

## Call for papers

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

### Democratic backsliding in the era of permanent crises

**Venue:** Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy

**Dates:** 26-28 June 2024

**Themes:** When exploring democratic backsliding in countries across Europe (e.g., Hungary, Poland) and other parts of the world (e.g., the US, India, Brazil, Venezuela), scholars developed concepts such as illiberal democracy, authoritarian populism, constitutional retrogression, and competitive authoritarianism. As we have witnessed over the past years, the turn to illiberal politics represents a serious challenge for the future development of both fragile and seemingly robust democracies. In order to contribute to the growing research on contemporary illiberal practices, we invite you to submit paper abstracts focusing on the following themes:

**Illiberal systems, states of emergency, and the centralization of power:** measures used by illiberal governments to centralize power in the executive branch; measures used in illiberal systems to weaken the judiciary and the legislative branch; measures initiated to avoid supervision from oversight mechanisms; the use of states of emergency to consolidate illiberal regimes ...etc.

**Illiberal systems and the suppression of opponents:** how illiberal governments justify the suppression of political opponents (e.g., opposition leaders, trade unions, university teachers and researchers) and groups perceived as incompatible with illiberal “values” (e.g., migrants, the LGBTIQ+ community, religious minorities, ethnic minorities); what measures illiberal governments use to suppress their opponents (e.g., criminalization, economic measures); how illiberal governments use surveillance and modern technology to monitor their opponents ...etc.

**Illiberal systems, resistance, and the rule of law:** how to engage civil society in organizing resistance against illiberal regimes; how to find new solutions for creating more robust democracies with an effective checks-and-balances system; how to de-securitize and de-criminalize opponents of illiberal systems; how to use counter-surveillance tactics to “monitor back” and resist those in power ...etc.

**The conference welcomes researchers from 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 26 to 28 June 2024 at the Faculty of Law at Roma Tre University in Rome, Italy. 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, research question, 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 2024** to the e-mail address [sos4democracy@inst-krim.si](mailto:sos4democracy@inst-krim.si) (please use "Call for papers – SOS4democracy conference" as the subject line of your e-mail).
4. Abstracts (and papers) must relate to the conference's general themes. All abstracts (and papers) 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 2024** at the latest. Should you not receive a notification by this day, please contact us as soon as possible at [sos4democracy@inst-krim.si](mailto:sos4democracy@inst-krim.si)
6. The final program of the conference will be available by **31 May 2024**.

**There will be no registration fee for participating at the conference.**

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

### Scientific committee:

Vasja Badalič, Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Slovenia

Gašper Završnik, Delo Media house, Slovenia

Matija Žgur, Roma Tre University, Italy

Damir Banović, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Deniz Erkmen, Ozyegin University, Turkey

Lior Volinz, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Mert Arslanalp, Bogaziçi Universitesi, Turkey

Edgar Sar, Istanbul Political Research Institute, Turkey

### 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.



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