

# **Digital Public Sphere, Political Communication, and Algorithmic Democracy**

## **International Conference**

**21 May 2026**

**Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged**

**JK101 Faculty Council Room**

6720 Szeged, Tisza L. krt. 54.

### **Organizers**

International Political Science Association RC10 – Electronic Democracy

International Political Science Association RC22 – Political Communication

Legal, Political Aspects of the Digital Public Sphere Research Group of the Centre of Excellence for Interdisciplinary Research, Development and Innovation of the University of Szeged

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged

### **Local Organizer:**

Dr. habil. Norbert Merkovity, University of Szeged

### **Members of the Scientific Committee:**

Prof. Domagoj Bebić, University of Zagreb

Prof. Javier García Marín, University of Granada

Prof. Magdalena Musiał-Karg, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan

Dr. Orsolya Szabó Palócz, University of Szeged

### **Conference scope**

This conference brings together scholars working at the intersection of digital democracy, political communication, and the transformation of the public sphere under platformized and data-driven conditions. The programme explores how political meaning is produced, circulated, contested, and institutionalized in contemporary digital environments, with particular attention to algorithmic mediation, artificial intelligence, short-form video platforms, media visibility, and the changing logics of political leadership and participation. Across different national and comparative perspectives, the papers address a broad range of interconnected questions, including how digital publics are shaped by identity formation and conflict, how AI increasingly influences democratic resilience and political agency, how machine learning can be used as a methodological tool in political communication research, how short-form video reconfigures attention and political subjectivity, how electoral campaigns unfold in hybrid and platform-dependent media environments, and how democracies respond to hybrid threats and new communicative vulnerabilities. By combining conceptual, methodological, and empirical contributions, the conference aims to deepen our understanding of the digital public sphere as a dynamic arena in which political actors, citizens, technologies, and institutions continuously negotiate legitimacy, visibility, and power.

## Programme

**09:30–10:00** Registration

(Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Szeged 6720 Szeged, Tisza L. krt. 54.)

**10:00–10:05** Welcome remarks

**10:05–11:40**

### **Panel 1: Digital Public Sphere, AI, and Algorithmic Politics**

(chair: Péter Bence Stumpf)

**10:05–10:20**

Norbert Merkovity (University of Szeged, Hungary)

*From Digital Supplement to Organising Medium: The Late Fourth Age of Hungarian Political Communication*

**10:20–10:35**

Orsolya Szabó Palócz (University of Szeged, Hungary)

*From Identity to Enmity: Political Meaning-Making in the Digital Public Sphere*

**10:35–10:50**

Magdalena Musiał-Karg (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland)

*Trusting Digital Democracy? Public Attitudes Toward Internet Voting in Poland: Between Trust and Skepticism (co-authored with David Duenas-Cid)*

**10:50–11:05**

Javier García Marín (University of Granada, Spain)

*Using Machine Learning in Political Communication: Locating Political Leaders on TV*

**11:05–11:20**

Ignacio Jesús Serrano (University of Granada, Spain)

*The Semantic Trace: NLP-Driven Analysis of Post-materialist Values in Spanish Law*

**11:20–11:40**

Discussion

**11:40–12:00** Coffee break

**12:00–13:40**

**Panel 2: Platforms, Campaigns, and Emerging Challenges**

(chair: Orsolya Szabó Palócz)

**12:00–12:15**

Óscar García Luengo (University of Granada, Spain)

*The Homo Algorithmus in the Age of Short-Form Video*

**12:15–12:30**

Viktória Zakinszky Toma (University of Novi Sad, Serbia)

*Narratives of War and Peace in the Communication Strategy of the Political Elite in Serbia*

**12:30–12:45**

Domagoj Bebić (University of Zagreb, Croatia), Šimun Mihanović Ijevljev (University of Split, Croatia), and Milica Vučković (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

*Digital Battleground: Political Communication in the 2025 Local Elections in Split*

**12:45–13:00**

Robert Imre (University of the Faroe Islands)

*Hybrid Threats, Preparedness, and Political Communication*

**13:00–13:15**

Péter Bence Stumpf (University of Szeged, Hungary)

*Strategic Considerations Regarding Early Parliamentary Elections*

**13:15–13:40**

Discussion and general remarks

**13:40** Lunch



RC10 – Electronic Democracy and RC22 – Political Communication



**Interdiszciplináris**  
Kutatásfejlesztési  
és Innovációs  
**Kiválósági Központ**



UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED  
FACULTY OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE