



ANDRÁSSY  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BUDAPEST



PÁZMÁNY

Pázmány Péter Catholic University  
Faculty of Law and Political Sciences

Programme

## Conceptions of the State: Between Tradition and Future

At Pázmány Péter Catholic University and Andrassy University Budapest

On 29 November 2024

The crisis of (representative) democracy has been discussed in various social sciences for decades. The democratic institutional system, which developed mainly in the 19th century, is today facing a number of challenges. The decrease in voters' interest in political affairs, the declining level of social trust in politicians and political parties, the parallel falling turnout in elections, the emergence of bubbles of opinion that also appear in stable democracies and the growing political polarisation - these are the best-known symptoms of this crisis. New technologies, such as AI, are putting enormous pressure on traditional forms of democracy and decision-making, as well as on trust in the procedural forms of democracy. All these factors can be interpreted as a crisis phenomena. However, they can also be seen as indications of the need to adapt and develop (representative) democracy, and to reflect on how the traditional democratic system can be improved.

Both our understanding of the problem and our attempts to find possible solutions and further developments depend on our fundamental understanding of the state and democracy. In order to identify the right directions, we must first of all clarify the conceptual basis from which we derive our sensitivity to the problem and our search for a way out. What do we understand by the state? What functions do we ascribe to it? How does the state relate to its citizens and vice versa? At the heart of this conference is the question of how the concept of popular sovereignty, which is now an inescapable part of modern statehood, can be implemented institutionally and procedurally. Last but not least, there is also the question of how democracy can be communicated and represented on a cultural level (signification techniques). What role do citizens play in shaping the life of the political community? What are the existing and future innovative forms of citizen participation in the technologically advanced environment? Do we need new standards? All these questions and the answers to them are culturally and historically (co-)determined, and the possible future development paths of democracy can only be derived from an in-depth discussion of its traditions.

The aim of our conference is to reflect on contemporary democratic developments and the crisis phenomena mentioned above in terms of fundamental understandings of the state. We invite proposals for papers that consider the nature of the state and its functions, and the place and role of citizens, from a conceptual, historical or comparative perspective. In particular, we will consider reflections that address these fundamental questions in the context of democracy, its crisis phenomena, possible responses to them and possible directions for development and innovation in social, political, cultural and technological terms.

**SWISS-HUNGARIAN**  
Cooperation Programme



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## PROGRAMME:

### Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Dean's Council Room)

#### Introduction

09.00-09.15 László Komáromi/Csaba Madarász/Zoltán Tibor Pállinger

#### Panel 1: Conceptual Foundations

09.15-09.45 László Komáromi: „The Vision of Man in Democracy / The Democratic Ideal of Man”

09.45-10.15 Lilla Berkes: „Functions of the Contemporary State and Citizen Participation”

10.15-10.45 Dragan Prohle: „A Kantian way of resolving the contemporary political antinomy. On digital publicity”

10.45-11.00 Coffee Break

11.00-11.30 Balázs Schanda: „The Böckenförde Dilemma Put to the Test: A Few Remarks If/How a State Can Renew its Moral-Cultural Fundaments”

11.30-12.00 Zoltán Tibor Pállinger: „All State Authority is Derived from the People: Participation Opportunities as an Implementation of the Concept of Popular Sovereignty”

12.00-12.30 Arne Pautsch: „Aleatoric Democracy – Remedy Against the Crisis of Parliamentary Systems?”

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Lunch Break 12.30-14.00

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## Andrassy University Budapest (Lecture Hall 6)

### Panel 2: Citizen Participation in Action

14.00-14.30 Henriett Kovács: „Remembrance Politics in Hungary”

14.30-15.00 Bruno Kaufmann: „Anchoring Democracy – Rethinking Active Citizenship Across the World”

15.00-15.30 Balázs Tárnok: „Democracy and the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities in Europe: Exploring the Tools of EU Participatory Democracy”

15.30-15.45 Coffee Break

15.45-16.15 Csaba Madarász: „Fundamental Questions of Democratic Participation in the Digital Age – The Disturbing Technological Facts Driving Procedural Innovations”

16.15-16.45 Ellen Bos: „External Voting”

16.45-17.15 Uwe Serdült: „Digital Democracy – Part of the Solution or Beginning of a Problem?”

### Concluding Remarks

17.15-17.30 László Komáromi/Csaba Madarász/Zoltán Tibor Pállinger

