

## Controversies in the Scholarly and Public Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe

**Research Workshop**  
**COST Action 16211 RECAST**  
*Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe*  
**Working Group 4: Debates**

**University of Malta, 24–25 May 2018**

Msida Campus  
Faculty of Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Boardroom 19

### Programme

#### Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> May

**9:00 - 9:30 Registration**

**9:30 - 9:45 Welcome and Introductory Speech**

**Prof. Andrew Azzopardi**

Dean, Faculty for Social Wellbeing - University of Malta

**Session 1: 9:45 -11:00** - 3 presentations (15 minutes each) + 30mins Q & A

*Debating Democracy and Civic Rights: Positionality, Dynamics and Implications*

**Chair: Dr. Maria Brown** (University of Malta, Malta)

1. Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark (The Åland Islands Peace Institute, Finland): *Human Rights and Political Compromise – Unbearable Tension or Fruitful Challenge?*
2. Ruzha Smilova (Centre for Liberal Strategies & St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, Bulgaria): *Understanding Civil Society Organizations in Central and Eastern Europe*
3. Jonathan Spiteri & Marie Briguglio (University of Malta, Malta): *Good Governance and Trust in Government*

**11:00 - 11:30 - Coffee Break**



**Session 2: 11:30 - 12:30** - 2 presentations (15 minutes each) + 30mins Q & A  
*Democratic Debate at National and Supranational Political Levels*

**Chair: Dr. Phyllisienne Vassallo Gauci** (Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta)

1. João Cardoso Rosas (University of Minho, Portugal): *Public Debates on Democracy and on the Role of Constitutional Courts in Upholding Social Rights Amidst Austerity Measures: The Case of Portugal (2011-2015)*
2. Taru Haapala (University of Jyväskylä, Finland): *Drafting the European Political Authority: The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe as an Arena of Inter-Parliamentary Conceptual Controversies*

**12:30 - 13:45 - Lunch Break at the University of Malta**

**Session 3: 13:45 - 15:00** - 3 presentations (15 minutes each) + 30mins Q & A  
*Challenges to Equality and Democratic Citizenship in Europe*

**Chair: Dr. Ruzha Smilova** (Centre for Liberal Strategies & St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, Bulgaria)

1. Linda Hart (University of Turku, Finland): *Islamic Family Law, Public Policy and State Intervention in Norway, the United Kingdom and Greece*
2. Phyllisienne Vassallo Gauci, Mr Raymond Facciol & Ms Jane Farrugia Buhagiar (Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta): *Migrant Learner Education in Malta – Equal Opportunities for All*
3. Alexander Osipov (International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies, Czech Republic/Germany): *Identity Politics: How some Utopias Affect Liberal Democracy*

**15:00 -15:15 - Coffee Break**

**Session 4: 15:15 - 16:15**

**Testimonial / Workshop, including discussion**

*Borders and Borderlands*

**Dr. Maria Pisani**

Activist, Integra Foundation – Malta & Lecturer, University of Malta, Malta

## Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> May

### 9:00 - 9:30 Registration

**Session 5: 9:30 - 10:30** - 2 presentations (15 mins each) + 30mins Q & A  
*Understanding Debates on Democracy and Civic Rights Through Localised Case Studies,  
Part 1: Legal Frameworks*

**Chair: Dr. Taru Haapala** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

1. Rafael Martínez Rivas & Elena García Guitián (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain): *The Catalan Debate and the Concept of Democracy*
2. Francisco Javier Bellido (University of Málaga, Spain): *Civic Rights in the Spanish Constitutional Debate of 1931: Between Reform and Radical Transformation*

### 10:30 -11:00 - Coffee Break

**Session 6: 11:00 - 12:00** - 2 presentations (15 mins each) + 30mins Q & A  
*Understanding Debates on Democracy and Civil Rights Through Localised Case Studies,  
Part 2: Cultural Agents, Structures and Practices*

**Chair: Prof. José María Rosales** (University of Málaga, Spain)

1. Lilia Raycheva & Nelly Velinova (St. Kliment Ohridsky Sofia University, Bulgaria): *Political Debates vs. Policy Actions in the Bulgarian Media Ecosystem*
2. Maria Marczevska-Rytko (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland): *A Critical Analysis of the Public Debate in the Newspapers Gazeta Wyborcza and Res Publica on the 2015 Referendum in Poland*

### 12:00 - 12:45 - Concluding Remarks

**Prof. Janet Mifsud**

Malta's COST Representative on the Committee of Scientific Officers

**Prof. Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark**

RECAST Vice-Chair

Associate Professor & Director, The Åland Islands Peace Institute, Finland

### 13:00 - Lunch at a nearby restaurant

### Conveners

Dr. Taru Haapala, University of Jyväskylä & Dr. Maria Brown, University of Malta