



The Legacy of 1956, 1989 and 2004 from the Perspective of 2021 in Hungary

– hybrid conference organised by the Hungarian Europe Society –

Date: 22 October 2021, Friday 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (CET)

Venue: ibis Styles Budapest Center (Rákóczi út 58., 1074 Budapest) & Zoom

1989 represents a **turning point in history**, both for Central Europe and the whole European continent. In East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary, democratic opposition managed in a short period to peacefully oust communist elites that had been ruling their countries for several decades. Hence, between 1989 and 1991 the new political elites were able to reunify successfully with a democratic neighbour (**Germany**) or build the democratic foundations of their states (**Czechia, Poland, Hungary**). The **German reunification** in 1990 itself can be considered as the preliminary step of the integration of Central Europe with the rest of the continent. Meanwhile, the **democratic and economic transitions** of the 1990s constituted necessary preconditions for Central European countries to achieve their **accession** to the Euro-Atlantic organizations such as the **European Union** and **NATO**. The transition was sometimes painful but successful, as **2004** became the symbol of unity of the European continent with the biggest ever European Union enlargement.

Today it is particularly important to recall the legacy of democratic transition of 1989 and the largest European integration of 2004 when nationalism, populism, and authoritarian trends are on the rise in Europe, particularly in Central European states and undermines the unity of the EU. Indeed, this legacy may serve as a crucial source of inspiration for activities aiming at the reinvigoration of European values.

The main goal of our **project EUritage** is to remind the European citizens about the importance of democratic transition of Central Europe and its accession to the EU and the values (**liberal democracy, rule of law, civic national identity, free market economy**) underpinning these processes. The same values make the fundamental foundations of the Union.

Agenda

10.30 Welcome: **István Hegedűs** (chairman, Hungarian Europe Society)

10.35 Historic Perspectives - Hungary at the Crossroads

Speaker: **Gergely Romsics** (historian, Institute of History at the Research Centre for Humanities, Budapest)

Discussant: **István Hegedűs** (chairman, Hungarian Europe Society)

11.15 Video presentation: “A European Success Story? Central Europe from Democratic Revolutions to EU Accession”

11.30 Round-table discussion:

Adam Balcer (senior fellow, WiseEuropa, Warsaw)

Ladislav Cabada (vice-rector for Research and Creative Work, Metropolitan University, Prague)



Zsuzsanna Szelényi (former Member of the Hungarian Parliament, 1990-94, 2014-18)

István Szent-Iványi (former Member of the Hungarian Parliament, 1990-2004)

Moderator: **Erik Uszkiewicz** (vice-chairman, Hungarian Europe Society)

12.45 Student challenge

Máté Bozóky (winner of the Hungarian essay competition)

12.55 Concluding remarks

István Hegedűs (chairman, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest)

RSVP: You can join in person (limited number of seats available, [please register here](#)) or online (via Zoom, [please register here](#))

Please note that proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required for in-person presence.

Please note that the language of the event is English and no translation will be provided.

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