



# CAS-E

Alternative Rationalities and  
Esoteric Practices in a Global Perspective

## Announcement

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Dear Friends,

We are excited to announce that:

**CAS-E has been awarded €4.6 mill. to launch its New Phase (2026–2030)!**

The Center for Advanced Studies – Erlangen (CAS-E) investigates practices that are marked as esoteric and negotiated in relation to hegemonic claims of rationality. In the first funding phase (2022–2026), an interdisciplinary research space was established at the intersection of Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Area Studies, alongside contributions from other disciplines.

The **second phase** introduces a generational and conceptual shift. The new leadership team consists of Giovanni Maltese (Religious Studies), Dominik Müller (Cultural and Social Anthropology; Spokesperson), and Eva Pils (Human Rights Law). The focus now lies on the situated and globally entangled processes of marking and boundary-making through which practices are identified or (de-)legitimized as esoteric.

A central emphasis lies on epistemic orders, power asymmetries, and the positionality of researchers. An “analytical double helix” connects heuristic comparison with performativity-theoretical approaches. Our key aims are the establishment of a methodologically sharpened, empirically grounded, and internationally visible paradigm for analyzing alternative rationalities and esoteric practices as negotiation processes of epistemic orders in a global perspective, as well as a context-sensitive analytical framework that captures struggles over legitimacy and knowledge in times of “post-factual” communication crises.

Center for Advanced Studies (CAS-E)  
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**Prof. D. Müller**  
Cultural and Social Anthropology  
(Spokesperson, PI)



**Prof. G. Maltese**  
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Practices in a Global Perspective“  
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**CAS-E**

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