

Programme

IFZO ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 8 – 9 OCTOBER 2025

Approaches to Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region

Venue: Conference Hall, University Main Building, Domstraße 11

8 October 2025

13.00 – 17.00 REGISTRATION

14.30 – 14.45 WELCOME ADDRESS

Clemens Räthel, IFZO Spokesperson

14.45 – 16.00 **KEYNOTE: “Infrastructuring Resilience: Berlin’s Usable Pasts”**

Introduction: Sebastian van der Linden

Speaker: **Timothy Moss (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)**

16.00 – 16.30 COFFEE BREAK

16.30 – 18.00 **PANEL 1: *Resilient Regions and Landscapes***

Chair: Alexander Drost

Saara Mildeberg (Tallinn University)

“Negotiating Resilience: Cultural Tourism in a Post-Industrial Adventure Land”

Ihar Buika (University of Greifswald)

“How innovation politics (do not) become innovation policy? Elements of agonistic legitimization approach to regional innovation capacity in peripheralized regions of Eastern Germany”

Can Orhan (University of Greifswald)

“Declining Opportunities? Risk Perception in the Housing Market of Shrinking Cities in the Baltic Sea Region”

18.30 – 21.00

CONFERENCE DINNER

Brasserie Herrmann (Gützkower Str. 1)

9 October 2025

8.00 – 15.00

REGISTRATION

9.00 – 10.30

PANEL 2: *Civil Defence and Social Resilience*

Chair: Cornelia Linde

Alexandra M. Friede (Helmut-Schmidt-Universität, Hamburg)

“Preparing for the worst: everyday expressions of defence willingness in Sweden”

Marta Szulc (University of Szczecin)

“Youth policies in the EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region from the Perspective of building regional resilience”

Adrian Hyde-Price (University of Gothenburg)

“Strengthening Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region: Lessons from Sweden and the Nordic Countries”

10.30 – 11.00

COFFEE BREAK

11.00 – 12.30

PANEL 3: *Resilience and Academia*

Chair: Franziska Sajdak

Susanne Kabatnik (Trier University)

“Resilience: Everyone loves it. Everyone needs it. But what is it? A linguistic perspective”

Martin Kerntopf (University of Greifswald)

“Debriefing: IVLP Research Security”

12.30 – 13.30

LUNCH

13.30 – 15.00 **PANEL 4: *Resilience and Security***

Chair: Andris Banka

Radhey Wadhwa (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
“Building Climate Resilience through WEF Nexus”

Agnieszka Kuszewska-Bohnert (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)
“Small states’ agency and shelter vis-à-vis China: Estonia and Lithuania as case studies”

Thoi Takhellambam (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
“Crisis Narratives and the Construction of Baltic Unity in the Shadow of the Ukraine War”

15.00 – 15.30 COFFEE BREAK

15.30 – 17.00 **ROUNDTABLE**

“Civil Defence and Resilience”, Politics and Academia in Dialogue

Moderator: Victoria Oertel

Nicolas Bock (Freie Universität Berlin)

Kazimierz Musiał (Council of the Baltic Sea States)

Wolfgang Schmülling (Ministry of the Interior and Building, MV)

18.00 – 21.00 RECEPTION and EXHIBITION OPENING “Wikingergold. Schatzpolitik seit 1800”
Pomeranian State Museum (Rakower Str. 9)

Welcome Addresses:

Ruth Slenczka (Pomeranian State Museum)

Maren Heun (Stralsund Museum)

Daniel Schiller (University of Greifswald)

Isabelle Dolezalek and Charlotte Wenke (TU Berlin / University of Greifswald)

Abstracts

KEYNOTE

Timothy Moss: “Infrastructuring Resilience: Berlin’s Usable Pasts”

What can we learn about resilience through the lens of infrastructure history? In my talk I will explore how energy and water supply systems – understood as socio-technical configurations – offer special insights into the vulnerability and resilience of cities by virtue of the essential services they provide, their embeddedness in the urban fabric and the diverse technopolitical functions they serve. I reinterpret my abiding research on Berlin’s infrastructure history to explain how infrastructures are both medium and object of vulnerability threats and resilience responses, using contrasting cases from the city’s turbulent history for illustration. At the same time, I will argue that the history of infrastructures is an experiential resource that we can ill-afford to ignore when tackling contemporary crises in which they are inextricably entangled.

