



# easa

European Association of Social Anthropologists  
Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux



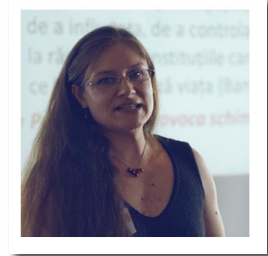
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# 1. President's Letter

## EASA PRESIDENT UPDATES MEMBERS ON RECENT EXEC ACTIONS.

Dear EASA members,



As I write these lines, the amount of grief and anxiety related to violent conflicts in several parts of the world is overwhelming for many of us. I want to acknowledge the emotional toll that the last month has taken on many of us, and reiterate my heartfelt solidarity with all our members and colleagues who have suffered, directly or indirectly, from the violence in Israel/Palestine and elsewhere.

Under these circumstances, it appears more important than ever to enhance anthropology's relevance in the world, and to allow it to fulfil part of its mission – as Ruth Benedict saw it – to 'make the world safe for human differences' through scholarship and public engagement. For that, we have been busy thinking about ways to strengthen EASA's engagement with the members and with the broader public.

In October, the executive committee met over the duration of several days to chart EASA's path forward in a world increasingly plagued by conflicts, overlapping crises, and the continuous precarisation of labour. It has become clear that the executive committee as governing structure is too limited in numbers and time to make the association grow and respond adequately to all the challenges that anthropology faces – from academic precarity to the neoliberalisation of the university, and from struggles around academic freedom to the rise of authoritarian governance that also impacts academia. For that reason, we are working towards **establishing several working/thinking groups** that would involve EASA members on the various domains of activity of the association, from lobby to publishing, and from public engagement to mentorship for early career anthropologists. We believe that by increasing member participation in such structures we can enhance the sustainability of our actions, as well as the democratisation of EASA's governance, while at the same time raising the next generation of anthropologists in the spirit of service to our discipline. At the same time, we hope that such groups will not be experienced



as ‘yet another bureaucratic committee’ whose meetings will burden their members, but as real communities brimming with ideas and dynamism. This is a process that will take some time – and, crucially, your support – but we foresee the set-up of these new structures and the clarification of their working procedures before the next EASA conference. These groups are part of a wider EASA **strategy** that we started to work on in October. We will soon create spaces of discussion around the strategic directions and the concrete steps to realise it over the next few years, and all members will be able to contribute through feedback and democratic voting.

Besides the work on a longer-term strategy of the association, in the first part of our mandate, we have undertaken steps to **strengthen our communication both inward and outward** through the appointment of our communication specialist, Rowena Harding. She breathed new life into our social media and imparted knowledge on communication strategies through a social media training dedicated to our networks, which we also opened to representatives of national anthropology associations in Europe. With this initiative, we aim at enhancing the public engagement of our discipline while further building our anthropological community in Europe. In this sense, the organisation of the first **European Anthropology Days** in February 2024 – about which you can read more in the newsletter – is another step to increase our discipline’s visibility.

Other achievements of our executive committee are described in more detail in the rest of the newsletter. I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in December, to tell you more about what the executive committee has been working on in the first half of its mandate, and to receive your feedback and ideas on how to move EASA forward.

All my very best,  
Ana Ivasiuc



## 2. The conflict in Israel/Palestine: exec statement and members' reactions

### THE EXEC RECEIVED SEVERAL RESPONSES TO THEIR RECENT STATEMENT.

The EASA executive committee has received heartfelt correspondence from members over the horrendous events in Gaza, Israel, and Palestine. We have received messages of support and criticism to our original statement, from valued colleagues. We think it is important that these are published in recognition of some of the divergent views.

At the centre of this conflict are long term inequalities of power which have been reproduced in ongoing structural violence and resistance. The discipline of anthropology, attentive to the complexity of relations of power, domination, colonisation, and resistance, is able to offer a well-informed critique on the violence currently taking place.

While we continue to stand in solidarity with those who lost loved ones in both Israel and Palestine, the exec committee hopes that we can reflect the views of many of our members in condemning the use of ongoing violence.

