

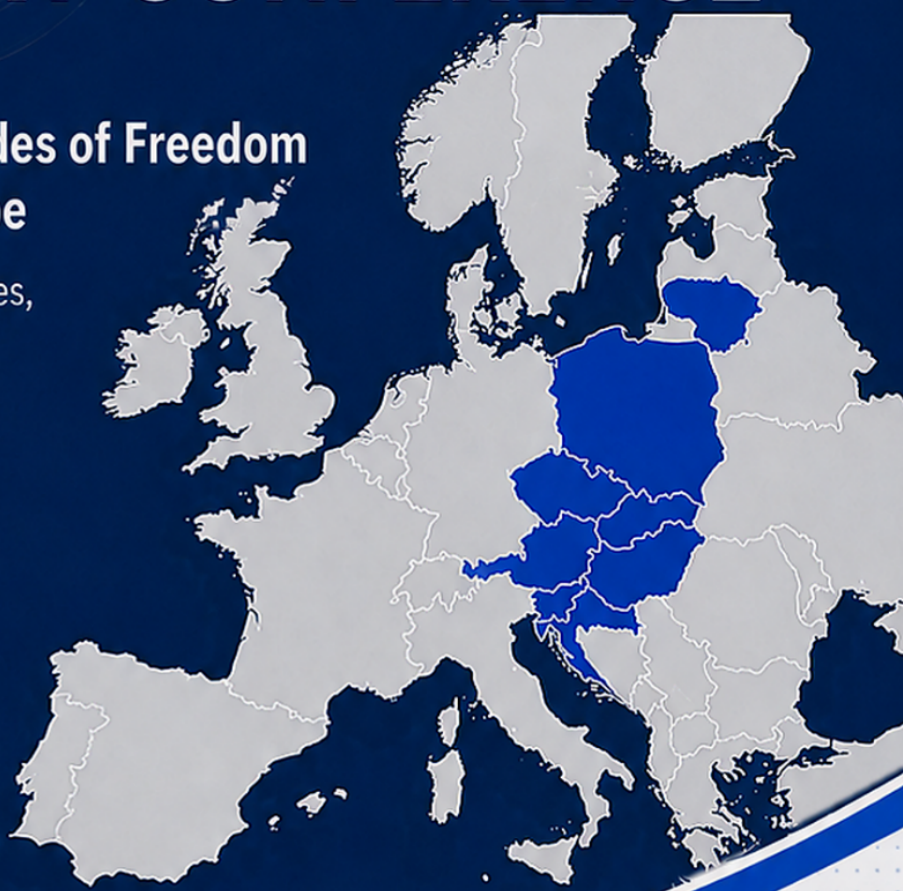
CEPSA 30TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

30 Years of CEPSA – 30 Shades of Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe

Historical Legacies, Democratic Challenges,
and the Politics of Freedom

 24–25 September 2026

 Pilsen, Czechia



Organizers:



Partners:



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

(Detailed programme and venue information follow)

THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

9.00 – 9.30	Arrival & Registration (Education and Research Library of the Pilsen Region, Smetanovy sady 2, main entrance)
9.30 – 10.30	WELCOME and KEY-NOTE ADDRESS (West Bohemian Museum in Pilsen, Kopeckého sady 2, Lecture Hall, first floor) Tereza Šlehoferová , Dean of the Faculty of Arts, UWB Petr Just , Czech Political Science Association Vice- President Boglárika Koller , CEPISA President Ferdinand Müller-Rommel , IPSA Vice-President KEY-NOTE ADDRESS: Petr Kopecký
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Coffee Break (Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor)</i>
11.00 – 12.30	PANELS ROUND ONE
12.30 – 13.30	<i>Lunch Break</i>
13.30 – 15.00	PANELS ROUND TWO
15.00 – 15.15	<i>Break</i>
15.15 – 16.45	PANELS ROUND THREE
16.45 – 17.15	<i>Coffee Break (Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor)</i>
17.15 – 18.45	PANELS ROUND FOUR (+ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING)
19.30	<i>Light Dinner & Drink (Library, Smetanovy sady 2, Ground Floor Corridor & Study Hall)</i>

FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

8.30 – 9.00	Arrival & Registration (Sedláčkova 38, main entrance)
9.00 – 10.30	PANELS ROUND FIVE
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Coffee Break (Sedláčkova 38, main entrance)</i>
11.00 – 12.30	PANELS ROUND SIX
12.45 – 13.15	CONCLUDING REMARKS (Veslavínova 42, ROOM – VC112)
14.00	<i>GUIDED TOUR OF THE CITY CENTRE (60-90 minutes, optional, more details follow)</i>

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

(Detailed)

1ST DAY: THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

9.00 – 9.30

Arrival & Registration

(Education and Research Library of the Pilsen Region, Smetanovy sady 2, main entrance; registration remains open until the start of the panels round four)

9.30 – 10.30

WELCOME AND KEY-NOTE ADDRESS

(West Bohemian Museum in Pilsen, Kopeckého sady 2, first floor)

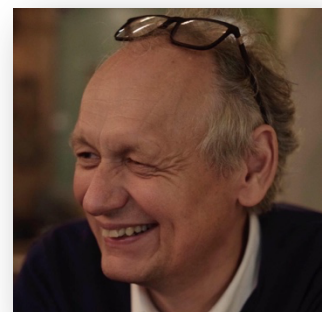
KEY-NOTE ADDRESS

Political Patronage, Autocratization and Democratic Resilience

given by Petr Kopecký

How do illiberal leaders undermine democracy? What mechanisms drive the advancement of autocratic projects? Using insights from Hungary and Central Europe, this lecture will show that political patronage – understood broadly as the power of political parties or politicians to appoint loyalists and dismiss unfriendly ones – is a critical enabling mechanism of autocratization. Political patronage is deployed by autocratizing governments as a strategy to first initiate democratic regression and subsequently to entrench and reproduce hybrid regimes that are emerging. This kind of autocratic patronage fundamentally changes the character of the state and raises questions about democratic resilience and the prospects for democratic restoration.

