



re:constitution Seminar in collaboration with  
Matej Avbelj, Professor of European Law and Rector of the  
New University, Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Resisting multiple pressures –  
Perspectives on Academic Freedom in Europe**

Thursday, 11 November – Friday, 12 November, 2021  
Ljubljana, New University

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## Concept

There is an intrinsic link between academic freedom, democracy and the rule of law, as they are ultimately, beyond the legal realm, cultural phenomena. The freedom of expression, enquiry, thought and open debate in academia are core values of democratic societies. In some EU member states, scholars, universities and academic institutions face indirect and sometimes even direct pressure. Also, the ongoing European debate about the rule of law and democracy is not just about legal questions but increasingly about academic and cultural beliefs. In some cases, the political sphere tries to occupy all aspects of public discourse, which greatly affects the situation of academics and academia.

In addition, there are other factors that potentially undermine academic freedom, linked to funding and the socio-political role of academics.

How can the institutions in question take action? How may academics work under such direct or indirect pressure? In the light of these questions, re:constitution, in collaboration with our re:constitution Collegium member Matej Avbelj and New University, organises a Seminar on **'Resisting multiple pressures – Perspectives of Academic Freedom in Europe'** in Ljubljana from 11-12 November 2021. In three main panels the participants will discuss:

- 1) Academic Freedom under Pressure: Case Studies from Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey;
- 2) Academic Freedom in a Broader Context – Funding, Digitalization, Globalization Dynamics and Shifting Socio-Political Roles of Academics in Europe, and
- 3) Developing Solutions and Creating Opportunities to Protect Academic Freedom in Europe.

## Programme

### Thursday, 11 November 2021

10:30 am

#### **Welcome & Introduction**

Matej Avbelj, Professor of European Law and Rector of New University

László Detre, re:constitution Academic Advisor

#### **Keynote**

#### ***Freedom of Education in Constitutional Democracy***

Jan Zobec, former Justice of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia and current Judge of the Supreme Court

12:00 pm

Lunch break

1:30 pm **Panel 1** – Academic Freedom under Pressure: Case Studies from Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey

The participants of the first panel shall elaborate on the threats to academic freedom in three countries: Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey. Illiberal policies and illiberal trends tend to occupy all spheres of public discourse aiming at minimizing critical voices. These trends pose threats on academic freedom as academics and academic institutions in some cases not only have to face indirect but also direct pressure from the political stakeholders. The case studies shall highlight distinct problems that have been identified in the respected countries and their effects on the international academic sphere.

<b>Hungary</b>	Tímea Drinóczi, Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil
<b>Slovenia</b>	Peter Jambrek, Sociologist and Jurist, New University
<b>Turkey</b>	Noémi Lévy-Aksu, Associate, Hakikat Adalet Hafıza Merkezi   Truth Justice Memory Center, Istanbul and re:constitution alumna
<i>Chair:</i>	<i>László Detre, re:constitution Academic Advisor</i>

3:00 pm Coffee break

3:30 pm **Panel 2** – Academic Freedom in a Broader Context: Funding, Digitalization, Globalization Dynamics and Shifting Socio-Political Roles of Academics in Europe

Academics may face broader challenges, differing from the more direct ones that one could witness under illiberal political regimes. These problems could be considered to be of a general nature as they concern broader discourse in academia in the 21st century. Participants of the second panel shall identify such common issues with special attention to underfunding of academia, digitalization and the access to academic materials. The participants shall also discuss the role of academics within the European Union under the shadow of rule of law backsliding.

Anna Lisa Ahlers	Lise Meitner Research Group Leader „China in the Global System of Science“, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Raffaella Kunz	Senior Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law
Georges Khalil	Academic Director, Forum Transregionale Studien
<i>Chair:</i>	<i>Jernej Letnar Čerňič, Professor of Human Rights Law, New University</i>

5:00 pm End of Day 1

## Friday, 12 November 2021

10:00 am **Panel 3** – Developing Solutions and Creating Opportunities to Protect Academic Freedom in Europe

The third panel of the re:constitution Seminar aims at discussing the means and strategies of the scientific community and other institutional stakeholders on how to resist political pressure and how to cope with the challenges in the 21st century. Participants may also elaborate on possibilities of the institutions of the European Union on safeguarding academic freedom and on supporting the scientific community.

Eva Seiwert Research Associate, Institute of Political Science, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

Joel Hanisek Policy and Programme Manager, Scholars at Risk Europe

Balazs Trencsenyi Professor of History, Central European University

*Chair: Matej Avbelj, New University*

11:30 am **Closing Remarks**

12:00 pm Farewell Lunch

From 1:00 pm End of Day 2