

Call for Papers

International Conference ZMSBw (Germany) / Klaipėda University (Lithuania)

### **The Year 1945: Experiences and Legacies in the Baltic Sea Region**

On 7 September 1945, the four Allied powers came together for a now nearly forgotten war parade in Berlin. Despite growing disagreements between the British, French, and Americans on one side and the Soviets on the other regarding many post-war issues, the Allies remained united in celebrating their victory in the Second World War and demonstrating their collective resolve.

However, what appeared self-evident for the victorious powers was far from obvious in many parts of Europe that had either been part of Germany or temporarily occupied by it and had fallen into the Soviet ‘sphere of influence’ in 1944–1945. The transfer of approximately 1.7 million square kilometres to Soviet control ushered in far-reaching changes, profoundly altering their political and social trajectories. Tens of millions of people were displaced, entire generations of intellectuals were decimated, and civilian populations endured relentless violence. Political transformations unfolded unevenly: in some areas, they masqueraded as ‘people’s democracies’, while in others they took the form of outright Stalinist annexations.

The legacy of these changes remains visible on the political map even today, with entities like the Kaliningrad region serving as enduring reminders of the logic of post-war spoils. Meanwhile, in the Baltic states—which remained conspicuously absent from the post-war European political map—a protracted guerrilla war continued, claiming countless lives among both combatants and civilians. The scars left by this period deeply shaped the societies of the region. While the Allies celebrated their victory in Berlin and fostered the impression of imminent peace, the realities in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea region told a different story.

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the ‘end’ of the Second World War in Europe, this international conference seeks to revisit the significance of 1945 for the Baltic Sea region, with a particular focus on territories that transitioned from Nazi occupation to Soviet dominance in 1944–1945.

We invite historians, memory studies experts, political scientists, and security scholars to contribute to this discussion by addressing the following key questions:

1. Was 1945 truly the end of the war, or merely an imperceptible pause in a prolonged conflict? How did differing regional experiences shape later interpretations of the year’s significance?
2. The memory of 1945: What did eyewitnesses remember, and what did the architects of the new regimes wish to forget? How are these memories reflected in personal testimonies and institutional narratives?
3. The ticking time bombs: How did the fundamental changes of 1945 shape the subsequent security architecture of the Baltic Sea region? What lasting effects have they had on regional stability and geopolitics?

We welcome proposals for presentations that explore these and related topics. Submissions should include a tentative title, an abstract of up to 200 words, and a brief profile of the author(s).

Submission deadline: **1 March 2025**.

Submission email: [1945conference@ku.lt](mailto:1945conference@ku.lt)

Language of the conference: English.

Conference venue: Klaipėda, Republic of Lithuania.

Conference time: **8–10 October 2025**.

Selected speakers will be reimbursed for travel expenses and provided with accommodation during the conference. Notification of acceptance and logistical details will follow in due course.

We look forward to your contributions to this critical discussion on the legacy of 1945 and its enduring impact on the Baltic Sea region.

The event is jointly organised by the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology of the Klaipėda University (Lithuania) and the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences (Potsdam, Germany).

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