Petr Kopecký is Professor of Comparative Politics at the Institute of Political Science of Leiden. His main research interest are political parties and party systems in Europe, contemporary democracies and their challenges, and political patronage and clientelism. He is a senior editor of *East European Politics*. He studied Economics at the University of Economics in Prague and Political Science at the University of Manchester. He received his PhD from Leiden University. He has published articles in, among others, the *European Journal of Political Research*, *European Union Politics*, *Party Politics*, *Political Studies*, and *West European Politics*, and books with Routledge and Oxford University Press. His most recent (co-authored) book on political patronage and autocratization is forthcoming with the Cambridge University Press (2026).



10.30 – 11.00

Coffee Break (Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor)

PANELS ROUND ONE: 11.00–12.30

1.	Panel title: DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM – I Chair: Bogłárka Koller Location: BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Study Hall (ground floor)	Piotr Kimla & Anna Ciłkowska-Kimla, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>Mechanisms of Power Consolidation in Contemporary Right-Wing Populism</i> Vít Hloušek, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia <i>Discursive and Ideological Evolution of Václav Klaus's Euroscepticism</i> Zsolt Gál & Darina Malová, Comenius University, Slovakia <i>From state capture to democratic backsliding: The tale of Slovakia in the Fico-era (2006–2027)</i> Maryana Prokop, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland <i>Government Stability or Government Resilience? Rethinking Measurement in Hybrid Regimes</i> Krisztina Arató, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary & Bogłárka Koller, Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Freedom Through or Freedom From the European Union? Sovereignty and Trust in the EU in Hungary, 2010–26</i>
2.	Panel title: CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTIVISM – I Chair: Michał Kuś Location: BUILDING – Sedláčková 15 ROOM – SP314	Michal Malý, Charles University, Czechia <i>From Biker Patriotism to Pro-Russian Proxy Actor: An Analysis of the Communication of Slovakia's Biker Group Brat za Brata</i> Irmina Matonyte, General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, Lithuania <i>Changing security environment and factors of societal resilience: Lithuanian case study (2022–2026)</i> Aleš Michal, Charles University, Czechia <i>Inheritors of Communism or New Warriors? Transformation of Left-Wing Actors in Central Europe</i> Sara Gibarti, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary <i>Humanitarian Assistance and the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis in Hungary: NGOs Responses Since 2022</i> Piotr Sula, Kamil Błaszczński & Michał Kuś, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>Youth and the Far Right in Poland</i>
3.	Panel title: FREEDOM IN TIMES OF CRISIS – I Chair: Anna Urbanovics	Helena Wyligata, DSW Ideis University in Wrocław, Poland <i>The Paradoxes of Securitization of Polish Migration Policy</i> Justinas Juozaitis, General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, Lithuania <i>Zeitenwende, Rearmament and Security Commitments in Central and Eastern Europe: A German Shift Towards Balancing Against Russia?</i>

	<i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ331	Constantin Palmer, Andrásy University Budapest, Hungary <i>Germany in the “Zeitenwende”: A Role Theory Perspective on Foreign Policy Realignment</i> Shirak Safaryan, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>Between Security and Freedom: Democratic Resilience in Armenia after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War</i> Anna Urbanovics, University of Pecs, Hungary <i>Securing the State or Empowering Citizens? Competing Approaches to Government AI in Central Europe</i>
4.	<i>Panel title:</i> HISTORICAL MEMORY AND SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTIONS OF FREEDOM – I <i>Chair:</i> Agnieszka Kasińska <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Music Room (ground floor)	Gabriela Rzepka, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>Burdened cooperation. How different interpretations of the past shape the current Polish-Lithuanian relations</i> Konstantinas Lotiuk, Klaipėda University, Lithuania <i>Defending the Democratic Shift: Russian Disinformation as a Strategic Threat to Ukraine’s Pro-Western Future</i> Katarzyna Gruszko, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland <i>“The Women Problem” in U.S. Politics? The relationship between gender and party identification in the context of the MAGA narrative</i> Orazio Maria Gnerre, Institute for the History of the Italian Risorgimento, Italy <i>The concept of freedom in the nationalist thought of Central and Eastern Europe from the 19th century onward</i> Agnieszka Kasińska, Jan Kochanowski University, Poland <i>The symbolic dimension of freedom, or how the state’s historical policy affects the present. The case of Poland</i>
5.	<i>Panel title:</i> WESTERN FREEDOMS FOR WHOM IN AN AGE OF NEW EXTREMES: POST-SOCIALIST EUROPE AND THE RISE OF POPULISM <i>Co-Chairs:</i> Přemysl Rosůlek <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ325	Jo Dillabough, University of Cambridge, UK & Elif Kara, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Turkey <i>Tracing moral transgression in the 21st academy: Nietzsche, freedom and a history of the present</i> Jo Dillabough, University of Cambridge, UK <i>Boomerang Effect: Anti-Colonial Thought, Intellectual Complicity, and the Populist Reordering of the Political</i> Jo Dillabough, University of Cambridge, UK & Elizabeth Maber, University of Cambridge, UK <i>Making the Nation Legible: The SZFE Crisis and the Illiberal University in an Age of New Extremes</i>
6.	<i>Roundtable:</i> EUPEACE ROUNDTABLE ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION <i>Chair:</i>	Petr Bláha, Jan Evangelisty Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czechia Ladislav Cabada, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia

