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REPORT FIRST EVENT JEAN MONNET MODULE EUinCEE

Report by

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“La crisi dello stato di diritto in Polonia e Ungheria e le risposte dell’Unione europea” (The crisis of the rule of law in Poland and Hungary and the responses of the European Union) was a webinar promoted within the Jean Monnet Module “The Rule of Law in the new EU Member States” (EUinCEE) at the University of Trieste, on December 10, 2020.

Organised by Professor Serena Baldin, Academic Coordinator and Module Leader and Professor Giuseppe Ieraci, member of the EUinCEE research and teaching staff, the event was patronized by the University’s Department of Political and Social Sciences (DISPES) and by the Municipality of Trieste, with the support of the EU’s Erasmus+ Programme.

After the welcome addresses of the DISPES Director, Prof. Sara Tonolo and the Trieste Municipality’s Councillor for European Projects, Lorenzo Giorgi, the workshop was divided into two main sessions where guest speakers from both the academic and the journalistic communities spoke on the highly sensitive issue of the rule of law in Central Europe.

The event was attended by over 200 people, including 22 journalists.

The first speaker was Angela Di Gregorio, Full Professor of Comparative Public Law at Milan University. She outlined the transition of the post-communist countries from their short-lived experience of liberal democracy in the 1920s to the Soviet era and then moved to explain the events that followed the collapse of socialism, focusing on Hungary and Poland and their recent, illiberal regression.



The second speaker was Mosquera Arias Christian Javier, PhD Candidate in Law and Human Sciences at the University of Insubria. His talk dealt with the origin and characteristics of the Visegrad Group, and its relationship with the European Union. It focused on the rise of Eurosceptic parties within the Group's member countries, their call for independent decision-making for their governments on policy matters such as immigration quotas, and the response of the EU, which at times has had to take strict measures, including the implementation of Article 7 TEU against Hungary.

The third lecture by Fabio Spitaleri, Associate Professor of European Union Law at the University of Trieste, dealt with protection of the rule of law in the European Union and the benefits and limitations of existing remedies.



He addressed the wave of crises that have tested liberal democracies over the last decade (e.g. the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit and the Coronavirus crisis), and explained the evolution of the rule of law and the inclusion of this concept in European Union law since its introduction in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. Having tried unsuccessfully to activate warning procedures against Hungary and Poland, the European Commission implemented many new instruments: the European mechanism for the rule of law, the conditionality policy and judicial review.

The fourth speaker, Carlo Fusi, Editor-in-chief of the Italian newspaper *Il Dubbio*, discussed the role of the press in reporting transparently on the Visegrad countries, also focusing on economic processes.



The fifth talk was given by Claudio Cressati, Associate Professor of History of Political Doctrines at the University of Udine. In his role of President of the “Accademia Europeista” of Friuli Venezia Giulia, he explained the latter’s role in re-establishing dialogues within civil societies during and after conflicts.

The sixth and final guest speaker was Eva Zukar of Europe Direct Trieste. She explained the role of the Europe Direct centres in educating citizens about European issues through workshops, conferences and celebration days.



In his concluding remarks, Stefano Amadeo, Full Professor of European Union Law at the University of Trieste, reflected upon the process Hungary and Poland are going through and how its violation of the independence of the judiciary is affecting the foundations of the EU.