



**FAKULTET
POLITIČKIH
NAUKA**

ACT·WB

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Advancing democracy: empowering democratic practices in the Western Balkans

Online, 17 May - 22 May 2021

Call for application - 22 March - 17 April 2021

Host: University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences, Institute for Social Science Research, Skenderija 72, Sarajevo, B&H. <https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/>

The global crisis of legitimacy of representative democracy is tangibly manifested in a low election turnout, progressive withdrawal of citizens from the arenas of democratic participation and in the consequent rise of populism and far-right tendencies. This has resulted in an increased interest in the process of democratic experimentation inspired by the principles of the participatory and deliberative conceptions of democracy.

However, while the crisis of representative democracy in the EU resulted in a call for more democracy and tangible efforts to institutionalize different democratic innovations aiming to foster the effective inclusion of citizens, similar actions are almost completely absent in the Western Balkans states. But, captured political institutions urge for the opening of the new non-institutional arenas of politics and we have recently witnessed different kinds of citizens' participation in initiatives against growing authoritarian tendencies. All these initiatives exhibit the citizens' willingness to participate in and democratize societies. In such demands for inclusion and participation, citizens of the WB countries sometimes search for inspirational traditions, like socialist self-government modes, but they also look for other forms of participative strategies for inspiration, above all, for democratic innovations (such was the case with plenums in B&H).

With this summer school, we want to open the discussion arena on the different democratic practices – including top-down democratic innovations promoted in the EU countries and bottom-up citizens' mobilizations. We aim for investigating the possible interplays between different forms of democratic innovations with the goal to reinvigorate democracy by promoting the broader inclusion of citizens' concerns and opinions into the political process. We therefore wish to examine the potentials of innovative democratic practices to democratize societies while bridging a divide between the scholarship on grassroots democratic initiatives and on institutionalized democratic innovations practiced in many EU countries.

The primary goal of this summer school is to enable the exchange of knowledge (theoretical reflections, research, data, policy papers etc.), to clearly delineate the field of study and build a common knowledge base on democratic innovations and on bottom-up citizens' mobilizations and their potential for democratizing political processes.



Co-funded by the
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The International Summer School will bring together researchers, activists and experts; they will be able to share (with strong interdisciplinary approach) their knowledge and discuss research methodologies and findings, amongst themselves and with 40 graduate students, and young post-docs (in Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Law, History, Political Philosophy).

The International Summer School 'Advancing democracy: empowering democratic practices in the Western Balkans' is a joint program of University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Science; Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade; University of Graz, Center for Southeast European Studies; University of Turin, Department of Cultures, Politics and Society; Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus; and Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence within the Jean Monnet Network Project '[Active citizenship: promoting and advancing innovative democratic practices in the Western Balkans](#)'.

Topics of the Summer School

The lectures and seminars will focus on:

- democratic innovations focused on effective inclusion of citizens
- citizens initiatives, social movements
- citizens' participation in illiberal regimes

These as well as other related topics will be under scrutiny during the intensive online one-week training. We will combine presentations and lectures followed by discussions, with participatory and dialogical teaching methods. Active involvement of the participants is highly encouraged. Participants will take part in 26 hours of lectures with discussions and seminar hours (activists and experts).

Certificate and Evaluation

A certificate of attendance will be provided to all participants who fulfil the basic requirements of the Summer School. Participants are invited to write a paper for the peer reviewed edited volume.

Target audience: The School is open to the European and international MA and PhD students, post-docs and researchers. MA and PhD students (in Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, Law, History, Political Philosophy) from the universities of the Western Balkans region, Croatia, Italy and Austria, are particularly welcome to apply.

Number of Participants: 40.

Language: The language of the Summer School is English. No language certificate is required for the application.

Summer school is **free of charge**.

How to apply

All interested candidates should apply online using the following mail: summerschool@fpn.unsa.ba





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All candidates are required to attach the following documents to the online application form:

1. CV
2. Short essay (700 words) answering the question: How to encourage civic participation?

The list of the participants selected by the Scientific Committee will be published on 26 April 2021 on the website of the Summer School. <https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/>

Members of the Scientific Committee

University of Sarajevo: Valida Repovac Nikšić (School coordinator)

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade: Irena Fiket

Center for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz: Florian Bieber

Department of Cultures, Politics and Society, University of Turin: Stefania Ravazzi

Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje:
Nenad Markovikj

Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence: Ivanka Mihailović



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