	Pavel Hulec <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Museum (Kopeckého sady 2) ROOM – Lecture Hall (first floor)	Jan Bozděch, Mayor of Klenčí pod Čerchovem, Czechia Tomáš Chmelík, Mayor of Přeštice, Czechia
--	--	---

12.30 – 13.30

Lunch Break

(*coffee and light snacks will be available during the lunch break for those who prefer to stay at the venue; Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor)

PANELS ROUND TWO: 13.30–15.00

1.	<i>Panel title:</i> FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES IN CENTRAL EUROPE: BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND THE REVIVAL OF REGIONAL COOPERATION <i>Co-Chairs of the panel:</i> Jaroslav Ušiak & Péter Rada <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Study Hall (ground floor)	Jaroslav Ušiak, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia <i>Recoding Security and Foreign Policy Drift: From Militant Democracy to the Instrumentalizations of Threats in Slovakia within the Visegrád Context</i> Péter Rada, Budapest Metropolitan University, Hungary & Laura Nyilas, National University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Recalibrating Transatlantic Ties: U.S.–Central European Relations and the Impact of Domestic Change in Hungary</i> Ewelina Kancik-Kořtun, Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>The Architecture of Regional Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe: Synergistic or Competitive Formats?</i> Péter Stepper, Budapest Metropolitan University, Hungary <i>Strategic Autonomy Revisited: V4 Narratives and the Impact of Hungary's 2026 Political Turn</i> Petr Just, Ladislav Cabada & Vít Hloušek, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic <i>The populist trap: Andrej Babiš and de-securitisation of the Czech security policy</i> Laura Nyilas, National University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Strategic Recalibration in Central Europe: U.S. Alignment, National Strategy-Making, and the Renewal of Regional Cooperation</i>
2.	<i>Panel title:</i> DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM – II <i>Chair:</i>	Dirk Dalberg, Institute of Political Science/Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia <i>The "Good" and the "Bad" Slovaks. Political thinking in Slovakia (1990–1998)</i> Tibor Mándi, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

	Goran Čular <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Museum (Kopeckého sady 2) ROOM – Lecture Hall (first floor)	<i>Crisis and/or Resurrection? Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. The Case of Hungary</i> Sebastian Kubas, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland <i>Autocratization Consolidation in Serbia</i> Krisztina Juhász, University of Szeged, Hungary <i>The Attempt of Further Autocratization in the Name of Protecting Sovereignty: The Hungarian Quasi-Transparency Bill under the Orbán Government</i> Jaroslav Bílek, IPS FSV UK, Czechia & Barbora Vališková, KPOL FF UHK, Czechia <i>Javier Milei as a legitimization tool for illiberal politicians: the case of the Czech Republic</i> Davor Boban, Goran Čular & Darion Nikić Čakar, University of Zagreb, Croatia <i>Challenges to a Consolidated Democracy: The Case of Croatia</i>
3.	<i>Panel title:</i> POPULISM AND THE POLITICAL INSTRUMENTALISATION OF FREEDOM – I <i>Chair:</i> Gabriella Thomázy <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ331	Dominik Kevický, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, Czechia & Petr Daněk, Masaryk University, Czechia <i>When emotions rule: the roots of the success of populist parties in post-socialist periphery</i> Zuzana Šteučeková, Matej Bel University, Slovakia <i>Do Green Nudges Work in Low-Trust Societies? Evidence from Slovakia</i> András Hettyey, Andrásy Universität Budapest, Hungary <i>Populist foreign politics: the substitution of politics for interests</i> Orsolya Szabó Palócz, University of Szeged, Hungary <i>AI as a Narrative Resource in Contemporary Campaign Communication – The Case of the 2026 Hungarian Parliamentary Elections</i> Žiga Jurij Urlep, Masaryk University, Czechia <i>Constructing Central Europe: political parties as actors in (sub)regionalism</i> Gabriella Thomázy, University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Populism, Migration and Citizenship in Hungary: Migration Governance and Integration under Fidesz (2010–2025)</i>
4.	<i>Panel title:</i> TRANSFORMATIONS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE <i>Chair:</i> Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė	Agniete Zotkeviciute Baneviciene, General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, Lithuania <i>Strategic Exposure as a Deterrence-Amplifying Mechanism in Lithuania's NATO Posture</i> Tigran Ohanyan, University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Poland <i>Neoclassical Realism theory in Changing Geopolitics. Case of the South Caucasus</i>

