

Activism As A Modality Of Resistance And Communication?

Comparing Judicial Activism Across Eastern Europe

Final Conference Programme

5-6 June 2025

Location: Room Spaak, Institut d'études européennes, ULB, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 39 – 1050, Bruxelles

Thursday, 5 June

14:45 – 15:00 | Welcome (by Ramona Coman and Agnieszka Kubal)

15:00 – 16:30 | Panel 1 (3 papers) ***Resistance to authoritarian turns in Eastern Europe***

Chair: Ramona Coman, Université libre de Bruxelles

- Crushing judicial resistance: interactions of court-curbing and judicial resistance in Hungary (Etienne Hanelt & Attila Vincze, Masaryk University)
- Judging under the grind of authoritarian politics: lessons from Hungary and Romania (Beáta Huszka and Ágnes Kovács, University of Oxford, ELTE)
- 'Activism via Deference' in Constitutional Courts' Conventional Rights-Protecting Role and Resisting De-Democratization: Evidence from Hungary and Slovakia (Max Steuer, Comenius University, Bratislava)

16:30 – 17:00 | Tea/Coffee Break

17:00 – 18:30 | Book Pre-Launch Debate *What do judges do, and how do they perceive their role when democracy is under strain?*

With the participation of: Yavuz Aydin, András Bálint Baka, Tamás Matusik, Andrea Titz, and Ramona Coman

Book details: *Dissensus over Liberal Democracy. Insights from European Judges* (co-edited by Ramona Coman, Viktor Kazai, Leonardo Puleo and Andrew Bradley, Hart Bloomsbury)

18:30 – 19:30 | Convivial drink reception (Institut d'études européennes ULB, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 39 – 1050, Bruxelles)

Friday, 6 June

09:00 – 10:30 | Panel 2 (3 papers) *From judicial resistance to activism?*

Chair: Birgit Apitzsch, University of Bochum

- Judicial activism in asylum policy: Resistance through rules conversion and organizational discretion (Cristina Dallara, Alice Lacchei, Madalina Moraru, University of Bologna)
- Judicial Resilience in Times of War: Ukrainian Judges' Experiences of Maintaining Rule of Law During Russian Military Aggression (2014-2025) (Hanna Oliinyk and Agnieszka Kubal, University of Oxford)
- What Explains Punishment in Historical Memory-related Court Cases? The Case of Ukraine since 2022 (Andrii Nekoliak, University of Amsterdam)

10:30 – 11:00 | Tea/Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 | Panel 3 (3 papers) *Post-illiberalism, reforms, role of judiciary (the curious case of Poland)*

Chair: Agnieszka Kubal, University of Oxford

- Judicial mobilisation in times of the rule of law transition (Barbara Grabowska-Moroz, Marcin Szwed, Central European University, University of Warsaw)
- Judicial Formalism in Post-Illiberal Poland (2024): Lessons Learned from Resistance (Marcin Mrowicki, University of Warsaw)
- Post-illiberal judicial activism. Polish judges' manifestations of contrasting views on judicial independence in times of re-liberalization (Aleksandra Dzięgielewska, Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy)

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 | Panel 4 (3 papers) *Judicial solidarity and the role of apex European courts*

Chair: Beáta Huszka, University of Oxford

- Activism of Foreign Judges against Attacks on Judicial Independence in another Country: A Form of Judicial Solidarity in Europe? (Vanessa Barbé, University of Valenciennes)
- How comparative perspectives on judicial independence shape judicial resistance and transnational support from German judges and judges associations (Birgit Apitzsch and Zeynep Bozkurt, Ruhr-University Bochum)

- The Origin Story of the European Court's of Justice Engagement with the Rule-of-Law Crisis (Pola Cebulak, VU Amsterdam)

15:00 – 15:30 | Conclusion & Publication Discussion (chair: Agnieszka Kubal)