**Monica Vasile, Rachel Carson Center, Munich,** [monica.vasile01@gmail.com](mailto:monica.vasile01@gmail.com)

**Title: Fiefdom Forests of the Carpathian Mountains**

Abstract: The article examines timber extraction practices in the contemporary postsocialist forests of the rural Eastern Carpathians in Romania. I argue that some of the new political forests of the Carpathian Mountains emerge as fiefdom forests, marked by authoritarianism, vulnerability and limited freedom to do otherwise, which are depicted locally in medieval and mafia terms. Based on long-term ethnographic research in a forest-dependent community, the story of the fiefdom forests follows three main threads: 1) the rise of an elite group of local timber barons, loggers and traders who control the forests, and accumulate power and capital, connected to the rise of authoritarian polities; 2) the experiences of small forest operators and workers, their vulnerabilities and dependency upon forest jobs, ridden with repression and violence; 3) the makeshift roads of local resistance and political struggle, revealing the limits of freedom and the internal divisions of community.