	<i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ325	Matthew Bergman, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary, Vera Shmalko, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary & Siegfried Manschein, European Union Institute, Italy <i>Do Sources Agree? Government Position Estimates in Central and Eastern Europe</i> Sylwia Zakrzewska, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland <i>Political Survival and Geopolitical Dependence: Belarus after the 2020 Political Crisis</i> Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania <i>The Formation and Representation of the National Interests of Lithuania in the Council of the European Union: The Case of Agricultural policy</i>
5.	<i>Panel title:</i> FREEDOM OF ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL COMPETITION <i>Chair:</i> Tim Haughton <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Educational Centre (first floor)	László Petrovski-Oláh, University of Szeged, Hungary <i>Competing for the Agenda: The Long Campaign for the 2026 Hungarian General Election</i> Beata Kosowska-Gąstoł, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland <i>Entrepreneurial Parties in Poland as a Byproduct of Political Competition between Mainstream Parties</i> Ádám Tislér, University of Pécs, Hungary <i>The Social Media Election: Digital Media and the Rise of Opposition Politics in Hungary</i> Kamil Sowa, Jagiellonian University/Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland <i>The Territorial Left: Party Family Competition Across EU NUTS Regions</i> Youlan Cheng, University of Warsaw, Poland <i>Formal Procedures, Unfree Competition: Digital Incumbency and Electoral Integrity, 2012–2024</i> Tim Haughton, University of Birmingham, UK <i>Continual Change: Party Systems in Central and Eastern Europe</i>
6.	<i>Roundtable:</i> HISTORICAL POLICY OF THE V4 COUNTRIES – THE CASE OF JÁNOS ESTREHÁZY <i>Chair:</i> Adamczyk Arkadiusz <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Sedláčková 15 ROOM – SP314	Arkadiusz Adamczyk, Jan Kochanowski University, Poland Peter Zachar, Ludovika University, Hungary & Istvan Jánék, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary Imre Molnar, retired, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hungary Dariusz Rogut, Institute of National Remembrance, Poland & Jan Ciechanowski, University of Warsaw, Poland Patrycja Jakóbczyk-Adamczyk, Jan Kochanowski University, Poland

15.00 – 15.15

Break

PANELS ROUND THREE: 15.15–16.45		
1.	Panel title: FREEDOM IN TIMES OF CRISIS – II Chair: Harald Edinger Location: BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ325	Istvan Tarrosy, University of Pecs/Stellenbosch University, Hungary <i>Understanding International Migration in Times of Crisis – Society Under Pressure of Government-Driven Discourse</i> Maciej Makulski, New Eastern Europe Magazine, Poland <i>Between Rhetoric and Strategy: Is Poland Reorienting Towards Northern Europe?</i> Tomasz Klin, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>The stalemate in the Russo-Ukrainian War and NATO eastern flank countries' security policy</i> Harald Edinger, Vienna School of International Studies, Austria <i>Performing Uncertainty: Russian Nuclear Threats in the Ukraine War</i>
2.	Panel title: HISTORICAL MEMORY AND SYMBOLIC CONSTRUCTIONS OF FREEDOM – II Chair: Leszek Nowak Location: BUILDING – Museum (Kopeckého sady 2) ROOM – Lecture Hall (first floor)	Márk Stégmayer, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria <i>Appealing Ideologies across Time and Regimes in Hungary</i> Jiabin Song, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania <i>Political Legitimacy and Legitimation in the Post-1949 China: On the Confucianism-Proletariat Dyad</i> Bohdan Szklarski, University of Warsaw, Poland <i>Myths and Symbols in the construction of democratic order after authoritarianism – lessons from the Polish experience.</i> Irena Skalová, Charles University, Czechia <i>Contesting the Past Online: Digital Memory Politics and Narratives about Russia in Czechia and Slovakia</i> Jan Niemiec, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland <i>The AKP-era Turkish foreign policy towards the Western Balkans: an interplay of neo-imperialism and pragmatism</i> Leszek Nowak, University of Warsaw, Poland <i>The relationship between freedom and tradition as a criterion of divisions in Polish political thought after the fall of communism.</i>
3.	Panel title: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: EAST VS. WEST – I Chair: Christopher Walsch Location: BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ331	Zoltan Voros, Ludovika University of Public Service/University of Pécs, Hungary & Viktor Eszterhai, Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Layered Dependency: Hungary, China, and the Structural Limits of Strategic Autonomy</i> Damir Kasum, Palacký University Olomouc, Czechia <i>Nationalization, Entitization, or Regionalization of Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina? A Comparative Perspective</i>

		Johannes Böhnlein, University of Wuerzburg, Germany <i>Poland and Hungary chose political change. What is the influence of informal Institutions in both countries? A Comparison of five significant informal Institutions in Poland and Hungary.</i> Csaba Törő, Karoli Gaspar University of the Reformed Church, Hungary <i>Collective freedom practiced and statehood peacefully restored in the Western Balkans 20 years ago: the case of Montenegro and lessons from its historic trajectory</i> Katarzyna Sypień, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>Beyond Western Climate Security Frames: Lessons from Southeast Asian Security Thinking for European Debates</i> Christopher Walsch, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary <i>Territorial integrity in the Western Balkans in times of Russian and American neo-imperialism</i>
4.	Panel title: UNDER PRESSURE: THE 2025 GENERAL ELECTION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC Chair: Vlastimil Havlík Location: BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Educational Centre (first floor)	Petra Vodová & Alberto Liroy, University of Hradec Králové, Czechia <i>Online Campaigning For All? Mapping The Digital Infrastructure Of The Czech Party System During The 2025 Electoral Campaign</i> Lukáš Linek & Michael Škvrňák, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czechia <i>Back to Class? Changing Effects of Class on Party Choice in the Czech Republic between 1992 and 2025</i> Jakub Charvát, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia <i>Neither Realigning nor Maintaining Election: Czech Party System and the 2025 General Election</i> Ladislav Mrklas & Tomáš Jarmara, CEVRO University, Czechia <i>Pre-electoral alliances in the Czech parliamentary elections of 2025: patterns, motivations and electoral effects</i> Petr Bláha, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, Czechia <i>No quotas, just circles: Institutional and electoral dynamics behind the rise of women in the 2025 Czech elections</i>
5.	Panel title: POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS, NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS AND CROSS-BORDER FLOWS: THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN AND WESTERN BALKAN PERSPECTIVES Chair: Bartosz Czepil	Andrea Schmidt, University of Pécs, Hungary <i>Twin Paths of Cross-Border Suburbanization: From Zemplén to Rajka in the Shadow of Košice and Bratislava</i> Danijela Vuković-Čalasan, University of Montenegro, Montenegro & Pete Moore, Case Western Reserve University, USA <i>Cross-border Flows and Political Transformation of Small States: The Case of Multicultural Montenegro</i> Bartosz Czepil, University of Opole, Poland <i>Political Transformation, Border Regimes and the Cross-border Mobility – the Curious Case of the Railway Connection via Głucholazy along the Polish–Czech Borderland</i>

