

CALL FOR PAPERS

12th AIB-CEE Chapter Annual Conference 2026

« Central and Eastern Europe in Transition Again? Rethinking International Business in a Changing World »

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Poznań University of Economics and Business (PUEB), Poland

<https://ue.poznan.pl/en/university/12th-aib-cee-chapter-annual-conference-2026/>

More than three decades after the collapse of state socialism and the onset of systemic transformation, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) continues to attract the attention of international business (IB) scholars. Early on, the region was characterised as a unique “natural laboratory”, offering quasi-experiments to probe the explanatory power of key theoretical perspectives such as transaction cost economics, the resource-based view, and institutional theory (Meyer & Peng, 2005). Building on broader institutional scholarship (North, 1990; Scott, 1995), this work highlighted how radical institutional change, evolving governance mechanisms and organisational restructuring in CEE could inform theory development well beyond the region itself. Two decades later, and amid new waves of geopolitical, technological and sustainability-related disruptions, an open question emerges whether **CEE is still a distinctive laboratory for refining our understanding of institutions, resources and firm strategies – and if so, in what ways?**

Recent contributions emphasise that CEE remains deeply embedded in, yet asymmetrically positioned within, global value chains (GVCs). Functional specialisation, upgrading patterns and dependence on foreign investors vary markedly across countries and sectors (Kordalska & Olczyk, 2021; Pavlínek, Domański, & Guzik, 2009). While foreign direct investment (FDI) and export-oriented manufacturing have supported rapid growth and deep integration into European and global production networks (Kalotay & Hunya, 2000; OECD, 2013), concerns have emerged about middle-income traps, structural dependencies and uneven catching-up (Myant, 2018). At the same time, major disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine have sparked debates on near-shoring and “de-risking”, which challenge existing structures of interdependence and force policymakers and firms alike to reconsider the balance between efficiency and resilience (Dikova, & McDougall-Covin, 2020; Hayakawa & Mukunoki, 2021; Simchi-Levi & Haren, 2022; Rašković).

These developments raise important **macro- and meso-level questions:**

- *How do evolving geopolitical and geo-economic realities reshape the location advantages and vulnerabilities of CEE economies?*
- *To what extent do institutional reforms, industrial policies and European integration trajectories mitigate or reinforce structural dependencies?*

The institutional context of CEE remains heterogeneous and dynamic, despite shared legacies and integration into the EU (Jaklič, Obloj, Svetličič, & Kronegger, 2021; Koveshnikov, Dabija, Inkpen, & Vătămănescu, 2022). Country-specific paths of privatisation, FDI attraction and regulatory change have generated diverse configurations of “dependent capitalism” and differentiated capacities to respond to shocks and to new demands for green and digital transitions (Myant, 2018; Szabo, 2020). As a result, CEE provides fertile ground for revisiting institutional perspectives on IB, including how formal and informal rules, state–business relations and policy frameworks shape firm behaviour (Filatotchev et al., 2003; Meyer & Estrin, 2001; Uhlenbruck, 2004).

At the firm level, companies originating from CEE have evolved from transition-economy latecomers to increasingly sophisticated competitors. Systematic reviews document how firms from the region use exports, outward FDI and complex internationalisation strategies to build and leverage capabilities (Caputo et al., 2016; Ipsmiller & Dikova, 2021; Jaklič & Burger, 2020). Some have emerged as “local heroes” or regional champions, while others operate as subsidiaries with changing roles within multinational networks (Eckert & Rossmeissl, 2007; Schuh, 2014). Yet, challenges related to institutional risk, resource constraints and the restructuring of GVCs persist (Hilger, Nedelko, & Steger, 2023; Jaklič & Koleša, 2022).

