This international conference will reflect the diversity and dynamism of Jewish life in the Balkans, where Jews, especially before World War II, played an important role in its social, cultural, and economic development. In some areas, such as the Macedonian city of Bitola, Thessaloniki, or the Croatian-Dalmatian city of Salona, Jews had been living since Ancient Roman times. During the Inquisition, Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal settled in what was then the Ottoman Empire, whereas Ashkenazi Jews took up residence mainly in Slovenia and Croatia. A vibrant Jewish life developed especially in larger cities where Jews established religious communities and various cultural, athletic, and humanitarian organizations.

The conference offers a great opportunity to deepen historical knowledge about life, thoughts, activities, and roles of Jews in the Balkans in times of war and peace. Scholars from Macedonia, Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia, Italy, Israel, Germany, Austria, Greece, Spain, Great Britain, and the USA will discuss new findings, theories, and methodologies. A special focus will be on the economic, social, and cultural development of Jewish communities in the Balkans, the role of Jews in the development of the local economy, and the impact of local, national, and international factors on Jewish life.

The conference is organized by the Moses Mendelssohn Centre for European Jewish Studies (University of Potsdam) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Split). It is supported by the Moses Mendelssohn Foundation Erlangen & Berlin, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Split), and the Jewish Community of Split.