

Faculty of Arts – University of Ostrava



**CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL HISTORY**

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CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Everything that mankind has done from its very start to the just-passed moments has become an integral part of its history. The knowledge of history is not only a necessity to understand one's own history, but it should provide also so much needed lessons for the future. Leading Czech economic historian Eduard Kubů once noted (with exaggeration) that the history is like the beer: the economic connections are like the famous golden beverage, everything else is just fluffy velvet foam. Whether we agree with this statement or we are sceptical about it, it has been just this economic dimension of human activities that has very often indicated the direction of the human action. And this is what the Centre for Economic and Social History of the University of Ostrava deals with.

[#socialhistory](#) [#economy](#)
[#modernization](#) [#society](#)
[#historiography](#)

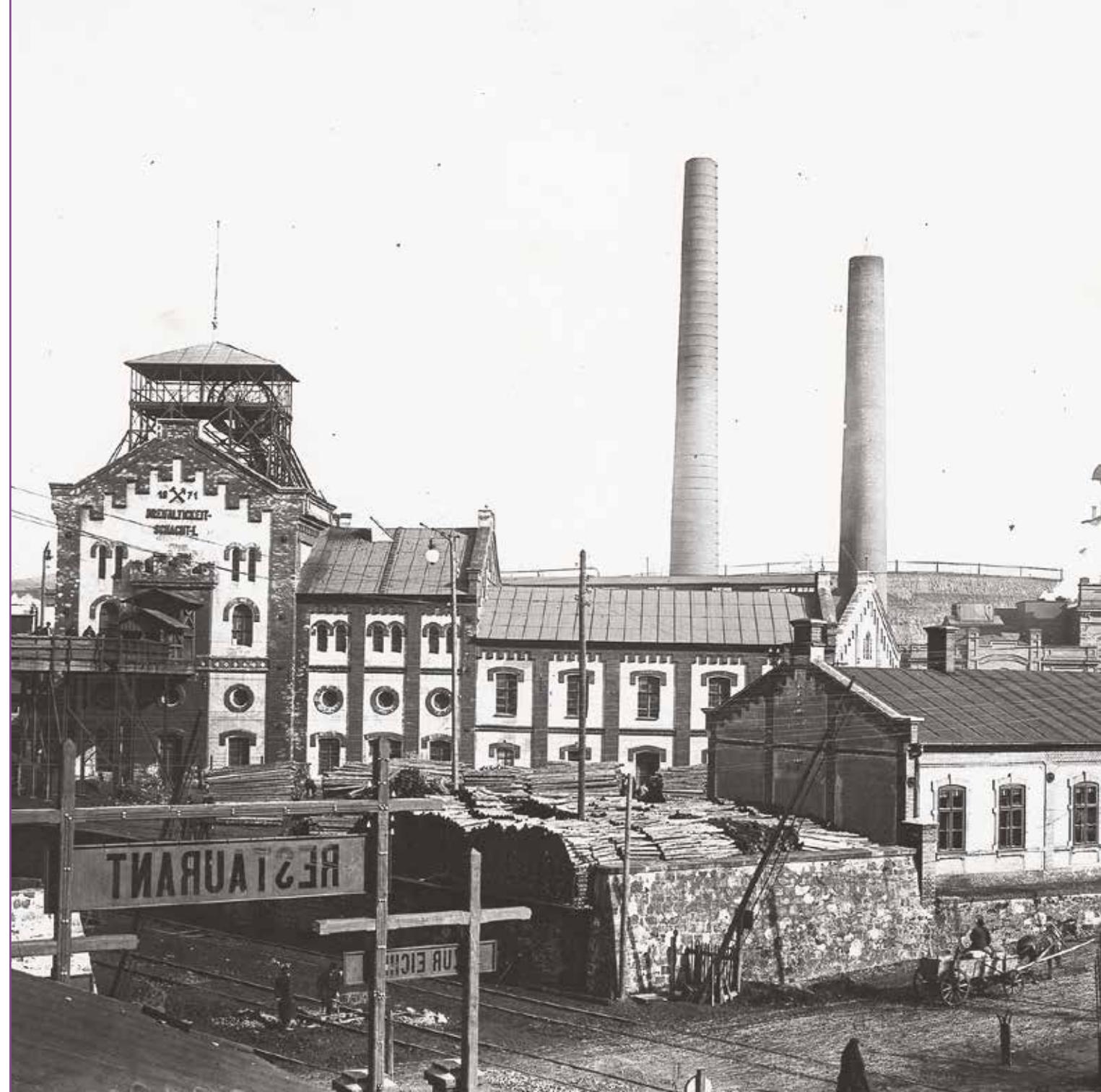
CESH

Everything Has its History

The Centre for Economic and Social History (abbreviated as CESH) focuses primarily on the research of the historical process of modernization as a regional phenomenon, whether in a broader definition (Europe, Central Europe, etc.) or in a narrower one (Silesia, Austrian Silesia, Moravia, etc.). The Centre emphasizes the anthropological dimension of modernization processes and their impact on individual segments of social structures and links. This research intention creates the possibilities of interregional comparison as well as the capture of changes of a global nature.