	<i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Sedláčkova 15 ROOM – SP314	Lukáš Vomlela, Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic & Dalibor Mikuš, University of ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia <i>Political Transformations, Cross-Border Flows and Political Networks in Central Europe: Fidesz and Selected Czech and Slovak Political Parties</i>
6.	<i>Roundtable:</i> 30 SHADES OF FREEDOM. CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE <i>Co-Chairs:</i> Agnieszka Kasińska & Boglárka Koller <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Study Hall (ground floor)	Petr Just, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia Vít Hloušek, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia Ladislav Cabada, Metropolitan University Prague/University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia Katarzyna Gruszko, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland Daniela Škutová, Matej Bel University, Slovakia Katarína Liptáková, Matej Bel University, Slovakia

16.45 – 17.15

Coffee Break (Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor)

PANELS ROUND FOUR: 17.15–18.45		
1.	<i>Panel title:</i> POPULISM AND THE POLITICAL INSTRUMENTALISATION OF FREEDOM – II <i>Chair:</i> Attila Antal <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Educational Centre (first floor)	Alexandra Halounová, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia <i>Freedom just for some? Populists' construction of gender as part of anti-gender mobilization in the V4 region.</i> Sándor Földvári, Emeritus, Hungary <i>Hungarian Far-Right Ambitions in the Late 20th –Early 21st cc. Toward the Revision of the Trianon Treaty</i> Natalia Stręk, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>Hybrid Populism in Contemporary Poland: Strategic Adaptations in Presidential (2020–2025) and Parliamentary (2019–2023) Elections</i> Gyula Speck, Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary <i>Competing Visions of Germany's Foreign Policy: Role Conceptions of AfD and Die Linke after the Zeitenwende</i> Attila Antal, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary <i>Weaponization of Law in Authoritarian Populist Regime</i>
2.	<i>Panel title:</i> MEDIA FREEDOM AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE – I <i>Chair:</i> Matevž Tomšič	Martial Dogou, University of Belgrade, Serbia <i>Transatlantic Tensions and the Future of NATO: A Study of Defense Spending Discourse in Times of Crisis</i>

	<i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Museum (Kopeckého sady 2) ROOM – Lecture Hall (first floor)	Dariusz Niedbała, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa & Marcin Moroń, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland <i>Conspiracy beliefs as a solution to organizing an unpredictable world – can trust moderate relation between conspiracy beliefs and depression amongst older people?</i> Jiří Zákavský, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia <i>Grande Partenza as a tool of sports diplomacy. The start of the Giro d'Italia cycling race in Hungary (2022) and Bulgaria (2026) through the social media of the participants</i> Jakub Čapek, Petr Jüptner & Jakub Hornek, Charles University, Czechia <i>Shifting Attitudes Toward Ukrainian Refugees in Czech Municipalities: A Media Content Analysis (2022–2025)</i> Matevž Tomšič & Rok Bratina, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia <i>Social Media, Segmentation of Media Audience and Political Preferences of Youth: The Case of Slovenia</i>
3.	<i>Panel title:</i> JUDICIARY, RULE OF LAW, AND INSTITUTIONAL FREEDOM <i>Chair:</i> Milan Brglez <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ331	Adrienne Komanovics, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary <i>From Negative Liberty to Constitutional Value: EU Law, Democratic Backsliding, and the Hungarian Challenge</i> Gergő Marcell Imre, Széchenyi István University, Hungary <i>Political Self-Defense and Criminalization</i> Richárd Kószó, University of Szeged, Hungary <i>Challenges of the European Union's 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework</i> Milan Brglez, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia <i>Freedom to Act? Slovenia, Palestine, and the Politics of Small-State Agency in Central and Eastern Europe</i>
4.	<i>Panel title:</i> FREEDOM IN EVERYDAY LIFE: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS <i>Chair:</i> Milos Petrovic <i>Location:</i> BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ325	Joanna Orzechowska-Wacławska, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>Are we really free? Economic insecurity and the appeal of populism: lessons from Poland</i> Daniela Škutová, & Katarína Liptáková, Matej Bel University, Slovakia <i>Critical Literacy of Public Administration Actors as a Safeguard of Freedom: Evidence from Slovakia and the Visegrad Group</i> Łukasz Jakubiak, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>The president-government-parliament triangle in the context of law-making activity: the case of Poland on the example of legislative initiatives regarding crypto-assets</i> Milos Petrovic, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Serbia <i>The relevance of negotiating Chapter 26 in the context of (shallow) Europeanization</i>

