

SEMINAR

Civic Participation in the V4 Countries after 1989

Department of Political Movements
Faculty of Political Science
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

Lublin, October 11-13, 2017

- Visegrad Fund



SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Wednesday (October 11th, 2017)

- 11.30 – Meeting with the representatives of Lublin authorities (City Hall, Król Władysław Łokietek Square no. 1).
- 12.30 – Lunch ('Ulice Miasta' Restaurant, Król Władysław Łokietek Square no. 3).
- 14.30 – Meeting with the representatives of student associations functioning at the Faculty of Political Science (Faculty of Political Science, Litewski Square no. 3, room no. 115).
- 16.00 – Presentation of research results carried out under the Project, intended for students and journalists (Faculty of Political Science, Litewski Square no. 3, Ignacy Daszynski's Aula).
- 18.00 – Dinner ('Hades Szeroka' Restaurant, Grodzka street no. 21).

Thursday (October 12th, 2017)

- 12.00 – Meeting with the representatives of non-governmental organizations (Centre for Local Development Foundation, Spółdzielczości Pracy avenue no. 28).
- 13.30 – Lunch ('Ulice Miasta' Restaurant, Król Władysław Łokietek Square no. 3).
- 15.00 – Guided city tour.
- 18.00 – Dinner ('Hades Szeroka' Restaurant, Grodzka street no. 21).

Friday (October 13th, 2017)

- 9.00 – Trip to Zamość.
- 11.00 – Meeting with the representatives of Zamość authorities and NGOs (Zamość City Hall, Rynek Wielki 13).
- 13.00 – Lunch ('Muzealna' Restaurant, Ormiańska street no. 30).
- 14.00 – Guided city tour.
- 17.00 – Departure from Zamosc to Lublin.

The collapse of communism nearly 30 years ago marks also the beginning of the process of economic, social and political transformation that Central and Eastern European countries subsequently underwent. With the benefit of hindsight, however, some doubts remain whether this transformation has indeed turned out to be as deep as expected and whether it has been already completed, even in the countries which seemed to be the most successful in implementing changes. The seminar in Lublin, which forms a part of the project "Practical Aspects of Civic Participation and Referendum in the Visegrad Group Countries after 1989", is dedicated to one, although crucial, aspect of that very general problem. It is also primarily focused on the experiences of the Visegrad Group countries. The participants of the seminar want to address the question of how the formal-legal changes introduced in the V4 after 1989 in order to foster an active engagement of common citizens in the political decision-making have fared so far in political practice? In particular, the use of referendum, both on national and local (where applicable) scale, will be the focal point of the discussion during the event.

The seminar is intended to provide an opportunity to deliberate on a wide range of topics related to the main theme. Participants would like to examine the political practice of referendum in the broader context of political culture and reflect on whether the former has indeed so far significantly contributed to the development of the political culture which puts emphasis on civic participation? Moreover, we hope to analyze how the engagement of ordinary citizens in the political decision-making, through referendum in particular, has been perceived and used by political elites. Furthermore, it is also worth inquiring into the mutual relations between institutions allowing for civic participation on the one hand and the political system as a whole on the other. It is our deep conviction that these matters should not be reserved only for academic dispute and therefore we want to involve in the seminar students, representatives of local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

It is our privilege that over the course of the project of which seminar in Lublin is a part we are cooperating with Universities from all the V4 countries. We are honored that during the seminar we will be joined by: Dr. László Komáromi from Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest, PhDr. Jaroslav Mihálík from University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava and PhDr. Kamil Švec from Charles University in Prague.

Last but not least, we are grateful to the International Visegrad Fund for the generous financial support which made the organization of the seminar in Lublin and the realization of the whole granted project possible.

Practical Aspects of Civic Participation and Referendum in the Visegrad Group Countries after 1989

Active involvement of the citizens in the processes of political decision-making is a crucial precondition of a robust, stable democracy. This includes not only the traditional forms of representative democracy, but also making good use of institutions of direct civic participation, such as referendum. Almost 30 years after the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe we want to ask how the Visegrad Group countries have been faring in that regard. What has been achieved and in what areas there is still a lot to be desired? How the experiences of the individual V4 countries with regard to the legal implementation and use of referendum in political practice can be related? What are the prospects for the future improvement of the quality of civic participation in the region?

The project aims to bring together the perspectives of social scientists from all the Visegrad Group countries in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the use of referendum in the period after 1989. Moreover, the scientific contributions to the project will form the basis for the development of a „Guideline of Best Practices” in this field. This electronic document will be primarily addressed to NGOs, think tanks, journalists, local authorities (primarily, but not exclusively from the V4) who share an interest in the strengthening of civil society and democracy. The project will also involve events, including a three-day meeting/seminar in Lublin as well as a series of subsequent workshops, dedicated to the promotion of active citizenship.

While the project is intended to focus on the analysis and comparison of the experiences of the Visegrad Group, its results might also be beneficial for other countries in the region which are facing similar challenges to the development of a strong civil society and democracy.

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**gazeta samorządu
i administracji**

The International Visegrad Fund is an international organization based in Bratislava founded by the governments of the Visegrad Group (V4) countries - the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic- in Štiřín, Czech Republic, on June 9, 2000.

The purpose of the fund is to facilitate and promote the development of closer cooperation among citizens and institutions in the region as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions. The fund operates several grant programs, and also awards individual scholarships, fellowships and artist residencies. Grant support is given to original projects namely in the areas of culture, science and research, youth exchanges, cross-border cooperation and tourism promotion, as well as in other priority areas defined in calls for proposals published on the fund's website.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The Department of Political Movements is amongst the oldest departments of the Maria Curie-Sklodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin, Poland. It evolved from the Political Movements and Political Thought Section of the UMCS Inter-University Institute of Political Science. In the 1980s the Section became the Department of Political Movements and Political Doctrines, and then it was transformed into the present unit. Currently it is a part of the Faculty of Political Science. The research of the Department is focused on 3 principal areas: 1) social thought and political movements, 2) religious systems in the contemporary world 3) direct and electronic democracy.



LUBLIN

Lublin, administrative centre of the voivodship and the capital of the Lublin Region, and home to 365 thousand inhabitants, is the biggest town in Eastern Poland. The location of the town atop loessial rolling hills of the Lublin Upland in the valley of the Bystrzyca and its tributaries is one of its assets. During the 5th and 7th centuries the inhabitants of Lublin grew in numbers, and by 1317 Lublin was granted municipal status. In 1474 Lublin became the capital of the voivodship, a role it has continuously played to this day. During the years of the first Republic, Lublin, which was centrally located, was inhabited by different nationalities and religious denominations that constituted a rich and varied community. Lublin is an academic centre recognized in Poland and abroad, with a rich educational offer.

Economically, Lublin offers a rapidly developing services sector, with favourable conditions for making profitable business. Buoyant international cooperation brings many benefits to the city's multidimensional development, as Lublin signed agreements with numerous cities with its eastern and the western neighbours.

