Alongside fundamental theological developments the Reformation also provoked considerable social upheaval whose effects reverberated throughout Europe. For many so-called “small nations”, the church's schism and the establishment of competing Christian denominations in the early modern era also constituted an important rupture that would entail profound social and cultural change.

The conference will employ a comparative approach and take the example of the Sorbs, Estonians and Latvians to examine the long-term consequences of the Reformation and confessionalisation on the belief systems and life worlds of the “small nations” of East Central Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. In their presentations, the 18 speakers from historical, cultural, literary and linguistic sciences, as well as from theology and art history, will address both the fractures and long-term developments ensuing from the Reformation and the continuities between pre- and post-Reformation times. Their inquiries will concentrate on the contents of and key players in the contemporary scholarly discourse regarding nations and languages, as well as on the charged relationship between the system of estates, ethnicity, and religious denomination in the early modern period. Due attention will be paid to the role of the Protestant ministry, the beginnings of a body of vernacular writing and literature, the confessionalisation of popular culture, and the historical ramifications that the change of faith held for art and architecture in Livonia and Lusatia.

A comprehensive conference programme and further information will be published in due course. Participation in the conference is free of charge but for organisational purposes we request an e-mail registration by 10 November 2017 at the latest: reformation@serbski-institut.de.

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In close cooperation with the Baltic Historical Commission.

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