

PROJECT TITLE

In and Out of the Asylum (I&OTA). Psychiatrists, Patients, Families, and States Torn between Psychiatry and Antipsychiatry in the Upper Adriatic Area: A Border History of Psychiatry

GRANT

Young Researchers 2024 - NextGenerationEU MSCA

PROJECT DURATION

May 2025 – May 2028

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Francesco Toncich

In and Out of the Asylum (I&OTA) explores the long-standing tension between institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation in the history of psychiatry. Focusing on the period from the 1880s to the 1980s, the project adopts a transnational perspective on the Alps–Adriatic region, a geopolitically complex borderland once part of the Habsburg Empire and today spanning Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Austria. Shaped by shifting borders, competing nationalisms, regime changes, migration, and political and ethnic violence, this macro-region provides a unique lens through which to examine psychiatric practices under conditions of geopolitical and socioeconomic changes. Psychiatry played a crucial and often contested role in this setting, alternating between phases of innovation and openness and periods of repression, particularly when state authorities instrumentalised psychiatric institutions to marginalise minorities and socially non-conforming groups. Despite this, the region's shared psychiatric history and the persistence of anti-psychiatry movements, has never been comprehensively studied. By analysing psychiatric institutions, patient experiences, and civil society across borders, the project investigates how ideas of control, care, confinement, and non-restraint shaped mental healthcare practices and the scientific and legal status of patients over time.

Workshop venue

Sala atti Arduino Agnelli
Department of Humanities
University of Trieste
Androna Campo Marzio 10, Trieste

Workshop organiser

Francesco Toncich
Department of Humanities
University of Trieste



**UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TRIESTE**

Dipartimento di
Studi Umanistici



**Ministero
dell'Università
e della Ricerca**



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collocazione: CARLA CERATI, serie Manicomi, inv. CC_MAN_2/ST_67/d

1st Project's Workshop

IN AND OUT OF THE ASYLUM PSYCHIATRIC CRITIQUES AND REFORMS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



**2-3
FEB
2026**

**Department of Humanities,
University of Trieste, Italy**

**Sala atti Arduino Agnelli,
Androna Campo Marzio 10, Trieste**

MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2026

10:30–10:45

Welcome and greetings

Tullia Catalan, University of Trieste

10:45–11:30

Project presentation

Francesco Toncich, University of Trieste

In and Out of the Asylum. Psychiatrists, Patients, Families, and States Torn between Psychiatry and Antipsychiatry in the Upper Adriatic Area: A Border History of Psychiatry

11:30–12:30

1st keynote speech

Marta Verginella, University of Ljubljana

War and Post-War in the Northern Adriatic in Psychiatric and Autobiographical Sources

Lunch break: 12:30–14:00

14:00–15:15

1st panel: Shifting Psychiatric Concepts and the Social Status of Patients

Chair: Marianna Ginocchietti, University of Trieste

Chantal Marazia, University of Milan

From Correlation to Law: The Origins and Fortunes of the “Penrose Hypothesis”

Cristian Montenegro, King’s College, London

The Semantics of “Community” in the Development of Mental Health Policy: Tracing Socialist, Authoritarian and Neoliberal Shifts

Coffee break: 15:15–15:45

15:45–17:00

2nd panel: Borders, Mobility, and Psychiatric Practice

Chair: Tullia Catalan, University of Trieste

Chris Sandal-Wilson, University of Exeter

Psychiatric Mobilities between Empires: Palestinian Patients at the Lebanon Hospital for Mental Diseases, 1900–1950

Marianna Scarfone, University of Strasbourg

Uprooting and Resettlement: Psychiatric Responses to Migrants’ Distress in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Coffee break: 17:00–17:30

17:30–18:30

2nd keynote speech

Volker Hess, Charité Medicine University Berlin

Shifting Normalcies. Media Technology and Protest-Movement in the Age of Reform

Workshop Dinner

TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2026

9:30–11:00

3rd panel: Changing Institution, Knowledge, and Practice in Postwar Psychiatry

Chair: Ana Cergol Paradiž, University of Ljubljana / University of Copenhagen

Heike Karge, University of Graz

Fear Without a Diagnosis: Transnational Transfers and the Boundaries of Psychiatric Knowledge in 1945

Dagmar Wernitznig, University of Ljubljana

The (M)Other Tongue: Reform, Migration, and Transgenerational Trauma in Post-WWII Austria

Jelena Seferović, Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb / Institute for Contemporary History, Ljubljana

“Od ludnice do moderne klinike”: Ninety Years of Transformation at NPH Dr. Ivan Barbot in Popovača

Coffee break: 11:00–11:30

11:30–12:00

Final roundtable & closing

Final lunch (Osteria sociale “Il posto delle fragole”) and visit of the former Trieste asylum at “Parco San Giovanni”