Katalin Szende (Central European University, Department of Medieval Studies)

[szendek@ceu.edu](https://mail2.hse.ru/owa/redir.aspx?C=qIQzNlrTYCxuGlLrhziDIsc1SBCCO8kh87OgfLUlY4kh2Xgp_9zWCA..&URL=mailto%3aszendek%40ceu.edu)

**Royal Power versus Local Autonomy in Mining Towns in Medieval Hungary**

It has been a widely accepted thesis of historical research that by the fourteenth century, the kingdoms of Bohemia, Poland and Hungary became integral parts of the European economy.  One of the most important factors in raising their profile was the increasing output of the region’s rich mineral resources, particularly silver, gold and copper. The other important novelty of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the appearance and diffusion of pragmatic administrative literacy in the urban context. The analysis of this process revealed its gradual character: from the acquisition of urban autonomy to the appearance of civic archives, one can identify several distinct steps, each of which represent a new and higher degree of trust in writing and the expansion of its use. The aim of this presentation is to show the complexity of this development in the mining towns of medieval Hungary, particularly the way how the monarchs used the instruments of municipal administration to assert their own authority over this strategically most important branch of the economy. The discussion will be based on the hands-on analysis of several kinds of primary sources such as royal charters of privilege (translation will be provided), the imagery of mining-town seals, and the structure and illustrations of the municipal books of selected mining towns.