Tim Moss is a Senior Researcher at the Integrative Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems (IRI THESys) at the Humboldt University of Berlin and Honorary Professor at the Leibniz University Hannover. Tim’s research is distinctive for connecting historical studies of infrastructure with contemporary debates on sociotechnical and urban transitions. He draws on relational and socio-spatial concepts from urban geography and science and technology studies to analyse past infrastructural trajectories, setting an example in theoretical grounding for historical research. Conversely, he uses analysis of the past as a source of historical contextualisation and critical reflection for scholarship on current transitions to urban networked infrastructures. He is particularly interested in the processes by which energy and water infrastructures reflect and reproduce the multiple geographies, power relations and socio-materialities of a city.

PANEL 1: *Resilient Regions and Landscapes*

Saara Mildeberg: “Negotiating Resilience: Cultural Tourism in a Post-Industrial Adventure Land”

The seaside Ida-Viru County in Northeast Estonia has carried a dual status as a tourism destination and an oil shale mining region throughout the 20th century. Once a major energy producer in the Soviet West, oil shale extraction in Estonia peaked in the 1980s but decreased in the 1990s due to the post-Soviet restructuring of the industry. Although oil shale is still being produced and used in Estonia in large quantities, the impact of mining on the environment has forced the country to find alternative ways to produce energy and reallocate the workers. Meanwhile, the post-industrial landscapes have already found their place in the new tourism concept that brands Ida-Virumaa as an Adventure Land. Drawing on policy analysis, interviews with representatives of local tourism enterprises and heritage-led initiatives, and participant observation, this paper focuses on the regional tourism narratives and practices where the past, present, and future of industrial landscapes and heritage is negotiated, revealing the complex relationship between sustainability and resilience.

Saara Mildeberg received a bachelor’s degree in photography from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2015, and a master’s degree in ethnology from the University of Tartu in 2019. Since 2020, she is a doctoral student of Studies of Cultures at Tallinn University, in which she also works as a junior research fellow at the Centre for Landscape and Culture. Previously, Mildeberg has collected place lore and studied human-landscape relations in rural areas belonging to national parks. In 2020–2022, she was a researcher for the Horizon 2020 funded project SPOT — Social and Innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its Potential Towards Deepening Europeanisation, focusing on the communities that use

Soviet-era heritage and industrial landscapes in cultural tourism. Her current research is a continuation of these topics.

Ihar Buika: “How innovation politics (do not) become innovation policy? Elements of agonistic legitimization approach to regional innovation capacity in peripheralized regions of Eastern Germany”

Innovation is an important aspect of resilience in regional development. In left behind and peripheralised regions, it is nowadays challenged in two respects. On the one hand, there is a transformation pressure to legitimately secure economic competitiveness and growth for a “green” era. On the other hand, the legitimacy of a “green” economy requires a much wider perspective on innovation to include social issues of justice and inclusiveness. This dual legitimacy challenge is deeply rooted between conflicting priorities of ‘more’ versus ‘better’ innovation discourses being part of the ambivalent relationship between innovation policy and innovation politics (Pfotenhauer 2019; 2023; Irwin 2023).

The study examines this relationship in the perspective of agonistic practices of legitimization in two peripheralized regions in Eastern Germany. On the island Rügen, radically different perspectives on sustainable development paths and respective innovation policy approaches often remained stuck in antagonism and are legitimised by election outcome. In contrast, in Frankfurt (Oder), politically pluralistic views on particular development priorities were tamed in a consensus-oriented, processual manner in a local advisory council whose policy recommendations made significant legitimising pressure on the legal administrative bodies.

The study’s results demonstrate how elements of innovation politics stimulate innovation policy debate and indicates that the discourses of ‘more’ and ‘better’ innovation are not necessarily mutually exclusive in peripheralised regions. Moreover, agonistic legitimization proves impactful regarding reconfiguration of power relations to the advantage of those previously not involved or even marginalised as well as strengthening of regional institutional structures of pluralistic democracy.

Ihar Buika is currently a Research Associate at the Institute of Geography and Geology at the University of Greifswald. After studying geoecology at Belarusian State University, he completed a master's degree (M.Sc.) in human geography (urban and regional studies) at the University of Bayreuth. After completing his master graduation, he worked as a project manager/regional manager at the Regional Planning Authority of East Württemberg. His research (and doctoral thesis) deals with aspects of legitimacy of societal innovation capability in peripheralised regions of Eastern Germany.