“The Centre takes a systematic approach to the researched problematics. It attempts to capture the image of selected historical regions in their entirety and with the respect to historical resources, thus creating a foundation for further scientific disciplines and helping to predict further development trends,” prof. Aleš Zářický, Director of the Centre, adds.

More about the Centre for Economic and Social History: ff.osu.eu/CHSD



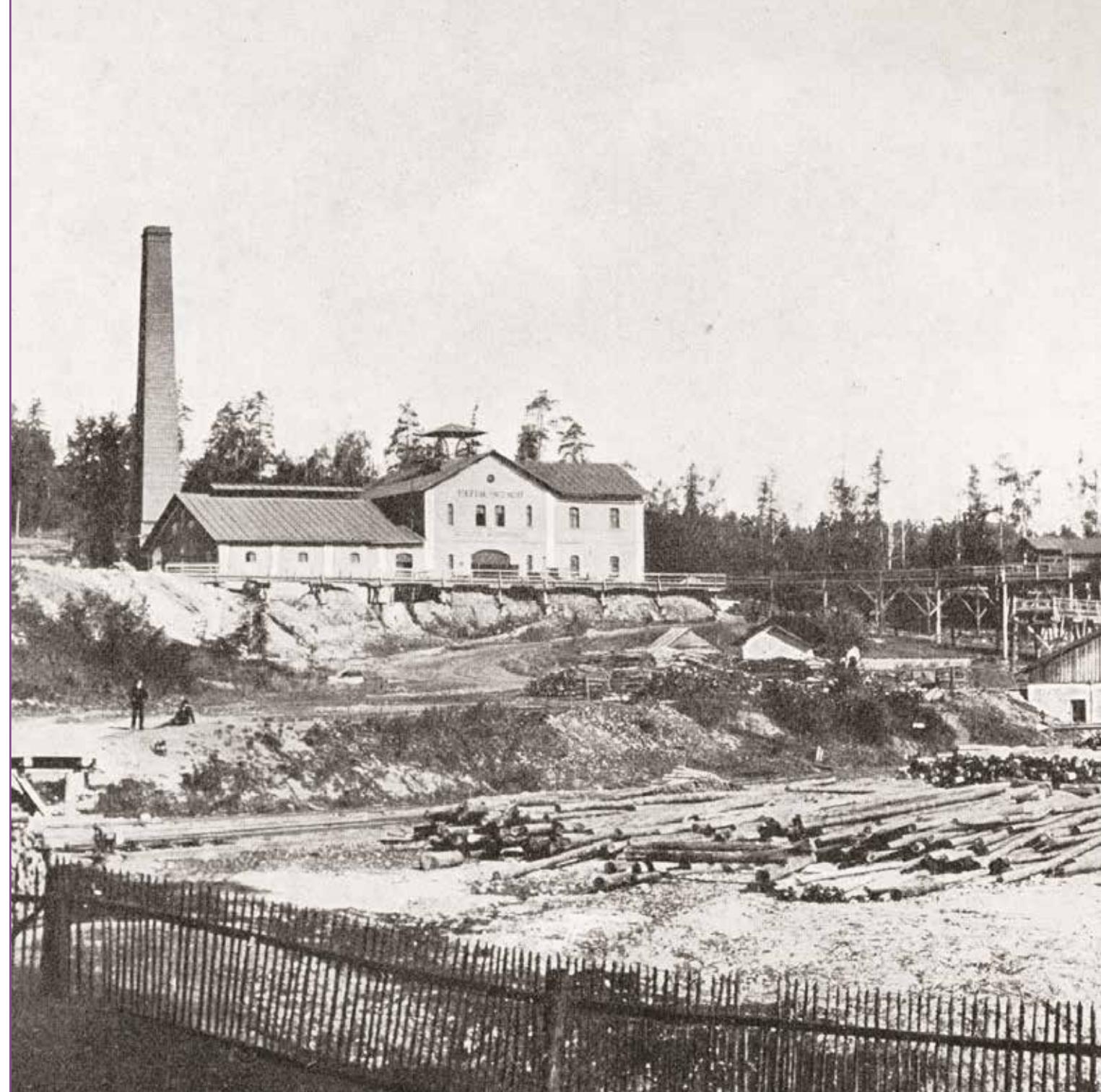
RESEARCH SUB-AREAS

- Theoretical problems of economic and social history, research methodology, displays in individual sectors of economy and interaction of processes affecting economic and social history.
- Research in the field of historical demography, emphasis on analysis of population transformation, link to economic and social history.
- Transformation of society, formation of civil society, social, legal and technological innovations, changes of social structure and social networks, infrastructure in historical perspective.
- Social activation in economically and socially different regions and its mechanisms.
- Transformation of the social and cultural structure of society and lifestyle changes, integration of old professional strata into the civil society, issues of the genesis of working and entrepreneur classes, the participation of the state and social strata in these changes, forming of the legislative framework and its changes in connection with changes in social, economic and cultural factors and social structure, attitudes of individual social strata and their transformation in the turning points of the history.
- Matter of education and professionalization, social inclusion and exclusion, social practice. Motivation of the actors/partakers leading to an improvement of social positions in the times of growth and decline of economies, a crisis impact on social structure, possibilities and degree of social components adaptability.
- Changes in individual economic sectors in relation to the changes in social conditions.
- Research of modernization trends in society in the 18th—20th century.

PARTICULARITY OF THE CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

The Centre for Economic and Social History is a unique institution of its kind in the Czech Republic; it cooperates not only with the Department of History from the same Faculty but also with other scientific institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad. It also continuously engages the students of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in its activities, for whom it creates conditions for the research activities as well as the presentation of the scientific findings. This is evidenced not only by its publishing platforms but also by a considerable number of publications published under the auspices of this workplace outside the University of Ostrava.

