



CEPSA 30TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

Call for Papers:

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

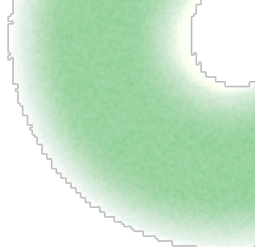
Historical Legacies, Democratic Challenges, and the Politics of Freedom

24 – 25 September 2026, Pilsen, Czechia

Freedom is one of the central normative and analytical concepts of political science and a fundamental value of democratic political orders. At the same time, it is not a fixed or universally shared concept. Its meaning, scope, and institutional expression are shaped by historical experience, political traditions, cultural contexts, and social transformations. Central and Eastern Europe offers a particularly important context for examining the multiple dimensions of freedom. The countries of the region share the legacy of state socialism, the influence of the Soviet sphere, and the profound systemic transformations that followed the collapse of communist regimes. However, their political trajectories have differed significantly, resulting in diverse institutional arrangements, political cultures, and interpretations of democratic values. These differences are reflected in the ways freedom is understood, institutionalized, and contested in contemporary political life.

The conference marks the **30th anniversary of the Central and Eastern European Political Science Association**, which for three decades has provided a platform for scholarly exchange and cooperation among political scientists in the region. This anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on both the development of the association and the broader political and social transformations that have shaped Central and Eastern Europe since the democratic transitions of the late twentieth century.

The theme “30 Years of CEPSA – 30 Shades of Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe” invites participants to explore how historical legacies, institutional arrangements, and current political developments shape the meaning and practice of freedom. In societies with relatively recent experience of non-democratic rule, freedom often acquires specific symbolic and pragmatic interpretations, which may differ from those found in long-established Western democracies. Under conditions of military, economic, or social insecurity, political actors and citizens may be more willing to accept limitations on freedom in exchange for stability, a tendency visible in democratic backsliding, the rise of populism, and tensions between majority rule and the protection of individual rights.



The past three decades have also brought important changes within the social sciences in Central and Eastern Europe, including shifts in research agendas, theoretical approaches, and methodological standards. The CEPSA anniversary therefore provides a suitable moment for scholarly reflection on the role of political science in analysing the changing meanings of freedom in the region.

Given the broadness of the concept, the conference particularly encourages contributions focusing on selected dimensions of freedom that allow for comparative and theoretically informed analysis across Central and Eastern Europe, including freedom of elections and political competition, media freedom and public discourse, freedom of speech, judicial independence and the rule of law, academic freedom, freedom and democratic backsliding, freedom in times of crisis, populism and the politics of freedom, historical memory and symbolic constructions of freedom, comparative perspectives on freedom in Eastern and Western Europe, transformations of political science in the region and others.

By bringing together scholars from across Central and Eastern Europe and beyond, the CEPSA anniversary conference aims to provide a forum for critical reflection on how freedom has been understood, institutionalized, and challenged over the past three decades, and how it may develop in the future.

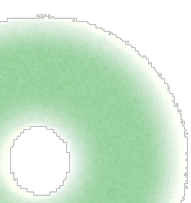
Conference Contributions and Proceedings

The conference welcomes individual paper proposals as well as panel and roundtable proposals related to the conference theme. Individual submissions should include the paper title, an abstract of 300-400 words, author name(s), institutional affiliation, and contact email. Panel and roundtable proposals should include the title, a short description, and a list of contributors with affiliations and proposed paper titles where applicable. The conference welcomes theoretical, empirical, and comparative contributions using diverse methodological approaches.

Submissions should be made via the conference submission form available at the following link: <https://1ka.arnes.si/CEPSA30>

Publication possibilities

A Book of Abstracts will be published as part of the conference proceedings. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of CEPSA, selected participants will be invited to submit full papers for publication in an international peer-reviewed scientific journal affiliated with the CEPSA.



Note for young scholars/PhD students

CEPSA particularly encourages submissions from PhD students. The evaluation committee will select the best PhD paper, which will be honoured with a special award, including the opportunity to publish in one of the scientific journals affiliated with CEPSA.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **Dates of the conference:** 24–25 September 2026
- **Conference venue:** University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Department of Politics and International Relations, Czechia ([Jumgnannova 1](#), Pilsen)
- **Submission deadline:** 15 May 2026
- **Notification of Acceptance:** 30 June 2026
- **Financial issues:** There is no conference fee. The organisers will provide coffee breaks and light dinner. The organisers do not cover any travel and/or accommodation costs.
- **Hint:** A film festival in Pilsen will begin on 25 September 2026, so accommodation in the city may fill up quickly. We therefore recommend booking a (cancelable) place to stay as early as possible.
- **Organising committee:**
 - Prof. dr. **Boglárka Koller**, President of CEPSA
 - Prof. dr. **Agnieszka Kasińska-Metryka**, Vice president of CEPSA
 - Prof. dr. **Simona Kukovič**, General Secretary of CEPSA
 - Assist. prof. dr. **Petr Just**, Czech representative in Executive Committee of CEPSA
 - Assoc. prof. dr. **Vladimír Naxera**, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen
 - Prof. dr. **Ladislav Cabada**, University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Senior president of CEPSA
 - Pavel Hulec**, M.A., University of West Bohemia in Pilsen
 - Alexandra Halounová**, M.A., University of West Bohemia in Pilsen