



**FDV**

**UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA**  
Faculty of Social Sciences

**eUTOPIA**  
Alliance of 10 European Universities



**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**5TH STUDENT CONFERENCE ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**LJUBLJANA, 8–9 MAY 2025**



**GLOBALIS**

EUTOPIA connected Community “Maintaining International Peace and Security” is organizing a Student Conference on International Relations (SCIR) on **8 and 9 May 2025 at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (FSS UL)**. In partnership with Ljubljana-based Student Association for International Relations Globallis this will be the fifth SCIR in a row. We cordially invite students of Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes from the wider IR field to participate.

With this conference, we want to give students the opportunity to acquire and practice research competences and skills in the field of IR and present their written research work in a mock academic conference. The conference will include several thematic sections which are outlined below. Above all, our mandate is to encourage young ambitious minds to deepen their academic knowledge acquired through their studies and sharpen it by obtaining constructive comments and recommendations on their research work and presentations. We hope that the event will serve also as a bridge between the (national) academic and study spheres. A specific goal is to foster academic collaboration between EU-based academic institutions and universities from Western Balkans. Successful student authors receive a Certificate of Internationalisation.

Read about the previous Ljubljana Student Conference in IR 2024 [here](#).



## Thematic issues for research paper submissions

**1. Foreign policy – capabilities of small, medium and big states and their strategies of influence**, Chair: *Prof Dr Ana Bojinović Fenko* (UNI Ljubljana), Discussant: *Assist. Prof. Dr Marko Kovačević* (UNI Belgrade)

States' foreign policy is “the goal-oriented behaviour of state actors beyond their own borders that runs through different procedural stages and covers a variety of substantive issue areas that transcend national boundaries” (Brummer & Oppermann, 2024, p. 1). This panel will investigate how different states' capabilities determine foreign policy goals and strategies of influence: e. g. small state foreign policy strategies of shelter-seeking, neutrality or specialisation, middle power strategies of hedging and big power strategies of balancing power, alliance, intervention, and empire-building.

**2. Institutions and growth on the European periphery**, Chair: *Assoc. Prof Dr Josip Lučev* (UNI Zagreb), Discussants: *Assoc. Prof Dr Brian Schmitt* (CY Cergy Paris), *Assoc. Prof Dr Marko Lovec* (UNI Ljubljana)

The students will explore the various growth models and their obstructions (corruption, clientelism, competitiveness) in the European periphery. How can the Mediterranean South and the post-socialist East of Europe overcome their structural issues and achieve robust and stable growth? What is the role of institutions in achieving development?

**3. International peace and security**: Chair: *Assoc. Prof Dr Ljupcho Stojkovski* (UNI Cyril Methodius Skopje), Discussant: *Assist. Prof Dr Federico Donelli* (UNI Trieste)

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) plays a pivotal role in multilateral diplomacy, yet its effectiveness in managing global problems, specifically safeguarding international peace and security, remains a subject of debate. This theme looks for research that critically assesses the performance of the UNSC, explores its successes, shortcomings, and limitations in addressing a wide range of global challenges, and investigates historical case studies or offer potential reforms or alternative approaches for a more effective international governance structure.

**4. International environmental protection**, Chair: Assist. Prof Dr Danijel Crnčec (UNI Ljubljana), Discussant: Prof Dr Julija Brsakoska Bazerkoska (UNI Cyril Methodius Skopje)

With the escalating environmental crises facing the world, this theme calls for research into international efforts and agreements designed to safeguard our planet. The aim is to investigate the efficacy of existing international policies and environmental agreements. This theme encourages to think about strategies, the role of non-state actors, and the consideration of ethical and legal dimensions in international environmental protection.

**5. The future of European integration: closing the capability-expectations gap?**, Chair: Assist. Prof Dr Jure Požgan (UNI Ljubljana), Discussant: Assist prof Dr Alice Cunha (Nova Lisbon), Prof Dr Susanna Cafaro (UNI Salento)

More than ever, the European Union has to navigate between complex internal dynamics, external challenges and a persistently weak economic outlook posed by multiple (global) crises in a changed geopolitical environment. Yet while some crises, such as the Eurozone, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the war in Ukraine, have led to converging EU member states' policies and have created new or additional capabilities for the EU to face these complex challenges, others, such as the migration crisis, Brexit and to an extent also the war in Ukraine, have reinforced EU's existing divisions and weaknesses. This panel invites research on the future of the European integration, i.e. the strategies and reforms needed to cope with these challenges and potentially narrow the gap between what the EU wants and is expected to deliver and what the EU can actually do (capabilities).

**6. European Union External Action: legal vs. political considerations**, Chair: Francesco Spera, PhD (UNI Salento), Discussant: Prof. Dr Lidija Kos-Stanišić (UNI Zagreb)

The European Union's role as a global actor is based on its actorness which needs to accommodate normative-grounded EU values and effective influence-aspiring geopolitical interests. This theme calls for research that examines how these two dimensions intersect as complementary or conflictual in EU's strategic positioning and actions in global governance on issues such as human rights, international trade and development, international peace and security, democratization, digital governance and others.

**7. The Western Balkans**, Chair: *Assist. Prof Dr Faris Kočan* (UNI Ljubljana),  
Discussant: *Assoc. Prof Dr Soeren Keil, PhD* (UNI Passau)

The Western Balkan region has historically experienced intricate political, economic, and security challenges. Potential research topics include investigation of conflicts, ethnic tensions, the EU accession process, economic development, and regional cooperation. This theme seeks to identify the underlying causes of challenges in the Western Balkans and offer insights into strategies for stability, conflict resolution, and inclusion into the broader European political and economic integration.

**8. Political discourse on war**, Chair: *Polina Zavershinskaia, PhD* (UNI Leipzig),  
Discussant: *Assist. Prof Dr Faris Kočan* (UNI Ljubljana)

This panel will address various issues of political discourse on war, e. g.: Manipulation of the collective memory at the national and international levels, Russian propaganda and its reverberation in the EU member states, Construction of the „truth“ industry by the political backlash, Political backlash in the EU and its discourses, Narration of the EU (official and alternative narrations), and Pre- and post-narration of the conflict/violence.



## Important dates

- 6 November 2024: release of the Call for Papers; see Guidelines for submission [HERE](#).
- 10 December 2024: students indicate their participation interest to [konferenca@globalis.org](mailto:konferenca@globalis.org)
- 17 December 2024, 17.00–19.00 CET: Online lecture “How to make a research plan?”
- week of 6–10 February 2025: Thematic issues-based online workshops held by Chairs.
- 31st January 2025: deadline for students to submit a Research Plan
- February 2025: student authors receive Chairs’ feedback on their Research Plan – notification of (non)acceptance.
- April 2025: deadline for student authors to submit a final Research Essay and notification of their participation at the Conference.
- 8 & 9 May 2025: conference takes place at the FSS UL in Ljubljana. All student authors that will have submitted their Research Essay will participate at the conference and orally present their Research Essay as part of the conference programme.
- July 2025: Student authors submit Research Essay abstracts for their publication. Delivery of Certificates of Internationalization to successful students.

To all accepted student authors, the organizer will fund a 3-day accommodation in Ljubljana but cannot offer coverage of travel costs. For student authors based at the Connected Community EUTOPIA-partner institutions (□□), the organizer can offer coverage of travel and accommodation for up to 3 students per institution.

## Ljubljana Student Conference in IR 2025 Academic Board

- Prof Dr Julija Brsakoska Bazerkoska, ☐☐ Ss. Cyril & Methodius University, Primus Iustinianus Faculty of Law, Skopje, North Macedonia
- Prof Dr Ana Bojinović Fenko, UL FDV, Slovenia
- Assist. Prof. Dr Danijel Crnčec, UL FDV, Slovenia
- Prof Dr Susanna Cafaro, University of Salento, Italy
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- Assoc. Prof Dr Soeren Keil, ☐☐ University of Passau, Germany
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- Assoc. Prof Dr Marko Lovec, UL FDV, Slovenia
- Assist. Prof. Dr Josip Lučev, ☐☐ University in Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science, Croatia
- Assist. Prof. Dr Jure Požgan, UL FDV, Slovenia
- Assoc. Prof Dr Brian Schmitt, ☐☐ CY Cergy Paris, France
- Francesco Spera, LL.M., PhD Student, University of Salento, Italia
- Prof Dr Fredrik Söderbaum, ☐☐ University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- Assoc. Prof. Dr Ljupčo Stojkovski, ☐☐ Ss. Cyril & Methodius University, Primus Iustinianus Faculty of Law, Skopje, North Macedonia
- Polina Zavershinskaia, PhD, University of Leipzig, Germany