This prompts a series of **micro-level questions** of central relevance for IB scholars and practitioners:

- *How do firms from the region navigate geopolitical uncertainty, regulatory complexity and pressure for digital and green transformation?*
- *Under what conditions can CEE firms move from subordinate roles in global value chains to positions of greater autonomy, innovation and value capture?*
- *What distinctive internationalisation paths and business models characterise CEE firms in the current wave of global change?*

Innovation and collaboration further illustrate how CEE may still serve as a laboratory for theory development (Jaklič et al., 2023). Research points to the importance of open innovation, alliances and ecosystems in supporting firms’ innovation performance, particularly under conditions of crisis and resource scarcity (Bogers et al., 2017; Puślecki et al., 2021a, 2021b; Trąpczyński, Puślecki, & Staszków, 2018). Studies highlight both the potential and the constraints of innovation cooperation in the region, such as low trust, uneven institutional support and capability gaps (Dziurski & Sopińska, 2020; Jaklič et al., 2014; Prokop et al., 2021). Digitalisation and Industry 4.0 transitions add new layers of complexity, with opportunities for upgrading but also risks of further polarisation between leaders and laggards (Butollo, 2021; Szabo, 2020).

From a theoretical standpoint, this raises further open questions:

- *How do open innovation practices, alliances and ecosystems interact with institutional conditions specific to CEE?*
- *Which combinations of domestic and foreign knowledge sources, digital capabilities and policy frameworks enable firms to overcome structural disadvantages?*

The **12th AIB-CEE Chapter Annual Conference**, hosted by the **Poznań University of Economics and Business** as part of its **100th anniversary celebrations**, invites scholars, practitioners and policymakers to engage with these questions. Building on the legacy of research that has treated CEE as a laboratory for international business (Meyer & Peng, 2005; Rašković et al., 2020; Koveshnikov et al., 2022), the conference seeks to explore whether – and how – the region continues to generate insights of broader theoretical and practical relevance in an era of geopolitical fragmentation, digital transformation and sustainability transitions.

We welcome contributions that address macro-, meso- and micro-level phenomena, examine multi-actor and multi-level dynamics, and reflect critically on the future role of CEE in IB research and practice. Submissions will be made to the following conference tracks, with some illustrative topics proposed below (*which do not constitute an exhaustive or closed list*):

Track 1. Global Geopolitical Shifts, Fragmentation, and the Future of International Business - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Magdolna Sass & Tomasz Dorożyński

Geopolitical tensions, strategic rivalry, and growing fragmentation are reshaping the international business environment in profound ways. This track welcomes contributions on how sanctions, security concerns, regulatory uncertainty, and shifting patterns of international cooperation affect firms, industries, and governments. Particular attention may be paid to nearshoring, friendshoring, and regionalisation, as well as to the changing role of Central and Eastern Europe in the evolving global political economy. The track encourages contributions that go beyond descriptive accounts and are aimed at developing new conceptual lenses or theoretical approaches on how geopolitical fragmentation reshapes firm behaviour, state–firm relations (industrial policy, security-driven regulation, and the emergence of new forms of state capitalism shaping international business decisions), and global value chains (configurations, governance structures, and patterns of value capture).

Keywords: geopolitics; fragmentation; nearshoring and friendshoring; sanctions and regulation; regionalisation; CEE in the global political economy

Track 2. Institutions in Transition: Revisiting the “CEE Laboratory” for IB Theory - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Erzsébet Czakó & Andreja Jaklič

Central and Eastern Europe has long served as an important context for theorizing institutional change and its business implications. This track focuses on how evolving formal and informal institutions shape firm strategies, cross-border collaboration, and patterns of competitiveness across the region. Contributions may address the renewed role of the state in industrial policy, innovation support, and sustainability governance, as well as the substantial institutional heterogeneity across different parts of CEE. The track also explicitly invites reflection on whether, and under what conditions, CEE can still serve as a distinctive laboratory for international business theory development in a period marked by new geopolitical, economic, and social pressures.

Keywords: institutions; institutional change; informal institutions; state role and industrial policy; CEE diversity; IB theory

Track 3. Competitiveness, Upgrading, and Sectoral Transformation in CEE - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Dávid Losonci & Anže Burger

This track examines the changing sources of competitiveness in Central and Eastern Europe in light of global restructuring, technological change, and sustainability pressures. It welcomes papers on functional and technological upgrading in global value chains, sectoral transformation, and the evolving balance between FDI-led and domestic-led growth models. Contributions may focus on industries such as automotive, electronics, IT, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and other sectors undergoing substantial reconfiguration. The track also encourages research on the resilience and vulnerability of regional clusters, as well as on the strategic implications of the energy transition and the emergence of green industrial development paths in CEE.

