

THE BIG U-TURN

Geopolitical Crossroads and the Future of the European Peace project

30th International Summer University, Kőszeg

June 22 – 27, 2025

At the beginning of the second quarter of the 21st century, interconnected global transformations are intensifying, driving a deepening geopolitical crisis making the collapse of the rules-based international order an increasingly tangible reality.

As a result, the European Union (EU), the harbinger of the European dream and Peace Nobel Prize Laureate in 2012, is facing its greatest challenge in its history. In order to reach geostrategic autonomy in terms of reducing its military reliance on the U.S., as well as energy independence vis-a-vis Russia, it is forced to confront divisions, its own fragmented military potential, while striving to re-militarize itself under a unified command.

The EU grapples with internal paradoxes while also recognizing the unique opportunities embedded within these constraints. A critical challenge lies in how Europe can strategically leverage its tools and resources to enhance its global influence while reintegrating its scattered “pieces” into a more cohesive and resilient whole. Some of the most pressing questions requiring urgent answers include:

- Is it possible – and if so, how – for the EU to achieve geostrategic autonomy from the U.S. while maintaining its role as a global soft power and a model for peaceful coexistence?
- Can the EU keep its promise realistic of further enlargement inclusive of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe amidst such constraints? More specifically, can the EU both secure and expand its Eastern borders while countering economic, military, ideological, and cultural influence from other global powers already involved in these regions?
- How plausible is creating an effective and efficient European Defence Force (European Army) composed by EU member states and neighbouring candidates, meanwhile keeping the North Atlantic Alliance alive under current security?
- Can EU’s rapid militarization reshape or undermine its role as a global soft power, its commitment to the European peace project, and its foundational values, especially in the face of growing security threats? How can the EU adapt to a combination of both hard and soft power?
- Most importantly, under what conditions can this obvious U-turn in military and security policy form a credible and durable foundation for a new, lasting peace order in the longer

run? Will societies, cross border solidarity and cross-regional cooperation play a role in these vital transformations?

- Alternatively, could the EU become ensnared in the vortex of escalating hybrid wars, ultimately abandoning its core values, promises and aspirations?
- How can Civic Spaces, Collective Action and horizontal actors contribute to a better future? How do grassroots movements, innovative research and planning (combined academic insights with practical applications) that better reflect the needs of local communities, provide a strategic framework for sustainable political evolution across Europe.
- Can media improve its coherence, transparency, and constructive debate in reshaping political and social change for better in a time when information is fragmented and often polarized?

The cover topics mentioned above, along with many other related challenges, will be thoroughly discussed in our signature Europe House style, complemented by authentic regional music and cultural events, all set in the medieval jewel town of Kőszeg.

We are excited to welcome you and engage in meaningful discussions that will shape the future of Europe together.

Detailed program will be coming soon.

Application deadline:

- **May 18, 2025 (for applicants who need visa)**
- **June 1, 2025 (for all other applicants)**

Application Form: [30th International Summer University in Kőszeg](#)

Participation fee:

- **200 EUR** for MA students
- **400 EUR** for PhD students, young researchers, social entrepreneurs

(Limited scholarships are available for applicants from Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe.)

The organizers provide:

- educational programme and materials

- special events, excursions
- accommodation with breakfast and lunch

Participants cover:

- travel costs to/from Kőszeg
- participation fee
- visa + insurance costs

Applicants should send the following documents to isu@iask.hu :

- completed application form
- 300 word motivational letter
- CV

Eligibility: Advanced MA and PhD students and young researchers, as well as social entrepreneurs, who have a keen academic or professional interest in the topics.

Kőszeg is called “The Jewel of Pannonia”. This beautiful medieval town borders 5 countries (Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary). This provides a rich cultural and regional added value, and the opportunity for strong cross-border cooperation. In a region where the iron curtain was built, developing a regional knowledge centre is exceptional and contributes to supporting opportunities furthering cooperation in an age of increasing uncertainties.

For more information please contact: isu@iask.hu OR call 0036-94-200-530!