The nature of the conflict is complex, involving deep historical structures of racism and victimisation, but there are surely some basic building blocks to a peaceful resolution. Reflecting humanitarian ideals, we ask for:

1. An immediate unconditional and permanent ceasefire to halt a genocide in Gaza and the provision of all necessary humanitarian aid.
2. The immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and prisoners.
3. A commitment from all parties involved to building a peace process that offers justice, equality, and citizenship to all the people in Palestine and Israel.
4. A process that will quickly bring food, water, shelter, and land for Palestinian people.





We understand the differences of opinion that will exist among colleagues and hope that we can create spaces of dialogue and debate in the hope that we can become wiser and allow anthropology to foster solutions.

[View the Executive statement.](#)

[View the letters received by the Exec since the statement .](#)

Recently, the EASA statement was applauded and mentioned by the [Catalan Institute of Anthropology \(ICA\)](#) and by [ANKULEGI, the Basque Association of Anthropology](#) in their own statements. [add to the names of the associations a hyperlink to their statements]

### 3. Update on the EASA Conference

DECISIONS ON PANEL PROPOSALS IMMINENT.

## **EASA BARCELONA 2024**

The 18th EASA Biennial Conference will be hosted by Universitat de Barcelona 23-26 July 2024: [EASA2024: Doing and Undoing with Anthropology.](#)

The conference will be hosted by the Department of Anthropology of Universitat de Barcelona (UB). Catalan and Spanish anthropology have been historically peripheral to the big schools of anthropological research, but in the last decades they have experienced a considerable development, and established an open dialogue and strong ties with European and Latin American anthropology. We have opened the call for panels to our local languages, Spanish and Catalan, in addition to EASA's official languages, English and French.

The two main venues of the conference will be the Facultat de Geografia i Història of UB and the Museu Marítim de Barcelona. They are located in El Raval, in the centre of Barcelona. While being in the centre, El Raval is also a social periphery: a migrant and working-class neighbourhood that has experienced an intense process of gentrification and touristification in the last decades. The neighbourhood constitutes an appropriate platform to reflect on questions of



interest to European (and global) Anthropology, including the flows of people, knowledge, commodities, and capital shaping contemporary social life; the human and non-human activities involved in place-making processes; the construction of meaning and hope at the intersection of centre and periphery. We would like the neighbourhood to be a protagonist in the conference: several activities, such as visits and laboratories, will be organised within the neighbourhood.

**The conference theme is “Doing and Undoing with Anthropology”.**

Anthropology has been questioned from sometimes opposite directions: it has faced growing decolonial critiques as well as calls to restore the values of so – called “Western civilization”. These criticisms cut to the core of how, and what we do as Anthropology: how it produces and reproduces itself, at several levels. First, they highlight the limits of the discipline, and provoke adversary reactions to interdisciplinarity, or on the opposite, encourage anti-disciplinary and anti-academic approaches. Second, there is an increasing awareness of the uneven relations between centres and peripheries, the hegemony of English-speaking countries, at a time when international funding agencies increasingly require research produced in English. Third, they impinge upon the growing precarisation and casualisation of labour, that results not only in the general deterioration of working conditions, but also of the production of knowledge. All these problems may be common to many disciplines but seem to be affecting Anthropology with a particular intensity. Claims to “let anthropology burn” have been made, proposing to “undo” anthropology as we know it. In these terms, “undoing” anthropology may not mean simply to destroy or abandon the discipline, but to disassemble and reassemble it differently. What would “undoing” anthropology imply? How can we reimagine and reconfigure what it means to do anthropology today? How can we find new ways of doing and undoing in the broadest possible sense?

We are planning for a dual mode conference: delegates will have the option to attend in-person (f2f) and/or online with both types of delegates able to convene, present, chair, discuss, and attend the relevant sections of the conference.

**The call for panels closed on 13th of November. The next deadlines are:**

**11 December - 22 January: Call for Papers & Labs**

**5 February - 11 March: Call for Funding**

**11 March - 16 June: Early Bird Registration**



## 4. Autumn webinars

### EASA CONTINUES TO HOLD PERIODIC WEBINARS.

Webinar on Mental Health in Academia, October 10

To mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2023, EASA held a webinar together with the [Researcher Mental Health Observatory \(ReMO\)](#) to raise awareness on mental health in academia. Two members of EASA and PrecAnthro, Mariya Ivancheva and Alexandra Oancă, and two members of ReMO, Brian Cahill and Luisa Solms, participated in the webinar. The discussion was facilitated by Alexandra Oancă, who is currently serving as the Vice-president of the EASA Executive Committee and who has run for the board in order to put mental health and its relations to academic precarity on the agenda of the European anthropological community.

