



Sovereignty in a Multipolar Modern World: Digital Autonomy and State Capacity in Central Europe

Synopsis

In the third decade of the 21st century, the concept of state sovereignty has changed systemically and fundamentally. Due to several reasons, like modern technological improvements and the vulnerability of global supply chains, sovereignty is no longer a topic under constitutional or international law. On the contrary, it must be simultaneously perceived as the state's actual capacity to act: the state's tangible ability to exercise its essential functions amidst external dependencies and hybrid threats, with particular regard to the online and digital spheres.

The conference aims to examine the legal and practical nature of sovereignty within a multidisciplinary framework, focusing specifically on the unique challenges of Central Europe. For the countries of the region, it seems to be a vital question how to navigate the growing economic and social influence of global tech giants and the competition between great powers, while maintaining their institutional and democratic resilience within the framework of the rule of law. Throughout the discourse, sovereignty shall not be interpreted as an isolated legal concept, but rather as the effective capacity for action and resistance available to states. The event provides a forum to discuss how control over digital infrastructures, cybersecurity considerations, and the regulation of artificial intelligence are becoming the new pillars of modern statehood.

Conference Program

4 May 2026

University of Szeged, Faculty of Law, ground floor Aula (Szeged, Tisza Lajos krt. 54.)

9:30-9:50 **Registration**

9:50-10:00 **Opening**

Dr. habil. Anikó Szalai, Head of Institute, Associate Professor, Digitalization and Democratization Research Group Leader, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged

10:00-12:00 **Plenary Session: Theoretical and Geopolitical Dimensions of Sovereignty: The Dichotomy Between Law and Fact**

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Lóránt Csink, Head of Institute, Professor, Institute of Public Law, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged

10:00-10:30 **Caught in the Crossfire - Shielding Rights and Taming Markets Resulting From The Evolution of CJEU Digital Jurisprudence After the Lisbon Treaty**

Dr. Krisztián Kecsmár, Judge at the General Court, Court of Justice of the European Union

10:30-11:00 **Is State sovereignty a problem for European integration?**

Prof. Dr. Spyridon Flogaitis, Director, European Public Law Organization



- 11:00-11:30 **Sovereignty and European Integration**
Prof. Dr. László Trócsányi, Rector, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
- 11:30-12:00 **Q&A**
- 12:00-13:00 **Lunch Break**
- 13:00-14:30 **Section I.: State and Sovereignty in the Age of Digitalization**
Moderator: Dr. Gizem Gültekin-Várkonyi, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 13:00-13:15 **Nation and Democracy under Illiberalism in the 21st Century**
Prof. Dr. Agnieszka Bień-Kacała, Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Szczecin
- 13:15-13:30 **New Approaches towards Sovereignty Considering Modern Challenges**
Prof. Dr. Lóránt Csink, Head of Institute, Professor, Institute of Public Law, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 13:30-13:45 **Digital Sovereignty as Freedom of Choice – Pathways to Open Digital Infrastructures**
Michael Kolain, Research Associate and Coordinator in the Department for Digital Transformation of the German Research Institute for Public Administration
- 13:45-14:00 **The Trends in Regulatory Challenges under Public Law at the Digital Age**
Dr. habil. Anikó Szalai, Head of Institute, Associate Professor, Digitalization and Democratization Research Group Leader, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 14:00-14:15 **Competitiveness and Credibility of the European Union in the Global South**
Dr. László Gulyás, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 14:15-14:30 **Digital Sovereignty: The Need of a Resilient Tech Ecosystem for Europe**
Dr. Norbert Tribl, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 14:30-14:40 **Q&A**
- 14:40-15:00 **Coffee break**
- 15:00-16:30 **Section II.: Regulating Power - Corporate Due Diligence and State Capacity**
Moderator: Dr. Norbert Tribl, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged



-
- 15:00-15:15 **State vs. Companies: Human rights breaches and the question of responsibility**
Dr. Gizem Gültekin-Várkonyi, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 15:15-15:30 **Structural Limits of Platform Self-regulation: Human Rights Due Diligence in the Social Media Governance Framework**
Dr. Tamás Pongó, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Public Law, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 15:30-15:45 **Civil Liability under the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive: A New Era of Corporate Accountability?**
Balkis Oueslati, PhD candidate, Doctoral School of Law, University of Szeged
- 15:45-16:00 **Digital Sovereignty and Cultural Competence in Global Platform Governance**
Dr. Brigitta Réka Szaniszló, Senior Lecturer, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 16:00-16:15 **Building Digital Autonomy Through Strong State Capacity**
Dr. Edit Soós, Associate Professor, Department of Political Sciences, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 16:15-16:30 **Priority Investments in Hungary: Selected Examples from the Case Law**
Dr. Judit Siket, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Public Law, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged
- 16:30-16:40 **Q&A**
- 16:40-16:50 **Closing Remarks**
Dr. habil. Anikó Szalai, Head of Institute, Associate Professor, Digitalization and Democratization Research Group Leader, International and Regional Studies Institute, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged

Please note: Participation at the conference is free of charge, but registration is compulsory.

Kindly register via following Google Forms link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Rj5UqzctjjILp8ZdSnH-gQCZe3up-GocDuuPuGdnMDI/edit>

The conference will be conducted in English language with no interpretation service.

The event is organized by the Digitalization and Democracy Research Group, which operates under the auspices of and with the support of the Digital Society Competence Centre of the Humanities and Social Sciences Cluster of the Centre of Excellence for Interdisciplinary Research, Development and Innovation of the University of Szeged.