5.	Panel title: CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY LOCAL DEMOCRACY – THE CASE OF POLAND Chair: Katarzyna Kuć-Czajkowska Location: BUILDING – Sedláčková 15 ROOM – SP314	Justyna Wasil, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>The activity of local government officials in Poland. Does ecology matter?</i> Agnieszka Ziętek, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>From apparent participation and the crisis of evidence-based policymaking to the erosion of civic culture and democratic backsliding: the case of Poland</i> Monika Sidor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>Councilors' Activeness in the Community. Examples from Lublin Municipalities and Counties in Poland</i> Maciej Drzonek, University of Szczecin, Poland <i>When does the rule of multi-term presidents end? The case of Polish cities</i> Katarzyna Kuć-Czajkowska, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>Freedom in formalization. Lack of regulations for large cities and their suburbs in Poland</i>
6.	Panel title: ACADEMIC FREEDOM Chair: Přemysl Rosůlek Location: BUILDING – Library (Smetanovy sady 2) ROOM – Study Hall (ground floor)	Jo Dillabough, University of Cambridge, UK <i>Universities, Populism and the Paradoxes of Freedom</i> Přemysl Rosůlek, University of West Bohemia, Czech Republic <i>Perspectives of academic freedom in the Czech Republic after 2025 parliamentary elections</i> Elif Kara, Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Turkey <i>History of the Present and Academic Freedom: A Turkish Case Study</i> Kriton Kuci, Mediterranean University of Albania, Tirana <i>Everyday nationhood and academic freedom: How banal nationalism shapes knowledge production in Albania</i>
*	Location: BUILDING – Jungmannova 1 ROOM – JJ303	CEPSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

19.30

Light Dinner & Drink

(Library, Smetanovy sady 2, Ground Floor Corridor & Study Hall)

WELCOME IN PILSEN

30th CEPSA CONFERENCE

BEST PhD PAPER AWARD CEREMONY

2ND DAY: FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

8:30 – 9:00

Arrival & Registration
(Sedláčkova 38, main entrance; registration remains open until the start of panels round six)

PANELS ROUND FIVE: 9.00–10.30		
1.	Panel title: DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM – III Chair: Agnieszka Turska-Kawa Location: BUILDING – Veleslavínova 42 ROOM – VC121	Julia Szamely, Central European University, Hungary, Elisa Omodei, Central European University, Hungary, Thomas Costello, Carnegie Mellon University, USA & David Rand, Cornell University, USA <i>Exploring the Impact of AI-Driven Persuasion on Political Support for Autocratic Leaders: A Case Study of Viktor Orbán's Supporters in Hungary</i> Kornelia Batko, Agnieszka Turska-Kawa, Christian Welzel & Tomasz Soliński, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland <i>From Democratic Hope to Democratic Fatigue: Qualitative Evidence from Poland</i> Ildikó Bartha & Tamás M. Horváth, University of Debrecen, Hungary <i>Risks in the Competition Policy of the European Union. A Rule of Law perspective</i> Giorgi Pareshishvili, Caucasus International University, Georgia <i>Sacred Boundaries of Freedom: Orthodoxy, Religious Diversity, and Illiberal Politics in Georgia (1991–2025)</i> Christina Eva Griessler, Andrassy University Budapest/netPOL – network for political communication, Hungary <i>The key factor of strengthening democratic institutions in the Western Balkans: The citizen</i> Jussi Metsälä & Heino Nyysönen, University of Turku, Finland <i>Cynical Indifference – The Autocratization Processes of Politics</i>
2.	Panel title: BRINGING EUROPE CLOSER TO CITIZENS: COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY Chair: Simona Kukovič Location: BUILDING – Veleslavínova 42 ROOM – VC112	Petr Blaha, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czechia <i>Local Development at the Ballot Box: Development-Oriented Local Referendums in the Czech Republic</i> Istvan Hoffman, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary/Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland & Bernardette Somody, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary <i>Intersections of horizontal policies: child participation in municipal development policies – in the light of Hungarian and Polish experiences</i>

		Miro Haček, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia & Simona Kukovič, School of Advanced Social Studies/University of Ljubljana, Slovenia <i>Community Led-Development: Slovenian Municipal Councillors in a Comparative Perspective</i> Pavel Maškarinec, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czechia <i>Spatial Dimensions of Electoral Democracy in Czech Local Elections</i> Miroslav Fečko, Ondrej Mital' & Silvia Ručinská, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia <i>Local development driven by digital public policy tools</i>
3.	Panel title: TRUST AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE Chair: Ladislav Cabada Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 38 ROOM – SO224	Aneta Világi, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia <i>Political Trustworthiness in the Digital Age: Elite and Civil Society Perspectives from Slovakia</i> Alenka Krašovec, Meta Novak, Anja Kolak & Damjan Lajh, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia <i>Distrust in Political Institutions in Slovenia: Searching for Explanations</i> Ladislav Cabada, Metropolitan University Prague/University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia & Petr Just, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia <i>Why don't we trust them? The decline of trust in democratic institutions and processes in Central and Eastern Europe (case study of Czechia).</i> Pavol Baboš, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia <i>Attributes of trustworthiness in the political communication at social platforms: Central European politicians at Facebook</i>
4.	Panel title: CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTIVISM – II Chair: Sorana Constantinescu Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 15 ROOM – SP314	Przemysław Żukiewicz, University of Wrocław/Karkonosze Academy of Applied Sciences, Poland <i>Judicial Pathways to Marriage Equality: The Polish Case</i> Kata Murányi, University of Pécs, Hungary <i>Billboards: Propaganda and Protest in Hungary's 2026 Political Campaign</i> Mitja Zupan, Tine Šteger & Simona Kukovič, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia <i>Digital Media Use and Political Participation among Youth: Evidence from Slovenia's Rural and Urban Communities</i> Maciej Skrzypek, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>Between Pro-Defense and Political Aides. Essence of Paramilitarism in CEE</i> Sorana Constantinescu & Szilard Bartok, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania <i>Political violence support: a cross national examination</i>

