



CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS

**Historical and Comparative Perspectives on
the Waves of Democratisation and Authoritarianism
in Interwar Europe and the Present Day**

Rome

10-11 April 2025

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski and the promulgation of the April Constitution (1935), the Polish Academy of Sciences in Rome (PAS), in collaboration with the SARAS department of Sapienza University in Rome, the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Warsaw (UW), and the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Silesia in Katowice (UŚ), plans to organise an international conference. The event will explore the crisis of democracy in Europe during the interwar period and its connections to the contemporary world.

DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA
ANTROPOLOGIA RELIGIONI
ARTE SPETTACOLO
DIPARTIMENTO DI ECCELLENZA 2023-2028



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and International Studies
University of Warsaw



UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA
IN KATOWICE

After emerging weakened from World War I, Europe faced a profound crisis of the liberal-democratic system, which led to the rise of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in numerous countries across Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. Beginning with Benito Mussolini, several European dictators, such as Adolf Hitler, Primo de Rivera, Francisco Franco, Józef Piłsudski, and Miklós Horthy, among others, often ascended to power through extralegal means. These leaders consolidated their authority by employing populist discourse based on criticism of the liberal state, democracy, and the activities of traditional political parties, leading to the gradual transformation of their countries into anti-democratic regimes.

In the light of this general framework, it is important to attempt to comparatively examine the relationship between the crisis of democracy and the rise of far-right populist parties, as well as the process of the evolution of the democratic system in an authoritarian regime. In particular, it seems important to ask the following questions:

1. What changes at an institutional, legal and political level did the introduction of an authoritarian/totalitarian system entail in various European countries over this twenty-year period?
2. What were the mechanisms of the seizure of power by anti-democratic forces?
3. What were the main legal and constitutional changes implemented by authoritarian (and totalitarian) regimes to consolidate power?
4. How has the legal framework evolved in authoritarian states (and in the process of autocratization) to repress dissent and political opposition?
5. What were the characteristics of the constitutions promulgated by various charismatic leaders during the 1920s and 1930s?
6. How do modern democratic societies address the threats posed by populist and authoritarian movements?
7. How can contemporary democracies be strengthened by drawing on the experiences of the past?

To answer these questions, a group of academics have decided to organise the conference titled: ***Liberal Democracy in Crisis: Historical and Comparative Perspectives on the Waves of Democratisation and Authoritarianism in Interwar Europe and the Present Day.***

- The event will be held at the headquarters of the **Polish Academy of Sciences in Rome**, located at **Vicolo Doria 2**, on the **10th and 11th of April 2025**.
- The languages of the seminar will be **English** and **Italian**.

Please submit your proposal by **15 February 2025**.

We are pleased to invite scientists from abroad to participate in the meeting. Those interested in attending the conference are kindly requested to contact the Organising Committee to confirm the title of their presentation/paper/s.



ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

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