ESREA Active Democratic Citizenship and Adult Learning Research Network Conference

Learning and Practising Active Democratic Citizenship in the Struggle against Growing Authoritarianism

Venue: Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Aškerčeva cesta 2, 1000 Ljubljana

Programme

Day 1 – 23 September 2026

08:15–09:15	Registration and coffee (Lobby)
09:15–10:00	**Opening of the Conference (Room 2)**

	Room 4	**Room 13**
10:00–11:30	Session 1 *Chair: Borut Mikulec*	Session 2 *Chair: Tadej Košmerl*
	Benny Momper *Manès Sperber Revisited: The Courage of Doubt*	**Nele Rathke** *Outreach Political Adult Education – How Much Political Action Fits into Political Education?*
	Fergal Finnegan *Fascism in Critical Theory in the Past and Critical Pedagogy in the Present*	**Neda Čairović, Natalija Gojak, Nikola Koruga, Jana Mišović** *In the Vortex of Change: The Transformation of the Teacher's Role Due to Student Protests*
	Anna Bilon-Piórko and Liwiusz Piórko *Adult Education and Learning for Active Democracy – from Neoliberal to Diffractive Subjectivation*	**Karolina Babič, Kristina Božič, Urška Breznik and Matic Primc** *A Public Stance of Education Providers in Response to War Crimes and Genocide: A Case Study from Slovenia*

11:30–12:00	Coffee break (Lobby)

	Room 4	**Room 13**
12:00–13:30	Session 3 *Chair: Diana Holmqvist*	Session 4 *Chair: Fergal Finnegan*
	Chad Hoggan and Tetyana Hoggan-Kloubert *Beyond Competencies: A Framework for Civic Literacy in an Era of Democratic Disillusionment*	**Joana Lobo Guimarães, João Caramelo, Vanessa Mendes and Tiago Neves** *Emancipation or Precarity? Adult Education and Migrant Professional Integration in Question*

	Borut Mikulec *Evaluating the Impact of the Erasmus+ Programme on Adult Education in Slovenia: Evidence of Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation*	**Barbara Samaluk** *Migrants as Organic Intellectual Educators in a Two-Way Integration Process*
	Tamás Kovács *Adult Education, Inequality and the Democratic Deficit: Lessons from Hungarian Employment-Oriented Adult Learning Policy, 2001–2020*	**Rachel C. Mayr** *Language Provision Under Pressure: Professional Responses in German Adult Education*

13:30–14:30	Lunch break (Lobby)

	Room 4	**Room 13**
14:30–16:00	Session 5 *Chair: Barbara Samaluk*	Session 6 *Chair: Katja Lihtenvalner*
	Jelka Zorn and Uršula Lipovec Čebron *Teaching Migration in the Age of Securitization*	**Natt Söderpil Jakauby** *Bodies Like Bark: Civil Disobedience in Forest Activism*
	Tallie Gilboy *"At Some Point We Must Move beyond Superficial Awareness": Examining Anti-racism and Intersectionality in Irish Social Work Education*	**Tadej Košmerl** *Active Citizenship in Youth Organisations through Education for Sustainable Development*
	Diana Holmqvist *Undoing Privilege for Democracy: How Can We Teach Increasingly Disillusioned Young Adults to Hope and Have Empathy?*	**Urška Štremfel and Meta Novak** *Youth Active Citizenship in Slovenia: Implications for Adult Civic Education in Contexts of Democratic Erosion and Institutional Distrust*

18:00	**Exhibition and Reception Dinner (Lobby)** **Exhibition by Amnesty International: *34 years of shame: "Today my only wish is that this would be written in textbooks, that the erasure is not concealed"*** The exhibition shows the ethnonationalist erasure of 25,671 people from the register of permanent residence within the newly independent Slovenian state and their struggle to regain their rights.

Day 2 – 24 September 2026

	Room 4	Room 2
09:00–10:30	Session 7 *Chair: Fergal Finnegan*	Session 8 *Chair: Borut Mikulec*
	Minjie Cai, Sian Moore, Ruth Ballardie and Jane Lethbridge *The UK Nurses' Strikes between 2022 and 2023 as a Space of Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*	**Gennaro Balzano, Vito Balzano** *Teacher Professional Development and Active Democratic Citizenship in Times of Polycrisis: The Italian Case between Performativity and Professional Recognition*
	Ana Luísa Costa, Mariana Fonseca, Dalila Pinto Coelho, Marta Sampaio and Isabel Menezes *Mapping Professional Activism in Inland Regions: Experiences, Constraints and Opportunities for Political Action and Learning*	**Meredith McLaughlin, Andy Pannell, Margaret Hudson and Jennifer Mellizo** *Deliberative Spaces in Times of Moral Injury: Communities of Practice as Antidote*
	Ana Luísa Costa, Marta Sampaio, Dalila Pinto Coelho, Mariana Fonseca and Isabel Menezes *Co-creating a Professional Activism Community of Practice: Adult Learning and Political Education Through Collective Action in Inland Regions*	**Davide Zoletto** *Educators' Professional Cultures in Socioculturally Complex Postdigital Environments: Decolonial Perspectives*

10:30–11:00	Coffee Break (Lobby)

	Room 4	Room 13
11:00–12:30	Session 9 *Chair: Tadej Košmerl*	Session 10
	Katja Lihtenvalner *How Radical Adult Education Helps Shape the Principles and Identity of Urban Grassroots Communities*	WORKSHOP **Brigitte Kukovetz and Annette Sprung** *Global Freedom of Movement and Its Impact on Adult Education: Imagining an Alternative Future*
	Alessia Polidor *Placemaking as a Commoning Practice: An Ethnographic Case Study of an Emerging Community Space in Lecco, Italy*	
	Zala Virant and Katja Fidler *Spaces of Collective Learning and Radical Adult Education: Roma Communities and Active Citizenship in a Neoliberal Context*	

12:30–13:30	Lunch break (Lobby)

	Room 4	**Room 2**
13:30–15:00	Session 11 *Chair: Diana Holmqvist*	Session 12
	Mandy Schulze *Regional Universities as Spaces of Democratic Learning? Seminar-Based Learning and Democratic Practice under Neoliberal Conditions*	BOOK PANEL **Ergün Özgür, Mustafa Şener, Bahar Ayça Okçuoğlu and Fatma Gül Eryıldız Şenvardar** *Highly Qualified Immigrants and Refugees (Europe and Türkiye)*
	Karola Cafantaris, Aldonna Islami, Anke Grotlüschen and Klaus Buddeberg *Follow Up: Emerging Questions and Further Research in the Project "Firewalls in Education"*	

15:00–15:30	Coffee break (Lobby)
15:30–16:00	**Closing Session (Room 2)**
16:00–18:00	**City Tour** Exploring Autonomous Places and Self-Organised Communities in Ljubljana (meeting in the Lobby)