Keywords: competitiveness; upgrading; global value chains; sectoral transformation; regional clusters; green industrial transition

Track 4. Internationalisation Strategies of CEE Firms: Models, Capabilities, and Performance - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Tiia Vissak & Krzysztof Wach

How firms from Central and Eastern Europe expand abroad, develop capabilities, and achieve international performance remains a central question for IB scholarship. This track invites submissions on the internationalisation of CEE firms, with a particular focus on export strategies, outward foreign direct investment, springboarding, and the role of alliances, acquisitions, and partnerships in cross-border growth. It also welcomes research on learning from foreign markets, capability development under resource constraints, and the business models of emerging CEE multinationals and internationally active entrepreneurial firms. Conceptual and empirical contributions are encouraged, especially those that deepen our understanding of how CEE firms compete and grow internationally. Papers about non-CEE firms are also welcome if they focus on the above-mentioned topics.

Keywords: internationalisation; CEE firms; export strategies and OFDI; capabilities; international entrepreneurship; firm performance

Track 5. Innovation, Open Innovation, and Ecosystems in International Business - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Miklos Kozma & Wioletta Mierzejewska

In an era of geopolitical fragmentation and technological disruption, innovation increasingly depends on collaboration across organizational, sectoral, and national boundaries. This track addresses the role of innovation and collaborative innovation models in international business, with particular attention to the CEE context. It welcomes studies on open innovation across borders, innovation cooperation, trust-building, and the development of cross-sector and cross-border ecosystems. Contributions may explore the internationalisation of R&D, the conditions

that support or hinder collaborative innovation, the role of digital platforms in enabling cross-border innovation, and the challenges faced by firms operating in dependent market economies. The track particularly encourages work that bridges firm-level innovation strategies with institutional, regional, and ecosystem-level dynamics in international settings.

Keywords: innovation; open innovation; innovation ecosystems; R&D internationalisation; trust and collaboration; dependent market economies

Track 6. Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence, and Platformisation in International Business - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Agnieszka Głodowska & Blaženka Knežević

Digital transformation is reshaping how firms internationalize, compete, and organize across borders. This track focuses on the implications of digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and platform-based business models for international business strategies and operations. Relevant topics include AI adoption, automation, digital capabilities, organisational change, and digitally enabled internationalisation. Particular attention may also be paid to data governance, cybersecurity, digital regulation, and the opportunities and constraints created by platformisation. The track further welcomes studies on digital divides within and across CEE economies and their implications for firms' international competitiveness.

Keywords: digitalisation; artificial intelligence; platformisation; digital internationalisation; cybersecurity and data governance; digital divides

Track 7. Sustainability, Green Transition, and ESG in International Business - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Małgorzata Stefania Lewandowska & Jurgita Sekliuckienė

Sustainability and green transformation are becoming central concerns for firms operating across borders. This track invites contributions on ESG adoption in MNEs and SMEs, sustainable supply chains, circular economy models, and the policy frameworks supporting green transition. It also encourages studies on climate risks, energy security, and the strategic responses of firms to environmental and social pressures in international markets. Special attention may be paid to the interaction between sustainability goals and internationalisation processes, including responsible internationalisation, social sustainability, and the changing expectations of stakeholders across borders.

Keywords: sustainability; ESG; green transition; sustainable supply chains; climate and energy risks; responsible internationalisation

Track 8. International Finance, Risk, and Economic Transformation - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Inna Romānova & Paweł Śliwiński

Financial dynamics remain a key part of economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. This track welcomes research on financial stability, crisis response, firm-level and sovereign risk, and the role of financial institutions in supporting international business activity. Relevant topics include foreign exchange exposure, inflation, monetary dynamics, investment financing, and the development of capital markets under changing macroeconomic conditions. Contributions that connect international finance with broader processes of structural adjustment, competitiveness, and resilience are particularly encouraged, especially in contexts marked by volatility, external shocks, and evolving institutional frameworks.

