



ICON-S International Society for Public Law
ICON-S Balkans Chapter

Inaugural Conference

**Union University Law School Belgrade
10-11 October 2026**

Public Law in Challenging Times: Governance, Resilience, and Europeanization in the 21st Century

Organizers

1. Union University Law School Belgrade (<https://en.pravnifakultet.edu.rs/>)
2. Rule of Law Programme South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (<https://www.kas.de/en/web/rlpsee>)
3. ICON S Balkans Chapter (<https://icon-society.org/balkan-chapter/>)

Scientific Committee

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About the Conference

The 21st century confronts public law with structural pressures that are neither episodic nor isolated. Financial instability, democratic backsliding, pandemics, migration, climate change, armed conflict, and technological transformation increasingly overlap and reinforce one

another. These developments challenge not only specific legal doctrines, but also the institutional architecture, normative foundations, and transnational embeddedness of public law itself.

This conference approaches these developments through three interconnected perspectives. First, it examines how public power is exercised under conditions of crisis. Second, it reflects on resilience as a constitutional response to systemic stress. Third, it explores how Europeanization, particularly in the Balkan region, acts as both a transformative force and a structural stress test for domestic public law systems. Together, these perspectives invite a comprehensive reflection on how public law governs, adapts, and preserves democratic integrity in challenging times.

Governance in Times of Crisis: Contemporary governance increasingly unfolds in a state of normalized exception. Emergency legislation, executive discretion, accelerated regulatory processes, and institutional improvisation have become recurring features of public decision-making.

This section explores how crisis conditions reshape the distribution and exercise of public power. It asks whether crisis governance remains exceptional, or whether it is becoming a structural mode of governing. We especially welcome doctrinal, comparative, empirical, and theoretical perspectives on the transformation of governance in challenging times.

Resilience, Rule of Law, and Democratic Integrity: If crisis is structural, resilience becomes essential. Yet resilience is not a neutral concept. In public law, it may refer to institutional durability, judicial independence, constitutional identity, societal trust. At the same time, resilience rhetoric can justify the concentration of power or the expansion of executive authority.

This theme examines resilience as both a normative ideal and a contested legal concept. It asks whether public law systems can preserve democratic integrity while adapting to profound and continuous stress. This perspective particularly welcomes contributions engaging legal philosophy, constitutional theory, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Europeanization and the Transformation of Public Law: The Balkan region offers a particularly revealing lens through which to examine the relationship between crisis and resilience. Europeanization operates here under differentiated conditions: Some states are members of the European Union, others are candidates, and others remain outside the Union while still deeply influenced by European legal norms. In EU Member States, Europeanization may generate tensions around primacy, constitutional identity, and conditionality. In accession countries, it is often reshaping constitutional structures in anticipation of accession. This differentiated landscape makes the Balkans a structural test case for multi-level constitutionalism. Europeanization may strengthen governance and resilience, but it may also produce tensions between domestic constitutional autonomy and supranational authority.

This theme invites contributions that examine Europeanization as a dynamic and uneven process across the Balkan region and nationally. Rather than treating European integration as a linear or homogenizing force, we encourage critical engagement with its legal, political, and normative implications. We particularly welcome contributions offering doctrinal, comparative, empirical, or theoretical engagement with Europeanization in the Balkan context.

How to Submit Your Contribution?

Presentations in parallel sessions will be selected by the conference committee. We welcome submissions in four formats:

1. **Fully-formed panels:** A fully-formed panel must include a *chair*, and at least three (3) and at most five (5) *participants* who have already agreed to take part. Participants may be *presenters* or *discussants*, but the panel must include at least three (3) presentations. One of the discussants or presenters may serve as chair.
2. **Individual submissions**
3. **LGSEE Blog Panel “Quo Vadis, Constitutional Courts in SEE?”:** This is a spin off category of individual submissions linked to the Law and Governance South East Europe (LGSEE) Blog - a partner blog of the ICON S Balkans Chapter. Linked to the conference themes, scholars, practitioners, doctoral researchers, and advanced students are invited to submit short contributions addressing the role of constitutional courts and the rule of law in Southeast Europe. Selected submissions will be published on the LGSEE Blog, and the authors of the best contributions will be invited to participate in a dedicated panel at the conference. The blog may cover travel and accommodation costs for selected participants. For details on submission requirements and deadlines, please consult the Call for Contributions.
4. **Book panels:** These are panels presenting recent books (monographs or edited volumes published from 2024 onwards). Such a session must include at least three (3) and at most five (5) *participants* who have already agreed to take part in a 30-minute (total) presentation of their collaborative effort, with 15 minutes allotted for audience questions. The exact role of the individual participant is up to the design of the showcase and we invite you to define and assign them as you consider it best to present your ideas and work.

Participation Limits

Each participant can present a maximum of two papers (as a sole or presenting co-author). For scheduling reasons, each participant may participate (as presenter, chair or discussant) in no more than three different panels. Notwithstanding, the conference committee may always invite participants to serve as chairs.

Submissions for fully formed panels and book panels must align with the Society’s gender balance policies, otherwise it may be rejected.

Practical Information

The conference will be held in person in Belgrade. No participation fee will be charged. Participants are responsible for their own travel, accommodation, and other expenses. The organizers will provide refreshments and lunch during the conference.

Timeline

Abstract submissions deadline: 31 May 2026.

Notification of acceptance or rejection by: 31 July 2026 (note that different dates apply for the LGSEE Blog panel).

Submission form

To submit your contribution, please use one of the following links for each submission type:

1. Fully Formed Panel
2. Individual Submission
3. LGSEE Blog Panel
4. Book Panels

Contact

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We're looking forward to seeing you in October in Belgrade - live, in person, and fully compliant with the principles of resilient governance.

Violeta Beširević, Maja Sahadžić, and Martin Belov
(co-convenors)