Mariya Ivancheva presented some of the findings of the “[Precarity Report](#)” of EASA members (Fotta et al. [2020](#)) that could help us understand the impact of working conditions on mental health and well-being in academia:

- Only 42.7% of surveyed EASA members managed to cover their living expenses solely from wages and from one full-time job;
- 53% experienced discrimination, unfair treatment, harassment, bullying, physical and emotional abuse;
- While 68% think it is unlikely that they will get a permanent post within the next 5 years, only 4% are seriously planning to get out of academia.

This keeps academics into a deadlock: the uneven distribution of security and stability maintains and even increases the existential precarity of academics, including but not limited to the inability to plan the future.

Brian Cahill presented ReMO and their activities, including ongoing initiatives such as the [STAIRCASE survey](#) that aims to understand the impact of working conditions on mental health and well-being in academia. The concerns that spurred the formation of this network around the mental health of researchers - and their subsequent application as ReMO as a COST action - were born within early-career associations, such as the [European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers](#) (Eurodoc) and the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) (MCAA).



Both Brian Cahill and Luisa Solms emphasised the ongoing mental health crisis among PhD students: the risk of developing anxiety and depression is six times more likely for PhD students compared to the general, university-educated population.

The discussion portion of the webinar touched on the need for action at a variety of levels and scales: from wellbeing, individual-level initiatives to systemic, structural change. While wellbeing initiatives usually promoted by universities are meant to alleviate the immediate suffering of academics and students (through support services, psychotherapy, meditation, yoga sessions), they need to be complemented by collective, structural solutions. Among the later, the panelists mentioned:

- unionizing and anti-precarity organising, committed to the politicisation of precarity and mental health;
  - approaching mental health as a labour right;
  - the need for learned, professional societies such as EASA to engage in sustained national and EU-level advocacy on social sciences and humanities;
  - lobbying for research career frameworks that prioritise mental health concerns and wellbeing;
  - challenging the restricted narratives about academic excellence, outputs, and evaluation;
  - Athena Swann-like monitoring and fair hiring awards; and so much more.
- For further info, on the EASA website, you can read the description of the webinar in full. **You can watch the [recording](#) of the presentations but not of the discussion.**





Webinar on Social anthropology and the European Research Council, 11 October

A second webinar was organised on 11 October on the topic of social anthropology and the current ERC grants program. The webinar hosted SH3 Panel Coordinator Dr. Lionel Thelen, who explained the range of options that the ERC funding scheme offers to social anthropologists, and clarified the changes that took place recently in the programme - notably the decision to place social anthropology as one of the core areas under the new SH8 panel - Studies of Cultures and Arts. The webinar also showcased three anthropologists who were recently successful with their ERC Starting Grant applications - Maddalena Gretel Cammelli, Tessa Diphoorn, and Elżbieta Drażkiewicz. **These brilliant scholars shared their 'tips and tricks' with regards to their successful applications and encouraged anthropologists to make use of the funding opportunities offered by the European Research Council.**

The [recording](#) of the webinar is available on our website.

## 5. Annual General Meeting of the members of the Association

**ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND (ONLINE).**

The 2023 EASA AGM will take place online on **the 21st of December 14-16:00 CET**. The link will be circulated to all members two days before.

### AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of previous AGM held in Belfast
3. Annual Reports and Accounts
  - President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer: receipt of accounts for the year to 31st December 2022 ([accounts summary PDF](#))
  - Journal editors
  - Book editors



- Networks
  - Media, communication and membership
  - Lobbying
  - Emerging issues
  - Ethics and Integrity Committee
4. Any other business

## 6. European Anthropology Days 15-17th of February 2024



**CONTRIBUTE WITH PUBLIC ACTIONS TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN ANTHROPOLOGY DAYS.**

The first edition of the [European Anthropology Days](#) will take place on the 15-17th of February 2024, thus resonating also with AAA World Anthropology Day to be held on the 15th of February 2024. If you plan to organise local or national events that promote anthropology towards the wider public on or (exceptionally for this first edition) around these days, please send us a title, paragraph of description of the event, an image, the date and place, a link to local webpage if available, to the contact address: [web.admin@nomadit.co.uk](mailto:web.admin@nomadit.co.uk), email title: EA



Days.