Can Orhan: “Declining Opportunities? Risk Perception in the Housing Market of Shrinking Cities in the Baltic Sea Region”

Demographic change, outmigration, and deindustrialization transform the built environment of shrinking cities. Vacancy, neglected buildings and delayed renovations, decreasing housing prices, and inaccessibility of financial opportunities associated with the risk factors represent observable and transformative effects of the shrinkage process in the residential housing stock. These trends transform the function and accessibility of housing in an unstable environment, while they may also represent opportunities with financial returns for different groups in shrinking regions. This complexity creates ambiguity in the housing market of the shrinking cities: Housing in shrinking cities is often more *affordable* compared to other regions, which might attract owner-occupiers or investors; on the other hand, it may also be perceived as *worthless* or *undesirable* to invest in or be an owner-occupier in those regions due to negative social and economic indicators. This ambiguity may hold consequences for the asset-based welfare structure in shrinking cities and specifically for the role of owner-occupation.

Shrinking cities in the Baltic Sea Region are among the most profoundly affected and transformed globally, undergoing significant changes in the volume and density of their physical and social structures. Moreover, the region experiences different shrinkage processes, housing regimes, and practices, which produce various housing patterns. Using semi-structured interviews in 6 cities in Germany, Lithuania, and Finland, this paper examines changes in the perception of homeownership (i.e. risk, uncertainty, and opportunity) in shrinking cities in the context of actors, institutional settings, and spatial and economic characteristics.

Can Orhan is a Research Associate and PhD Candidate in Economic Geography at the University of Greifswald, and at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Baltic Sea Region Research (IFZO). His research focuses on housing, homeownership, and wealth patterns in shrinking cities in the Baltic Sea Region. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and a Master's degree in Urban Studies.

PANEL 2: *Civil Defence and Social Resilience*

Alexandra M. Friede: “Preparing for the worst: everyday expressions of defence willingness in Sweden”

Russia's war against Ukraine made European countries prepare for the worst, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. Finland's and Sweden's decision to join NATO is believed to have enhanced the collective deterrence and defence posture. Finland and Sweden are widely regarded as “policy entrepreneurs” when it comes to involving “whole of government” and “whole of society” in defence matters. Concentrating on the Swedish case, this paper shifts attention to the role of “ordinary people” within total defence arrangements. Sweden resumed its total defence planning in 2015. Total defence relies on the mobilisation of the entire population. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, policy actors have struck a harsher tone to raise “war awareness” among the Swedish public. Membership in voluntary defence organisations can be seen as an everyday expression of defence willingness. To examine responsibilities assigned to “ordinary people” within Sweden's total defence, this paper investigates how Swedes are motivated to join voluntary defence organisations. Using theoretical insights from social psychology, it processes results from a recently conducted survey among representatives of voluntary defence organisations, as well as publicly available communications materials. A deteriorating, more complex and volatile security environment is said to necessitate the involvement of a wide range of – public and private, civilian and military – stakeholders, including “ordinary people”. The implementation of such a “total” approach to defence can be observed in the Swedish case. This, in turn, tells us more about the domestic determinants of the EU's and NATO's defence and deterrence posture.

Alexandra M. Friede is a postdoctoral researcher at Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces in Hamburg, Germany. Her research concentrates on national defence policies in the Baltic Sea region, European defence cooperation, and EU/NATO, with a particular focus on total defence and how “ordinary people” are made responsible for crisis preparedness. She recently published in *European Security*, *European Policy Analysis*, and *Contemporary European Politics*.

Marta Szulc: “Youth policies in the EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region from the perspective of building regional resilience”

Adolescence is a transitional period in which children and young people gradually become recognised as adults, it is a period of half-dependence in which young people try to achieve personal autonomy while remaining dependent on their parents or the state”. In this difficult and challenging period, the role

of mature politicians who understand that youth involvement shapes future adults and participants in social and political life is extremely important. The resilience of this social group has implications for society as a whole. The aim of this article is to confirm the hypothesis that a properly implemented youth policy by the EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region fosters social resilience in the region. Youth policy is 'a strategy implemented by public authorities to provide young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of their societies and agents of change'. The study was based on data analysis of youth participation and youth policy in the Baltic Sea Region. The author identified the following factors that support youth resilience: safety, development, substance abuse prevention, preparation for adulthood, introduction to the labour market, support for personal independence, support for full participation in society. Social resilience is also enhanced by: interactions that foster the experience of community, including good peer relationships, a sense of belonging and a support network, a sense of community building. The analysis allows us to conclude that actively pursued youth policy has a strong impact on building social resilience.