Keywords: international finance; financial stability; FX and inflation risk; sovereign and firm-level risk; capital markets; economic transformation; international capital flows, international investment, international financing

Track 9. CEE and Non-European Partners: China, Global South, and Emerging Markets - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Ninel Seniuk & Xia Chen

Relations between Central and Eastern Europe and non-European partners are gaining new strategic relevance in an increasingly multipolar world economy. This track explores business and economic ties between CEE and China, India, ASEAN countries, Latin America, the Middle East, and other emerging markets. It welcomes research on trade, investment, cooperation frameworks, and competitive dynamics involving both traditional and emerging international players. Particular attention may be given to China–CEE relations, including the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as to the strategic role of CEE as a bridge between the European Union and emerging regions.

Keywords: China-CEE relations; emerging markets; Global South; trade and investment; multipolar competition; CEE as a bridge

Track 10. Country and Regional Business Environments: CEE Countries and Beyond - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Arkadiusz Michał Kowalski & Miklós Stocker

National and regional business environments continue to shape the opportunities and constraints faced by internationally active firms. This track focuses on the evolution of business environment reforms, regional competitiveness, cluster development, and smart specialisation strategies, both within CEE and in a comparative perspective beyond the region. Contributions may address the interaction between public policy, innovation systems, and territorial development, as well as the implications of nationalism and shifting political priorities for firms operating across borders. The track encourages studies that link place-based conditions with firm behaviour, investment attractiveness, and long-term development trajectories.

Keywords: business environment; regional development; clusters and competitiveness; smart specialisation; public policy; nationalism and international business

Track 11. Teaching, Learning, and Research Methods in International Business - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Mirosław Jarosiński & Natalia Ribberink

This track brings together contributions on both the pedagogy and methodology of international business. It welcomes papers on teaching IB in disrupted and rapidly changing environments, curriculum internationalization, and the use of CEE-based cases in the classroom. It also invites work on qualitative and quantitative methods suited to IB research in CEE settings, including issues of data access, measurement, comparison, and emerging methodological opportunities. The track is particularly interested in submissions that reflect on how international business scholarship and education can respond to new empirical realities, digital tools, and the changing needs of students, researchers, and practitioners.

Keywords: IB teaching; curriculum internationalization; case teaching; research methods; data challenges; CEE-based scholarship

Track 12. Contemporary Challenges of International HRM - TRACK CO-CHAIRS: Michael Müller-Camen & Michał Lemański

International human resource management is facing mounting pressures caused by changes in the labour market, AI and digital transformation, sustainability challenges, and geopolitical disruption. This track welcomes contributions on talent shortages, migration and human supply chains, expatriation, new forms of work, diversity and inclusion, and the changing role of HRM in multicultural workplace and in internationally active firms. It also encourages submissions of research on how digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and shifting institutional environments affect workforce management and organisational practices across borders. Both conceptual and empirical studies are invited, especially those examining how firms develop resilient, adaptive, and context-sensitive IHRM practices in response to increasingly complex international conditions.

Keywords: international HRM; talent and labour shortages; migration and expatriation; multicultural workplace; diversity and inclusion; common-good HRM; green HRM; AI and algorithmic HRM; digital HRM

Key dates

Submission system: <https://meetings.aib.msu.edu/cee/2026/>

Short Paper/Full Paper/Panel Proposal Submission Deadline: **07.06.2026**

Short Paper/Full Paper/Panel Proposal Decisions Announcement: **22.06.2026**

Conference Workshops Application Deadline: **08.07.2026**

Conference Workshops Application Decisions Announcement: **22.07.2026**

Early-bird Registration Deadline: **17.07.2026**

Regular Registration Deadline: **14.08.2026**

Late Registration Deadline: **11.09.2026**

Conference Fees

	Early-bird	Regular	Late
Already AIB member*	300 EUR	350 EUR	400 EUR
Non-AIB member	300 EUR + 120 USD AIB membership fee	350 EUR + 120 USD AIB membership fee	400 EUR + 120 USD AIB membership fee
PhD student Already AIB member*	200 EUR		
PhD student Non-AIB member	200 EUR + 40 USD AIB membership fee		

* You must be a member of AIB on the day of the conference by having paid the membership fee. If you are a non-AIB member, the membership fee must be paid accordingly: Lecturer/Professor/Others + 120 USD, PhD students + 40 USD.

For any questions, contact us directly at email: aib-cee2026@konf.ue.poznan.pl

On behalf of AIB-CEE and the Organizing Committee:

AIB-CEE Chapter Chair

Andreja Jaklič

Conference Chair

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