We shall promote the event via the new page dedicated to the EA Days and social media before the event, and share images and texts after the event, among members and as part of our lobbying and outreach strategy. EASA thanks all the national associations for their implication, support, feedback and follow up of this initiative, which is crucial for its promotion and sustainability.



## 7. Introducing Dr. Hayal Akarsu, co-opted member of the Executive Committee

### READ MORE ABOUT HAYAL.

Hayal Akarsu is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University. Previously, she was a Junior Research Fellow in the Crown Center for Middle East Studies and Lecturer in Anthropology at Brandeis University. She obtained her PhD in 2018 from the School of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, and her MA in 2012 from Near Eastern Studies at New York University (NYU). From her current book project on police reforms to her ongoing research on digital policing and environmental crimes, Akarsu explores how various imaginations of risk and threat securitize and police different realms of social and natural life.

## 8. Introducing the new members of the Integrity Committee

### READ MORE ABOUT THE NEW COMMITTEE.

Following a recruitment process initiated over the summer, three new EASA members have joined the Integrity Committee. It is our joy to introduce them to you, in alphabetical order:

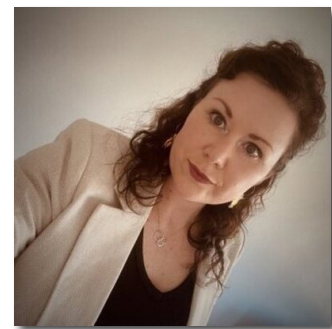
**Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco** is a Cultural Anthropologist





with food and economic anthropology expertise. Serving as an assistant professor at the University of Gastronomic Sciences and a fellow at Durham University's Department of Anthropology, he also coordinates professional networks related to economic and food anthropology for the European Association of Social Anthropology. Since 2019 he has chaired the Ethics Committee of the University of Gastronomic Sciences. In the same institution, he coordinates the undergraduate program in Gastronomic Sciences and Cultures. His research primarily explores local development and the role of food and gastronomy's impact on economic and socio-economic progress. His notable publications include "Food Festivals and Local Development in Italy" (2020, Palgrave) and "Il Cibo del Futuro" (2021, Carocci).

**Kathleen Openshaw** is a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University, where she teaches ethics. Kathleen's research interests are local migrant lived religious expressions and material religion. Kathleen is a member of the research team for an Australian Research Council Discovery Project, "The African Diaspora and Christianity in Australia". She is co-editor (with Rocha and Hutchinson) of *Australian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Arguments from the Margins* (2020). Kathleen is currently working on her forthcoming ethnography of the Brazilian megachurch, The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) in Australia, to be published with Rutgers University Press.



**Rachel Spronk** is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. Her various research projects evidence a concern with the historical trajectories that have shaped the present, the production of knowledge about gender and sexuality and, ultimately, how the lived experiences of people inform our theoretical models. Overall, she investigates the interface between sexuality and the middle classes in Ghana and Kenya, examining problematic assumptions behind both terms. Since 2014 she has been a member of the Ethics Advisory Board of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), at the University of Amsterdam.







## 9. Announcement of new networks

Sensory Media, Anthropology of History, Digital Anthropology, Creative Anthropology, Anthropology of the Sea(s), Anthropology of Surveillance

Over the past 12 months we have seen six new networks come into existence:

[Sensory Media Anthropology Network](#)

[EASA Network for an Anthropology of History](#)

[The Anthropology of the Sea\(s\) Network](#)

[The Anthropology of Surveillance Network](#)

[European Network for Digital Anthropology](#)

[Creative Anthropology Network](#)

Please visit the webpages of these new networks to learn more and to join if interested. The last two are such recent newcomers that their sites are under construction.

## 10. Call for the next conference venue EASA 2026

Bids are now invited.

EASA is now seeking bids to host the next biennial conference due in 2026. [Please view this page](#) for more details as to what is required/expected.