Dr. Marta Szulc - Assistant Professor at the Institute on Politics and Security, University of Szczecin. Her main research interests focus on the Baltic Sea Region, the European Union and youth policy. Expert of Team Europe Direct and former participant of Baltic Youth Cooperation. Major publications include: "Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego", "Youth policy in the Baltic Sea Region: a case study of Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, and Polish youth participation in the BSSSC Working Group on Youth Policy, European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and EU macroregional approach : the analysis of ten years of the strategy implementation".

Adrian Hyde-Pryce: "Strengthening Resilience in the Baltic Sea Region: Lessons from Sweden and the Nordic Countries"

Nordic countries have long focused on civil defence and societal resilience as a key aspect of their security policies. For Sweden and Finland this has been of particular importance. As neutral countries in the Cold War, their ability to defend themselves was crucially dependent on the resilience of their societies. With the end of the Cold War, Sweden largely dismantled its civil defence, whereas Finland was more cautious and retained much of its infrastructure. With the deterioration of the European security environment, Sweden has begun reconstructing its 'total defence' (*totalförsvaret*), but is doing so in the context of radically transformed societal structures and public-private relations. This paper draws on theories of societal security and the collective action problem to examine the case of Sweden and its cooperation with Finland and Norway.

It focuses on four critical aspects of civil defence and societal resilience that Sweden and its Nordic partners are addressing that present particularly challenging policy dilemmas and raise interesting theoretical questions: (1) changing state-society relations following the wave of privatisations and deregulation that have taken place over the last three decades, which has considerably enhanced the role of private sector actors in critical infrastructure including energy, transportation, communications and health; (2) growing societal heterogeneity and individualism, which has weakened social cohesion and eroded social capital; (3) digitalisation, which has created new vulnerabilities and pushed the issue of cyber security in complex polycentric systems to the fore; (4) the radically changed media and information landscape, which makes resilient public communications in crisis situations more problematic. Taken together, these four social, economic and technological processes have created a new societal dynamic which Swedish and Nordic policy-makers must confront as they seek to craft policies for a 'whole-of-society' approach to societal resilience within the framework of a revised 'total defence' concept.

Adrian Hyde-Price is Professor of Political Science at Gothenburg University, Sweden. He has held academic appointments at the universities of Bath, Leicester, Birmingham, Southampton and Manchester, and was a Research Fellow at Chatham House. His research has focused on European security, and he has published widely on the EU and NATO, German foreign policy, and security in the Baltic Sea region. His publications include *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance* (2016, co-edited); *The Challenge of Multipolarity: European Security in the Twenty-First Century* (2007); *Germany and European Order* (2000); and *British Foreign Policy and the Anglican Church* (2008, co-edited). His current research focuses on Swedish foreign and security policy; Nordic-Baltic security cooperation; deterrence and defence on NATO's eastern flank; and theories of International Society, regionalization and foreign policy change.

PANEL 3: *Resilience and Academia*

Susanne Kabatnik: “Resilience: Everyone loves it. Everyone needs it. But what is it? A linguistic perspective”

This talk approaches *resilience* from a linguistic perspective. Rather than a fixed psychological trait, resilience is treated as a communicative practice: it is narrated, attributed, performed and negotiated—in everyday talk and public discourse. I first outline a discourse-linguistic view: using corpus-based methods, we examine how crises are framed (e.g., as danger or opportunity), who gains discursive authority, and which lexical, phraseological and metaphorical patterns legitimize or contest action. I then turn to conversation and interaction analysis to show how resilience is practised in situ: through sequentially organized responses to face-threats (e.g., counter-speech, denials, reframing, narrative reconstruction, downgrading, laughter). Two mechanisms—persistence and adaptation—become visible in language as speakers maintain or reconfigure stability. Empirical vignettes from therapeutic and messenger-based group interactions illustrate how collaborative wording and interactional work (re)activate communicative resources and make resilience observable.

Susanne Kabatnik is a Professor of Digital Lexicography at the University of Trier. Her research focuses on corpus linguistics, conversation analysis and medical communication. Her work centres on the analysis of linguistic practices in crisis situations, particularly in psychotherapeutic conversations.