5.	Panel title: FREEDOM IN TIMES OF CRISIS – III Chair: Anna Molnár Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 38 ROOM – SO221	Murat Özay Taşkın, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>Security and Stability in Times of Crisis: Türkiye's Security Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa</i> Katarzyna Zalas-Kamińska, University of Wrocław, Poland & Michał Rutkowski, The World Bank, USA <i>Strategic Dynamics of Development Assistance: Cooperation, Competition, and the Case of Polish Aid</i> Helena Bauerová, University of West Bohemia, Czechia <i>Security Narratives and Changing Understandings of Freedom in the V4 States</i> Katarzyna Sypień, Jagiellonian University, Poland <i>Environmental security under polycrisis in Central and Eastern Europe freedom solidarity and crisis governance</i> Anna Molnár & Éva Jakusné Harnos, Ludovika University of Public Service, Hungary <i>The Transition of the European Union from Normative Power to Securitising Actor: Still a Peace Project?</i>
6.	Panel title: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: EAST VS. WEST – II Chair: Zsolt Boda Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 38 ROOM – SO231	Birgit Mitter & Armin Mühlböck, University of Salzburg, Austria <i>From Accession to Integration: Networks and Learning in EU Cultural Funding after Eastern Enlargement</i> Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, University of Warsaw, Poland <i>Geopolitical Changes in US Strategies – Consequences for Central Europe</i> Timofei Nosok, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary <i>Beyond Marxism: Juche as an Independent Political and Philosophical Framework</i> Kseniya Kizilova, Institute for Comparative Survey Research, Austria/Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany <i>From Policy Performance Gaps to Democratic Disaffection: Populist, Authoritarian, and Democratic-Cynical Pathways in Central and Eastern Europe</i> Zsolt Boda, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, Attila Bartha, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, Jonathan Kamkhaji, EUI, Italy & Claudio Radaelli, EUI, Italy <i>Emotionalized narratives and the support for immigration policy. Findings from a comparative survey experiment</i>

10.30 – 11.00

Coffee Break (Sedláčkova 38, main entrance)

PANELS ROUND SIX: 11.00–12.30

1.	Panel title: DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM – IV Chair: Anzhelika Savchuk-Konarska Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 38 ROOM – SO224	Bacho Bitari Khuroshvili, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>The Politics of Freedom in Georgia after Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Democratic Backsliding and Policies of De-democratisation</i> Danilo Lorenzo Delos Santos, University of Pécs, Hungary <i>Populism Manifested: Modes of Control and Arbitration, a Comparison of Orban and Duterte</i> Barbara Balicka, University of Wrocław, Poland <i>When Freedom Turns: The Contested Legacy of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe</i> Gokhan Yildiz, University of Opole, Poland <i>Inflationary Pressures, Post-Neoliberal Intervention, and Democracy Trade-offs in Türkiye and Poland</i> Anzhelika Savchuk-Konarska, University WSB Merito, Poland <i>How the elites are faring: the case of Ukraine in the context of Central and Eastern Europe</i>
2.	Panel title: THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT & IDEOLOGIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE Chair: Marián Sekerák Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 15 ROOM – SO314	Zoltán Balázs, Corvinus University, Hungary <i>Carl Schmitt and Radical Conservative Thinking in Hungary after the Millennium</i> Marcin Czyżniewski, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland <i>Political Thought in the Transformation Process of the Polish and Czech Post-Communist Left after 1989</i> Jan Květina, Czech Academy of Sciences – Philosophical Faculty, Hradec Králové, Czechia <i>Bohemian/Czech Republicanism: Nonsense or a Rupture in the Traditional Canon of Czech Political Thought?</i> Lukáš Valeš, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czechia <i>Research on the History of Political Thought in the Czech Lands Between Democracy, Nazism, and Communism</i> Marián Sekerák, AMBIS College, Czechia <i>Interpretation and Canon Formation: The Historiography of Political Thought in Czech and Slovak Contexts</i>
3.	Panel title: MEDIA FREEDOM AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE – II Chair: Maria Ochwat Location: BUILDING – Veleslavínova 42 ROOM – VC121	Jan M. Gajewski, European School of Law and Administration in Warsaw, Poland <i>Synthetic Freedom: La Boétie's Voluntary Servitude Rebuilt for the Digital Age</i> Batal Almutairi, Arab Open University, Kuwait <i>Institutional Trust and Digital Migration: Rethinking the Decline of Legacy Media in Arab and Western Media Systems</i>

