



CfP

The End of “Freedom” in Central and Eastern Europe?

Addressing the Challenges of an Illiberal Turn

9-11. June 2022

Andrassy University Budapest

ABSTRACT

“Freedom” has always been a central topic in public debates, and often spurs social tensions. This is especially the case in Central and Eastern Europe, where political and economic freedoms and national sovereignty were only tasted after 1989, following decades of struggles which often turned violent, including the Hungarian uprising, the Prague Spring, or the Romanian Revolution.

Even after the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe were brought down, however, “freedom” remained elusive, and required a long and arduous negotiation process. This included the implementation of new constitutions and judicial reforms, accompanied by negotiations about what exactly was to be understood as “free” in different areas of life. These debates contain, but are not limited to, questions of religious freedom, women’s rights, the degree of state regulation of capitalist economic systems, questions of the independence of the judicial systems, and the level of European integration. The results of these debates have been varied throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and as illiberalism grows, concerns with freedom’s curtailment are rising. Regardless of this backlash against democracy, questions about the legitimate constitution of civil liberties remain of central importance. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how disputes surrounding “freedom” can turn fierce, as government-mandated public health measures often clash with legally codified individual and civil liberties.

The aim of this conference will, therefore, be to explore a wide variety of synchronous and diachronic disciplinary perspectives of the many facets of the “struggle for freedom” in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. We encourage researchers to submit abstracts for paper presentations that address the conference’s theme from various disciplinary perspectives. Possible topics include:

- individual freedom and its limitations in late modernity
- the danger of government overreach in pandemic times
- plebeian risk of a “dictatorship of the majority”
- freedom of the press between freedom of speech and ‘political correctness.’
- threats to academic freedom in the illiberal state.
- state sovereignty and membership in the EU
- economic models between neoliberalism and the new party-state capitalism
- contested spaces for civil societies
- artistic freedom in polarized societies

Abstracts should not exceed 500 words and should be submitted to conference@freedom-in-cee.com by March 10, 2022. If you need financial support for travel and accommodation expenses, please inform us about it when submitting the abstract – we can cover such costs for a limited number of participants. After the conference, a special issue in a renowned academic journal is planned, and selected participants will be invited to submit papers.

If you have any questions, please contact: conference@freedom-in-cee.com

The organizing team is looking forward to receiving your abstract.

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