Martin Kerntopf: “Debriefing: IVLP Research Security”

Research security protects research processes, data and results from unauthorised access and strategic influence. This is particularly relevant in sensitive areas such as STEM subjects, dual-use research and strategic manufacturing. The aim is to combine scientific integrity and international cooperation with compliance and security requirements. This presentation provides insights into the current status of processes in the United States and possible consequences for research in Germany.

Dr Martin Kerntopf is a political scientist and member of the DaLiJe data literacy project at the Digital University Unit at the University of Jena. He also works as a data manager at the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Baltic Sea Region (IFZO) at the University of Greifswald. His current work focuses on teaching data and future skills, as well as developing resources in the field of research security.

PANEL 4: *Resilience and Security*

Radhey Wadhwa: “Building Climate Resilience through WEF Nexus”

Climate resilience requires more than sector-specific interventions, it requires a holistic and beyond silos-level approach to address the interdependencies between critical resources. The Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus framework is one such framework, which is gaining recognition as a useful approach to manage synergies and trade-offs beyond traditional silos approach. It puts emphasis on the integrated governance and thus aims to enhance resource efficiency by mitigating environmental degradation. Initially introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2011, the framework has evolved into a global paradigm with multiple scholars outlining its benefits. This approach is highly pertinent in the Baltic Sea Region, a transboundary region which is a semi-enclosed and highly sensitive ecosystem. However, there exists a persistent gap between the nexus thinking and policy implementation in the Baltic Sea Region countries.

The paper explores how the WEF Nexus as a framework can be utilised to enhance climate resilience and build environmental security in the BSR. The paper uses comparative analysis of Lithuania, Finland and Germany to understand key system interdependencies between water, energy and food security and will further assess how regional government bodies enable or constrain integrated responses. By examining policies of regional bodies, including the EU Green Deal, Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) and EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), the paper aims to examine how the WEF Nexus approach can be embedded. The paper draws from insights of social-ecological resilience theory and the securitisation framework of Buzan and Dabily. The paper puts forward an advocacy where in WEF Nexus is used as an actionable governance strategy. Lastly, the paper aims to bridge the gap between conceptual frameworks and policy action by advocating the WEF Nexus as a governance framework for the region.

Radhey Wadhwa is a Ph.D. candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, and his research includes WEF Nexus and Climate security in the Baltic Sea Region. He is an Erasmus+ program candidate at the Vytautas Magnus University VMU, Lithuania, from September to October 2025 this year. He holds a Master's in International Relations and Area Studies from JNU (2020-2022). He has written extensively on climate-related topics in Indian outlets such as Financial Express and ORF and international platforms such as Australian Outlook as well.

Agnieszka Kuszewska-Bohnert: “Small states’ agency and shelter vis-à-vis China: Estonia and Lithuania as case studies”

Due to the prevailing threat, the discourse on Estonia and Lithuania’s security strategies is focused on Russia and regional challenges. This paper looks beyond these narratives, and seeks to unpack the multi-dimensional resilience of the two Baltic states with a focus on China. An assertive Asian actor with aspirations to reshape the global order is using security dynamics to enhance its presence in Europe. Russia’s weakening due to Western sanctions, coupled with its growing reliance on China, could potentially facilitate China’s objectives. In this dynamic environment, it is worth looking at resilience vis-à-vis China, that became a notable aspect of Estonian and Lithuanian policies. It is hypothesised that both these countries demonstrate an apparent lack of strategic trust in authoritarian Beijing’s policies and that they are choosing to strengthen their position through agency/shelter strategies and a combination of more visible and low-profile resistance.

The aim of the presentation is to analyse the strategies of Estonia and Lithuania and contextualise them in the broad study on small states as significant, albeit frequently disregarded, architects of the emerging world order. The analysis adopts the author’s theory of agency and shelter, which is built upon the studies of Baldur Thorhallsson, Tom Long and Christine Ingebritsen. Multi-dimensional agency and shelter strategy has three key components: political/security, economic and technological, and is defined

as the state's capacity to deter, adapt and resist coercion or interference by a powerful actor. It relates to diverse tactics (active resistance, values-driven diplomacy, searching for protection by fostering alliances) employed by small states to overcome their vulnerabilities in asymmetrical relations.