The members of the Centre provide expert opinions on economic and social history issues. They closely cooperate with Czech Television, for example within the broadcasting programme CS History, with the Statutory City of Ostrava and with other organizations in the city and region; they traditionally cooperate primarily with academic and scientific institutions in neighbouring Poland, Slovakia, the Federal Republic of Germany and others. Over a long period, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland has been supporting the project „The Protection and Documentation of Polish Cultural Heritage in the Czech Republic“, which represents one of the platforms of international research of identities of European regions. In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic financed an international project dedicated to the restructuring of the Katowice and Ostrava regions.



How did it all start?

The Centre was established in 2008 as one of three workplaces of the University of Ostrava with the so-called internationally comparable quality, and its expert orientation was following the existing scientific orientation of the vast majority of the staff of the Department of History of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ostrava. *“A significant change occurred after we had won a competition to promote excellent university workplaces. Today there is a number of major research directions, but in 2008 there were only three at the university level, of which ours was the only one in the field of social sciences. Since then we have built a real scientific workplace with regular employees,”* prof. Zářický adds.

The initiators of the workplace origin were assoc. prof. Aleš Zářický, at that time the Vice-Dean for Science, Research and International Relations of the Faculty of Arts, and above all prof. Milan Myška, who, even at the age of seventy-five, was not losing his professional knowledge, organizational skills, and the stubbornness, which was typical of him. In its early days, the Centre mainly followed up on his lifelong work and the vision that general and complex processes are best explained and shown on regional examples. In 2013, it was also prof. Myška on whose initiative the Centre submitted the grant project for the research of Austrian Silesia, which subsequently became the largest grant from the field of humanities supported by the Czech Science Foundation for a long time. Professor Myška has also scientifically profiled the Centre towards the regional economic and social history and has provided opportunities also for young and emerging researchers. It is not for nothing that we talk about the so-called Myška's Silesian Historical School, and many of his pupils have been members of the Centre to this day.



Dombrau, österr. Schlesien.
Dąbrowa — Dombrova.

Achievements and News

Currently, the Centre employees focus primarily on research of the historical process of modernization, which they analyse with an emphasis on the anthropological dimension and examine the manifestations of this process in individual segments of the social structure. At the same time, by the research, they verify the strength of the research hypothesis that despite its global nature, the modernization was not a transparent process but was developing regionally. The main focus is on the economic and social manifestations of the historical process of modernization in the territory of Austrian Silesia and Moravia, and on its comparison with general development trends. So defined research also creates further analysis possibilities and scope for possible comparison with other modernizing regions.

