hour' as integral actors in an increasingly globalising and interwoven world.

Within this frame, the consuls of the Habsburg Monarchy (and later Austria-Hungary) offer an especially rich but understudied case beyond the works of Rudolf Agstner, Engelbert Deusch and others. Here, the example of the United States is particularly notable, inasmuch as nearly one in ten Austrian consuls served in the United States during the long nineteenth century, and the expansion of the consular service and their activities in the U.S. accompanied the emergence of American midwestern metropolises – Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Milwaukee – even as the New York consulate remained primary in balancing Austrian considerations of exchange, trade, and international great power politics. Meanwhile, the rising tide of emigration from Austria-Hungary elevated the importance of consuls and their activities in serving Habsburg citizens. From port cities in the Eastern Mediterranean to consular offices in North and South America, East Asia, and across Central and Eastern Europe, Habsburg consuls acted as diplomatic agents, commercial protectors, legal intermediaries, cultural brokers, and imperial scouts. Their activities illuminate how Habsburg power projected itself through informal means via networks of officials which, at its peak, numbered 493 consulates at the turn of the twentieth century. By embedding itself into transregional circuits of governance, trade, and information, the Habsburg Monarchy asserted its global presence through pragmatic (and sometimes even clandestine) locally anchored forms of statecraft.

ORGANIZERS

Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies
Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences
Austrian State Archives
American University in Bulgaria / Institute of Balkan Studies with Center of Thracology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

REGISTRATION

Registration and further information:



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Austrian State Archives

Conference

Habsburg International

Austrian Consuls and Consulates in the United States and around the World

Under the patronage of State Secretary Sepp Schellhorn, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria

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25–26 June 2026

Austrian Academy of Sciences
PSK-Building / BMEIA / HHStA
1010 Vienna

Program

Thursday 25 June 2026

PSK-Building, 1010 Vienna,
Georg Coch-Platz 2, 3rd floor

9:00

Welcome

Katrin Keller, Director of the Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Barbara Haider-Wilson / Jonathan Singerton, Senior Research Fellow, Austrian Academy of Sciences / Assistant Professor of Global Political History, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Michael Burri, Program Officer, Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies / Editor, Journal of Austrian-American History, Philadelphia

9:30

Panel 1 Diplomacy in Theory and Practice

Chair: Jonathan Singerton, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Simeon Simeonov, American University in Bulgaria/Institute of Balkan Studies with Center of Thracology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
The Trans-Atlantic Nexus: Consular Modernization in the Age of Revolutions

Andreas Titton, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv
Sources on the Austro-Hungarian consular system

Discussant:

Christian Prosl, former Austrian Ambassador to the United States (2003-2009) and Germany (2009-2011); former Consul General in Los Angeles; and former Director of the Consular Section at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria

11:00

Coffee Break

11:30

Panel 2 Consuls involved in Smuggling, Intrigue, and Relief

Chair: Barbara Haider-Wilson, Austrian Academy of Sciences

Matteo Barbano, Institute for Mediterranean Studies / Rethymno, Greece
Habsburg Consuls and the Austrian Lloyd: Smuggling, Imperial Representation, and Maritime Authority (1890s–1914)

Stephanie Truskowski, University of Notre Dame / South Bend, Indiana
“Austrian Intrigues” and the Mexican Question: The Role of The Austrian Foreign Service in Clandestine Negotiations

Eszter Balázs, Ludovika University of Public Service / Budapest
Diplomacy as Humanitarian Practice: American Consuls in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

13:00

Lunch

14:30

Panel 3 Habsburg Consuls in the United States and Americas

Chair: Pieter Judson, European University Institute Florence

Jonathan Singerton, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Neither Ambassador nor Consul: The Strange Case of the First Habsburg Representative in North America

Milagros Martínez-Flener, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú / Lima
Damages and Losses: The Pacific War and the Austro-Hungarian claims against Chile

Sven Mörsdorf, European University Institute Florence
Permanently Temporary: The Austro-Hungarian Consular Colonies in New York City and Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1900–1920s

16:00

Coffee Break

16:30

Panel 4 Consuls and their Networks

Chair: Peter Becker, University of Vienna

Diether Becke, University of Innsbruck
Between Patronage, Loyalty, and Conflict: Networks in the Austrian Consular Service in Galați/Galatz and Alexandria between 1846 and 1850

Ayşegül Ersin, University of Vienna
Family, Salons, and Intellectual Circles: Diplomatic Consular Networks between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul

Hannah Boeddeker, TU Braunschweig
Consular Networks and Information Management: Investigating Identity in the Early Twentieth Century

18:00-18:45

Transfer time between venues

19:00-20:15

Keynote Session

Alois-Mock-Saal, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria, Minoritenplatz 8, 1010 Vienna

Welcome

Deputy Director-General Ambassador Rupert Weinmann, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria

Moderation: **David Schriffel**, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria

Holly Case, Brown University / Providence, Rhode Island
Symbols Games with Consuls: Central and Eastern Europe, the US, and Systems Thinking

Friday 26 June 2026

Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, 1010 Vienna,
Minoritenplatz 1, Dachfoyer

9:00

Welcome

Helmut Wohnout, General Director of the Austrian State Archives

Andreas Titton, Archivist, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv

9:15

Panel 5 Consuls in the United States, State Rivalries

Chair: João Fábio Bertonha, State University of Maringá

Andrej Rahten, University of Maribor
Slovene Consul from Wilsonia: Ivan Švegel between Habsburg Loyalty and Nationalist Sentiments

James McSpadden, University of Nevada, Reno
From Habsburg Consul in San Francisco to Treasonous Ex-Diplomat: Joseph Goričar as the “Benedict Arnold” of the Austrian Diplomatic Corps or as America’s Favorite Pan-Slavic Patriot?

Ellinor Schweighofer, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main
Consuls and Diplomats. Austrian representatives in Frankfurt during the German Confederation

10:45

Coffee Break

11:15

Panel 6 Consuls and New Markets

Chair: Michael Burri, Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies

Amy Millet, University of Kansas / Lawrence, Kansas
Commodity Diplomacy: The Food Industry as a Site of International Relations in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Habsburg Europe

Gábor Egry, Institute of Political History, Budapest
Big Business, Weltpolitik, and a Humble Hungarian: Consul-General Miklos Janko’s Role as Middleman for Austrian-Hungarian Capital in the Late Ottoman Empire

Chung Hin Mak, Humboldt University of Berlin
The Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition (1868-1871): Expansion of Habsburg Consular Network and Internationalism in the Pacific Rim

12:45

Lunch