

## Quo Vadis, Central Europe? The region's place in the EU after 15 years of membership

**Time: 29 April 2018, 10:00-14:00**

**Venue: Central European University, Budapest, Nádor utca 15, 103 Tiered Room**

This year, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 15 years will have passed since the momentous Eastern Enlargement of the EU. When twelve new countries joined in 2004, most of them formerly part of the Soviet bloc, it signified a symbolic re-unification of the continent, which was now breathing with both lungs, to mention only two metaphors that have emerged over the years. But what has happened since? This conference will look back at the European integration of the four Central European countries of the Visegrad Group in particular. On the first panel we want to focus on the biggest challenge that has emerged over this time period, democratic backsliding. It will try to provide an overview of how we arrived at this situation, and analyse possible ways forward, also in the context of Article 7 and EU budget conditionality. The second panel will look at the state of the European Union 15 years after the enlargement and seek to discuss which role the Central European countries are playing, could be playing and should be playing in the future development of European Integration.

- 09:30 – 10:00**      **Registration**
- 10:00 – 10:15**      **Opening remarks**  
**Beate Martin**, Co-Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest Office  
**Péter Balázs**, Director, CEU Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS)
- 10:15 – 10:45**      **Keynote Address: “Why illiberal democracies are defective?”**  
**Wolfgang Merkel**, Director, Democracy and Democratization Unit, WZB Berlin
- 10:45 – 12:00**      **From liberal avantgarde to avantgarde of illiberalism? Central European democracy after 15 years of EU membership**  
**Laurent Pech**, Professor of European Law, Middlesex University, London  
**Péter Krekó**, Executive Director, Political Capital Institute, Budapest & Associate Fellow, JHU SAIS Bologna Institute for Policy Research  
**Ol’ga Gyárfášová**, Director, Institute of European Studies, Comenius University, Bratislava
- 12:00**              **Coffee Break**

**12:30 – 13:45**

**Central Europe's role in the future of European integration**

**Zuzana Stuchlíková**, Head of Brussels Office, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Brussels

**Alena Kudzko**, Deputy Director, GLOBSEC Policy Institute, Bratislava

**Wojciech Przybylski**, Editor-in-Chief, Visegrad Insight, Warsaw

**Dániel Bartha**, Director, Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy, Budapest

**13:45**

**Concluding Remarks**

**Péter Balázs**, Director, CEU Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS)

**14:00**

**Buffet Lunch**