*“The greatest current achievement is the forthcoming edition of the extensive two-part publication *Rakouské Slezsko v procesu modernizace v letech 1742 až 1914 (Austrian Silesia in the process of modernization between 1742 and 1914)*, a work of approximately 1,500 pages, which summarizes not only the findings of more than ten years’ research of the Centre staff but at the same time it reflects the lifelong research of its founder, prof. Milan Myška. We are dealing with a unique synthesizing work, which captures in detail the process of modernization in its entirety on the example of a particular region,”* prof. Zářický says.

However, many other publications have arisen in connection with solving the project, whose output is the mentioned synthesis. The monograph of dr. Petr Kadlec about the formation of secondary education was awarded a special certificate of merit of the Society of Historians of the Czech Republic, the monograph of dr. Michaela Závodná even won the Josef Pekař Award in 2016, which is awarded to the best professional

historical monograph of the author under the age of 35. In the scope of the Centre under the leadership of assoc. prof. Jemelka, a three-part monograph on Ostrava’s workers’ colonies, which attracted a well-deserved public interest, had also originated. *Biografický slovník Slezska a severní Moravy* (Biographical Dictionary of Silesia and Northern Moravia), whose origin dates back to the beginning of the 1990s, has also been positively accepted over a long period, and today, it is one of the unique biographical works, in which the prestigious publishing house De Gruyter has shown the interest. It is also worth mentioning the Centre’s share to the preparation of the main section and the organization of a secondary section on economic and social history at XIth Congress of Czech Historians in Olomouc in 2017.

The members of the Centre publish and have long-term activities also abroad. This is evidenced not only by the publication outputs recorded in the Web of Science database but also by the prestigious international awards, e.g. the Medal of Merit for Polish Culture, awarded to prof. Zářický in 2015. The Centre, respectively the University of Ostrava, got into the narrowest selection for organizing XIXth World Congress of Economic History in 2021, where, however, in the final in Amsterdam, the International Jury preferred Paris. On the contrary, in 2022 it will be Ostrava who will organize the XVIth International Congress of Urban History.

COOPERATION WITH ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

The main partner of the Centre within the inter-university cooperation is the Institute of Economic and Social History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. The cooperation with the Institute of Czech History and the Institute of World History of the same university and the Department of History of Masaryk University in Brno can also be considered as above-standard. Outside the academic environment, cooperation especially with the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague and Brno, the Committee for Historical and Social Demography of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, the Archives of Ostrava City, the Land Archives in Opava, the Moravian Land Archives in Brno, the Silesian Museum in Opava and the Museum of Těšín region in Český Těšín, is developing successfully.

SIGNIFICANT PUBLICATIONS

- Jemelka, Martin (ed.): *Ostravské dělnické kolonie. I–III*, Ostrava 2011–2016.
- Závodná, Michaela: *Koleje a město. Problematika městské kolejové dopravy ve vybraných moravských a slezských městech v letech 1850–1918*. České Budějovice – Ostrava 2016.
- Zářický, Aleš – Fasora, Lukáš (edd.): *The Process of Creating Social Networks, their Significance and Role during the Formation of Modern Society. Contribution from the XIth Congress of Czech Historians, 13.–15. September 2017*. Ostrava–Brno 2018.
- DOKOUPIL, Lumír, NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila, LIPOVSKI, Radek: *Populace Rakouského Slezska a severovýchodní Moravy v éře modernizace: (od 60. let 19. století do první světové války)*. Ostrava 2014.
- Edition series *Nobilitas in Historia Moderna*
- Biographical Dictionary of Silesia and Northern Moravia

PROJECTS SOLVED WITHIN THE CENTRE

- Large Historical Atlas of Bohemian Silesia - Identity, Culture and Society of Bohemian Silesia in the Process of Social Modernization
Period: 2018—2021
Ident. project code: NAKI DG18P02OVV047
- Education, the economy and society 1848—1914: The socioeconomic contexts of the development of vocational education infrastructure in Austrian Silesia
Period: 2018—2020
Ident. project code: GA18-04624S
- Historical modernization process (on the example of Austrian Silesia)
Period: 2013—2019
Ident. project code: GA13-28086S
- Restructuring of Ostrava and Katowice regions as a possibility of Czech-Polish cooperation
Period: 2015
Provider: MZV ČR
- Protection and documentation of Polish cultural heritage in the Czech Republic
Period: 2015 – present
Provider: MKiDN PR



TEAM STRUCTURE

CESH Management

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Vice-Rector for Studies and Lifelong
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