		Lili Tóth, University of Pécs, Hungary <i>Governing the Digital Era: Challenges and Responses in Estonia and Hungary</i> Vlastimil Havlík & Alena Kluknavská, Masaryk University, Czechia <i>Engaging the Divide: User Reactions to Anti-Populist Politicians' Messages on Social Media in the Czech Republic</i> Maria Ochwat, Catholic University of Lublin, Poland <i>Freedom of Expression and Communicative Mechanisms of Restricting Free Speech: A Comparative Perspective from Central Europe and Southeast Asia</i>
4.	Panel title: FREEDOM AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL Chair: István Hoffman Location: BUILDING – Sedláčkova 38 ROOM – S0231	Kęstutis Grumodas & Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania <i>Who Counts as "The Public"? Public Opinion Orientations among Lithuanian Local Councillors</i> Jakub Čapek, Charles University, Czechia & Adam Slavíček, Prague University of Economics and Business, Czechia <i>From City Hall to Parliament: Electoral Performance of Mayors in the 2025 Czech General Election</i> Balazs Brucker, ELTE CERS Institute for Regional Studies, Hungary <i>Defending Democracy from Below: Budapest's Municipal Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe</i> Łukasz Lewkowicz, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland <i>Transnational Networks and Cross-Border Cooperation in Central Europe: The Case of the Visegrád Group</i> István Hoffman, Eötvös Loránd University/Maria Curie-Skłodowska University/ELTE Research Center for Social Sciences, Hungary <i>Boiling the Frog (2010–2026): The Gradual Erosion of Local Democracy in Hungary through Financial Centralization and Politicised Legal Supervision</i>
5.	Roundtable: ONLINE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF RURAL YOUTH: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES Chair: Simona Kukovič Location: BUILDING – Veleslavínova 42 ROOM – VC112	Inez Fekete, STRIA, Hungary Sorana Constantinescu, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania Teodora Ivanović & Maja Nikolić, NGO UZOR, Montenegro Petr Just, Metropolitan University Prague, Czechia Peter Csanyi, Rudolf Kucharcik & Michael Augustin, Bratislava University of Economics and Business, Slovakia Mitja Zupan & Matevž Tomšič, School of Advanced Social Sciences, Slovenia

12.45 – 13.15

CONCLUDING REMARKS (Veleslavínova 42, room VC112)

14.00

*GUIDED TOUR OF THE CITY CENTRE (60–90 minutes;
optional; Info follows)*

VENUE

Travel Information

For travel to Pilsen, please refer to the information on the [city's website](#). For participants traveling by car, we recommend using the [Rychtárka](#) parking garage. Pilsen has an extensive public transportation network. However, if you are staying in the city center, the conference venues will be just a few minutes' walk away. The individual buildings where the conference will take place are also just a few minutes' walk from one another. Please keep this in mind when moving between panel sessions.

Venue Information (online map [here](#) or via QR code below)

Thursday

- Education and Research Library of the Pilsen Region (Smetanovy sady 2): registration, coffee breaks, panels, and dinner
- West Bohemian Museum in Pilsen (Kopeckého sady 2): welcome and keynote lecture, panels
- Sedláčkova 15: panels
- Jungmannova 1: panels and committee meeting (*Note: Unfortunately, the reconstructions will be ongoing in the building. Thus, we would like to ask those participating in the panels scheduled in this building to follow the signs from the main entrance directly to the conference rooms on the second floor.*)

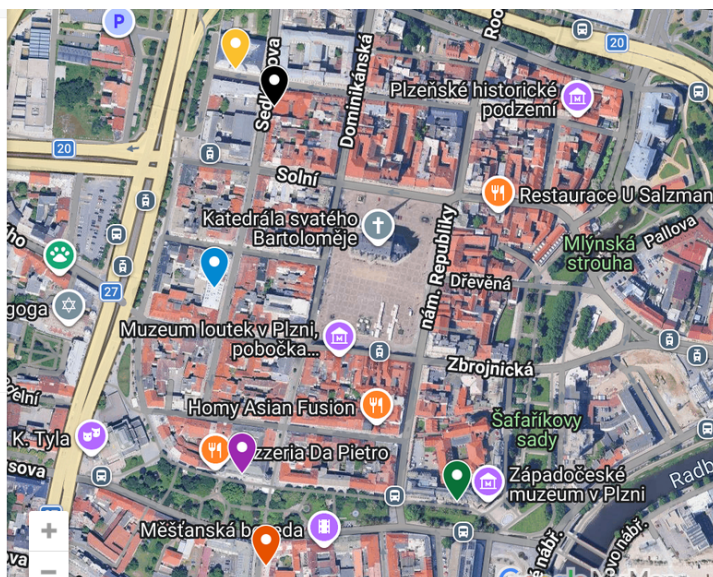
Friday

- Sedláčkova 38: registration, panels, and coffee break
- Veleslavínova 42: panels and concluding remarks
- Sedláčkova 15: panels



Venues

-  Smetanovy sady 2 (Library) (Thursday)
-  Kopeckého sady 2 (Museum) (Thursday)
-  Jungmannova 1 (Thursday)
-  Sedláčkova 38 (Friday)
-  Veleslavínova 42 (Friday)
-  Sedláčkova 15 (Thursday & Friday)



Lunches and Refreshments

Light refreshments will be provided during coffee breaks on both days of the conference (Thursday in the Regional Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor; Friday at Sedláčkova 38). Lunches: there are numerous restaurants in the vicinity of the venues where the attendees can purchase lunch. On Thursday, light snacks will be provided during the lunch break (Regional Library, Smetanovy sady 2, ground floor). On Thursday, all the participants are welcome to attend dinner & drink that will be hosted on the library grounds (Smetanovy sady 2) at 19:30.

Guided Tour

Those interested can take part in a free guided tour of Pilsen's historic center (approx. 60 to 90 minutes), scheduled for Friday, September 25, starting at 14:00. If you are interested, please apply [here](#) or via QR code by Thursday, 24 September, 11:00 am..



We are looking forward to greeting you in Pilsen.

Welcome!

2026 CEPSC Conference Organising Committee



**Get Ready for the
29th IPSA World Congress of Political Science
24-28 July 2027 | Rome, Italy**

Call for Proposals | 8 September - 4 November 2026

Scan the QR code
or **visit**
wc2027.ipsa.org



Partners

LUISS 
Università di Roma

 **ITALIAN POLITICAL
SCIENCE ASSOCIATION**