

## WELCOME

Following last year's study days in Aarhus titled – In times of disruption - we are continuing our reflections at this year's study days in Berlin with an in-depth look at the topic - working with polarization -.

The EGATIN committee - Elge Pauziene, Anneli Bittner, Mirjana Pernar, Linde Wotton, and Taras Levin – has entrusted the Berlin Institute for Group Analysis with the honorable task of hosting this year's Study Days. Thank you very much for your trust and support!

Taras, you have tried to come to Berlin in person. But the regulations of martial law, as you wrote in your email, turned out to be too strict. Thus, your attendance is again limited to online participation. I am sure you express for many others the harsh consequences of polarizing conflicts.

The polarization processes caused by the current wars and conflicts have an effect like an incessant, deep, stirring bass tone. Digital developments are accelerating all communication processes. The continuous stress affects all social relationships, regardless of the region.

I wish us inner freedom and time for reflection over the next two days.

The connection between past and present is of great value in times of transition processes.

To introduce the study days and our conference theme, I would like to take a step back in the history and development of EGATIN.

The first idea for a European training network emerged in 1984.

1984 is also the title of Orwell's book, published in 1949: He warns of the dangers of propaganda, hatred, and totalitarianism in this novel. Still highly relevant in 2025.

But back to EGATIN - It took another four years of discussions and creative debates.

EGATIN officially started with 13 institutions from 8 countries in 1988.

## FOLIE

The Founding Members were the following Institutes:

[Institute of Group Analysis - Athens](#)

Institute de Analysis Grupa - Bilbao

Cambridge Group Work - Cambridge

Institute for Analytic Group & Family Therapy - Copenhagen

Gruppenanalyseseminar - Gießen

Institut für Gruppenanalyse - Heidelberg

Institute of Group Analysis - London

Westminster Pastoral Foundation - London

Förderverein Gruppentherapie - Münster

Midland Group Work and Family Therapy Course - Northampton

Centro Analisi Terapeutica di Gruppo - Roma

Training Committee of Centre for Mental Health - Zagreb

Institut für Gruppenanalyse Zürich

Nowadays - 47 institutions, located in 26 countries, belonging to the network EGATIN – you'll find these institutions, illustrated on a big world – map, here in the basement of bUm. As you can see - EGATIN is massively grown in the last 37 years!

The aims of EGATIN, were and are 'to promote, on a non-profit making basis, scientific, educational, clinical and cultural activities' and 'to provide opportunities for dialogue and exchange in an European and International context'

To encourage high standards in group-analytic training program (through the sharing of expertise and experience between member organizations)

To contribute towards the development and extension of training in group analysis', while

'protecting and respecting the character, integrity and internal affairs of each member organization'.

You find more to the history of EGATIN in the article of Zoe Voyatzaki on the website of EGATIN.

Let me introduce the - Local organization committee (local staff) from Berlin Institute of Group Analysis – Yvonne Blieske, Phillip Denzin, Frauke Glöckner, Yasemin Müller, Thomas Munder, Flora Petak, Susanne Raetzer, Nicole Reimer, Magdalena Zawilska and me - we worked full of enthusiasm to make the study days here in Berlin possible.

Don't hesitate to contact one of us if you have any questions or any thoughts you would like to share with us.

Stefan Trbojevic from EGATIN is organizing the online performance. Nothing is possible without him! Thank you Stefan for your kindness and support.

This location is called bUm - it is a former transformer station. It's located in the Berlin district Kreuzberg. Around the bUm, you can find many cafes and restaurants. It is a very frequented area of Berlin, day and night.

The story about this building bUm tells - in 2016, the Google concern announces the opening of a start-up campus. This provoked massive resistance here in Kreuzberg in the citizenship - even a brief occupation of the building in September 2018.

The protests have had an effect: in 2018, Google hands over this former transformer station to the social cooperative Karuna and the donation platform betterplace. Instead of a tech campus, a "house for social engagement" was built up. Since 2018, a team of young people has been running this place. They also support the EGATIN study days with great engagement and patience! We are lucky and thankful!

Now – a short insight into our conference here in Berlin:

I'll give you some information for better orientation:

First of all, I would like to welcome the six colleagues who will be enriching the content of the study days with their lectures, experiences, and thoughts on the theme of polarization in groups - Hanna Reinhardt Bork, Maja Brkic, Mirela Bregu, Susanne Raetzer, Ido Peleg and Kathrin Albert.

Anneli Bittner and Stephan Alder will be conducting the three large groups.

And twelve colleagues who agreed to moderate the 11 discussion groups on site and one discussion group online.

FOLIE:  
On site:

Angelika Golz (UK)

Kristian Valbak (Denmark) – Delegate EGATIN

Lili Valkó (Hungary) – Delegate EGATIN

Frauke Glöckner (Germany) – Delegierte EGATIN  
Audun Magne Ulland (Norway) – Delegate EGATIN  
Aleš Vápenka (Germany)  
Ben Padfield (UK ) – Delegate EGATIN  
Sophia Maria Moraitou (Greece) – Delegate EGATIN  
Marit Joffe Milstein (Israel)  
Ali Keyvan (Turkey) Delegate EGATIN  
Denisa Schuckova (Czech Republic) Delegate EGATIN

The online discussion group:

Gila Ofer – (Israel) Delegate EGATIN

After the lectures, the discussion groups will offer the opportunity to deepen and exchange thoughts, associations and feelings on the topics.

FOLIE:

Tomorrow, during lunch brake - we provided from 1.15pm to 2 pm - three rooms for interest groups.

- GA - online training
- GA with children / adolescents
- Applied GA – working with organisation

If you are interested in participating in one of these meetings, please enter your name on the list at the info point.

Tonight at 7 PM, the welcome reception will take place at the entrance. It will end around 9:30 PM.

Tomorrow, the GALA Dinner will take place at 8 PM here in the auditorium, and dancing will start around 9:30 PM. The young DC Jurji will provide the music you sent and even more. The party will end around 11:30 PM.

Before the Gala dinner, you are welcome to join for an aperitif at the entrance starting from 7:30 PM.

The local staff will arrange the auditorium for the Gala Dinner between 7 PM and 8 PM.

And please, one last note - enter these stairs here in the auditorium only when the staff has given the green light to use them.

Now I want to get you in the mood to the theme -Polarisation:

FOLIEN:

... there is a lot to watch-wait and wonder – enjoy the conference.