Research questions: (1) What are the similarities and differences in Estonian and Lithuanian narratives and tactics towards China? (2) How can their multi-dimensional agency and shelter strategy be comparatively exemplified and evaluated in a strategic model diagram by looking at their deterrence, adaptation and resistance?

Agnieszka Kuszewska-Bohnert: Associate Professor at the Faculty of International and Political Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Her research focuses on international relations with emphasis on South Asia's challenges and its relations with Europe, China, India in IR. She is the author of six books, numerous research articles and has conducted extensive research in South, Central Asia and China. She has been a visiting professor/delivered guest lectures at Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Calcutta, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Nepal Institute for Regional Cooperation and Engagement, Baltic Academy, Riga, University of Rostock, Heidelberg University and University of Leipzig. She taught a course on security challenges in South/East Asia at the University of Tartu, Estonia. In 2023, she initiated comparative studies on small states' strategies with a research project conducted in Nepal. In summer semester of 2024/2025, she delivers a course on India and China in international relations at the University of Greifswald (Dep. of Political Science & Communication Studies).

Thoi Takhellambam: "Crisis Narratives and the Construction of Baltic Unity in the Shadow of the Ukraine War"

Informed by the collective memory of the Soviet occupation, the Baltic states- Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been some of the most vocal critics of Russian aggression, warning of its threat well before February 2022. These states have been narrating the crisis and the subsequent escalations in Ukraine as a threat to their sense of security. However, while the Russian narratives regarding Baltic states are well-documented and critically analysed, the formulation, projection, strategic use and effectiveness of Baltic narratives in countering Russian influence remains an underexplored study area. Again, the narrative from the region is often assumed to be unified without sufficient attention to the variance in their individual states' narratives and the coherence that constitutes their "Baltic" identity. This study examines the points of convergence and divergence in the construction, projection and reception of the crisis narratives of the three Baltic states in the context of the war in Ukraine, focusing on state discourse post-February 2022. It relies on the discourse analysis of governments' official communiques, political statements and policy documents to achieve its empirical goal of finding narrative patterns. The study finds that, while the Baltic states exhibit variation in their intensity and rhetoric style of messaging, there is a narrative alignment around the themes of existential threat, deterrence, historical memory, democratic values and alliance solidarity. Secondly, the Baltic states' crisis narratives in response to the Ukraine war have refined and realigned their strategic narratives about sovereignty, identity and security. Finally, the unified regional Baltic narratives have amplified the voices of resilience in the region in the broader European security framework. The study underscores the role of the small states' narratives in forging social cohesion and regional unity in times of crisis.

Thoi Takhellambam, a citizen of India currently pursuing PhD degree at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. She holds a MA degree in Politics with Specialization in International Studies. Her PhD thesis topic is "Representation of Russia in the American Strategic Narratives and Media Framing of the Russo-Ukrainian War".

ROUNDTABLE: *Civil Defence and Resilience*

Nicolas Bock is a Research Associate at the Disaster Research Unit (DRU) at the Freie Universität Berlin. Since 2024 he works as part of the research project “Krisenfit: Krisenfitte Kommunalverwaltungen – Strategien und Instrumente zur Vorbereitung auf multiple Lagen“. His research focus includes but is not limited to socio-economic disaster research, national/international emergency management systems, critical infrastructure and civil protection and defence.

Before joining the CBSS as Senior Adviser for Regional Identity in 2023, **Kazimierz Musiał**, a Polish national, worked as a professor and researcher at the Institute of Scandinavian and Finnish Studies at the University of Gdańsk, Poland. He focused on studying regional cooperation and communities in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea area. He holds an MA in Scandinavian Studies from Poznań University, a PhD in Political Science from Humboldt University Berlin, and a habilitation degree in Sociology from Jagiellonian University in Cracow. At the CBSS, he is now responsible for matters related to culture, higher education, and youth.

Since November 2021, **Wolfgang Schmülling** is the State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior and Building Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Victoria Oertel is a senior researcher at the Department of Philosophy, University of Greifswald. She was a doctoral fellow at the IRTG “Baltic Peripeties. Narratives of Reformations, Revolutions and Catastrophes” and wrote her PhD thesis on “Health as a Happy Ending? Potentials of a Narratological Interpretation of the Concept of Disease Using the Example of the Conceptions of Disease and Health before and After the Accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany”. Since 2021 she holds an educational degree in Fine Arts and Philosophy from the University of Greifswald.