



3rd Annual CEENELS Conference

Legal Traditions and Legal Identities
in Central and Eastern Europe
Riga, 11-12 January 2018



The 3rd Annual CEENELS Conference on “Legal Traditions and Legal Identities in Central and Eastern Europe” will be hosted the Law Faculty of the University of Latvia in Riga on on 11-12 January 2018. The conference is integrated with the 76th Annual Conference of the Faculty of Law of the University of Latvia.

Call for Papers: “Legal Traditions and Legal Identities in Central and Eastern Europe”

Over the centuries, the region of Central and Eastern Europe has been a true melting pot of legal traditions, including the German legal tradition in the Baltic states and later in Poland (since the 18th C.), the Austrian legal tradition in the former Habsburg empire, the French legal tradition (in Poland and Romania), the Russian legal tradition (itself influenced by the German and Byzantine one) as well as the Byzantine and Ottoman legal traditions in the Balkans. On top of that, during the 20th century the entire region was subject to the Socialist Legal Tradition, both with regard to the former USSR republics, as well as with regard to countries of the former Soviet bloc. The impact of the Socialist Legal Tradition, whilst still detectible in the legal mentality, has been different in each country. For instance, Poland and Romania managed to maintain a stronger national legal identity, whilst for instance Czechoslovakia followed the socialist route in recodifying its civil law and economic law on entirely new premises. Yugoslavia, in turn, was a case in itself with a very distinct path of socialist governance and law.

Today, the western part of the CEE region is part of the European Union. This has opened the respective countries once again onto the influence of the Western legal tradition, and even, partially to the Common law tradition (e.g. American legal models, concept of precedent, etc.). On the other hand, the eastern and south-eastern part of the CEE region remains outside of the EU, with some countries seeking accession and adapting their legal systems to EU law, whilst others intending to pursue their own path of legal culture.

Undoubtedly, the various legal traditions which have impacted upon Central and Eastern Europe have contributed to the shaping of the legal identity of the region. However, many questions at the interstices of legal history, sociology of law and legal theory still remain open, in particular whether we can speak of a CEE legal identity or perhaps even of a legal family, and if so, which common elements allow for such a classification. Or, perhaps, we should rather speak of two or even three legal families in the region (Central European, Eastern European, Balkan), in function of the legal traditions which impacted on each country’s legal culture and its current legal orientation (e.g. EU membership).

Furthermore, the illiberal tendencies in certain countries of the region seem to have an impact upon its legal identity. What remains to be clarified, are the legal traditions that stand behind such developments, in particular the legacy of the inter-War period.

We invite contributions addressing these and adjacent topics, and in particular on the following issues:

- Can we speak of one CEE legal identity? Or perhaps two identities (Central European vs. Eastern European)? Or maybe even three (e.g. Balkans)?
- How significant is the Socialist Legal Tradition today? Are we overexaggerating its impact, or perhaps underestimating it?
- How distinct is CEE legal identity from Western European legal identities?
- What are the characteristic features of CEE legal identity? Can judicial formalism be treated as our *differentia specifica*?



- What is the future of CEE legal identity? Are we going to merge with Western European legal culture, or maintain our distinctiveness?
- Can the recent events the legal life of certain CEE countries, such as in Hungary or Poland, be described in terms of legal traditions and legal identities? Is it possible to detect an impact of the Socialist Legal Tradition, or perhaps pre-War legal traditions in the on-going events?

Paper proposals of up to 300 words should be submitted to ceenels@ceenels.org no later than until 15 November 2017. We will communicate acceptance of papers by 1 December 2017.

About the University of Latvia Faculty of Law

The Faculty of Law of the University of Latvia has been the cradle of legal sciences in Latvia ever since the university set up its Faculty of Economics and Law on September 28, 1919. Outstanding instructors, graduates and accomplishments in legal studies led to a rapid increase in the number of law students. The separate Faculty of Law was established in 1944. The Faculty of Law is very proud of its instructors and graduates, who are outstanding lawyers. Instructors conduct scholarly work at the university, but are also actively engaged in the profession as distinguished judges, prosecutors, sworn attorneys or directors of various government institutions. Graduates, too, have become important and successful lawyers. Currently the Faculty of Law has more than 1000 students in four study programmes. This makes the faculty Latvia's largest provider of studies in the field of legal sciences. The Faculty of Law is not only the largest law school in Latvia but also has a wealth of traditions and achievements and facilitates the development of the field of legal science in Latvia in general.”.

About CEENELS

The Central and Eastern European Network of Legal Scholars (CENELS) was established in April 2015 in Brno at its inaugural 1st annual conference devoted to “25 Years after the Transformation: Law and Legal Culture in Central Europe between Continuity and Discontinuity”. The aim of CEENELS is to provide for a platform of multilateral cooperation between scholars from Central and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, by organizing conferences, workshops, running a website and mailing list, as well as helping scholars from the region find partners for international research projects. The 2nd annual conference was held at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in January 2017 and was devoted to “An Uneasy Legacy: Remnants of Socialist Legal and Political Thinking in Central and Eastern Europe”.

Organizing committee: Doc. Dr. Jānis Pleps, Prof. Dr. Daiga Rezevska, Doc. Dr. sc.pol. Ivars Ijabs,
Dr. Rafał Mańko, Mgr. Piotr Eckhardt