Social Sciences 4 Democracy

Call for submissions

The Social Sciences for Democracy project (SOS4democracy) invites you to submit paper abstracts for its 4th annual conference.

Democracy in Crisis: Possibilities for Resistance and Social Transformation

Venue: Institute of Criminology and Faculty of Law of the University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Dates: 16-18 June 2027

Contemporary liberal democracies are increasingly theorised as being in a state of crisis. Across democratic contexts, we observe the rise of populist politics, centralization of power in the executive branch, criminalisation of dissent, expanding practices of securitisation and surveillance, and continued impunity for violations of international law. At the same time, existing legal frameworks continue to be mobilized by social movements and other actors to challenge authoritarian practices, defend fundamental rights, and resist the normalisation of violence. This conference seeks to explore contemporary forms of authoritarian and illiberal practices, as well as the possibilities for resistance, solidarity, and the building of movements for social transformation.

We invite academic and non-academic contributions from diverse disciplines and fields of practice that address these and related questions through empirical, theoretical, and historical perspectives. Possible themes include:

- **Illiberal systems and the centralisation of power**: Authors are invited to explore measures through which governments centralise power within the executive branch, weaken judicial and legislative oversight, and undermine other mechanisms of accountability.
- **The rise of populist politics**: This theme explores the growing electoral and political influence of populist parties and movements, their mobilization around migration and national identity, and their impact on democratic institutions and political discourse.
- **The limits of international law in times of remilitarization**: Recent armed conflicts raise fundamental questions about the limits of the international legal order and the

possibilities of mobilizing international and domestic law for political struggle and accountability. We invite contributions on how growing military spending, the shift of production and research towards defence, and the broader militarization affect democracy.

- **Technology and the reshaping of democratic environments**: This theme explores how surveillance, AI, and other emerging technologies are reshaping governance, from migration control, policing, and welfare administration to military and security infrastructures. Authors are invited to consider the implications of these developments for human rights, accountability, and democratic participation.
- **Repression, securitization, and criminalization of dissent**: We invite authors to explore the expanding use of policing, anti-terrorism measures, restrictive legislation, and institutional disciplinary measures to suppress political protest and social movements, including the growing pressures placed on universities, academic freedom, student activism, and journalistic freedom.
- **Democratic resistance and civil society mobilization**: This theme considers how civil society, social movements, opposition actors, and transnational networks mobilise to resist authoritarianism and political violence, including through monitoring and documenting illiberal measures, strategic litigation, public advocacy, investigative research, and other forms of civic oversight.

The conference welcomes researchers from the social sciences and humanities, practitioners, activists, students, and others engaged in research and advocacy on the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in contemporary democracies.

Venue & accessibility: The conference will take place over three full days, from 16 to 18 June 2027, at the Institute of Criminology and the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, Slovenia. This will be an entirely in-person meeting with no option for virtual attendance or presentation.

General guidelines for abstract submissions:

1. Submissions to the conference should include an abstract of a maximum of 300 words (please state the objectives of the paper, methodology, and results).
2. Submissions should also include a short biography (maximum 100 words) of the author(s) of the paper.
3. Please submit your abstract and short biography by **15 February 2027** to the e-mail address sos4democracy@inst-krim.si (please use "Call for papers – SOS4democracy conference" as the subject line of your e-mail).
4. Abstracts must relate to the conference's general themes. All abstracts must be in English.
5. All submissions will be peer-reviewed. Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis with notifications sent out regularly. Applicants will be notified about the acceptance of abstracts by **31 March 2027** at the latest. Should you not receive a notification by this date, please contact us as soon as possible at sos4democracy@inst-krim.si
6. The final program of the conference will be available by **31 May 2027.**

There will be no registration fee for participating in the conference.
The organizers of the conference cannot provide any funding for travel and accommodation.

If you have any questions about the conference, please do not hesitate to contact us at this e-mail address: sos4democracy@inst-krim.si

Scientific committee:
Vasja Badalič, Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Slovenia
Kristina Čufar, Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Slovenia
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Damir Banović, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
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Tina Anžič, Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Slovenia
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About the SOS4democracy project:
The SOS4democracy project taps the potential of higher education and research organizations, civil society associations, and a news media organization to create a training program for researchers, journalists, and activists involved in pro-democracy struggles in Europe. The project pursues three major objectives. First, the project aims to improve cooperation between academic and non-academic organizations by developing a training-through-research program to equip researchers, journalists, and civil society activists with the conceptual and methodological tools needed to explore the impact of illiberal measures. Second, to ensure the transfer of know-how between the academic and non-academic sectors, the project is developing the following training programs: training on advanced research methods and practical skills; media training; and training on civic monitoring mechanisms and public advocacy. Third, to improve the overall R&I capacity of the participating organizations, the project will organize a training program on research management, knowledge brokering, data stewardship, and knowledge transfer.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101119678.