

## Střed/Centre. Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies of Central Europe

### Call for Papers

Issue topic: **‘Soft Sciences’ and Science Policy in Central Europe**

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Contact: [stred@mua.cas.cz](mailto:stred@mua.cas.cz)

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Freed from direct political control more than thirty years ago, social sciences and humanities in Central Europe have been facing new challenges. Events like Hungarian government’s ‘ban’ on the discipline of gender studies or pressures against the Central European University that forced it to move some of its activities from Budapest to Vienna made news headlines internationally. Are these cases rather exceptional or do they suggest deeper changes in the relation between the state and academia in Central Europe? What are the current challenges to social sciences and humanities in the region and what development led to this situation?

Unlike other disciplines, social sciences and humanities are defined not only by their object of research and methodologies but also by their specific social position. They are challenged by the permanent need to justify their existence and relevance for the society since their potential to encourage industrial innovations or stimulate economic growth is limited. On the other hand, scholars and scholarship in these disciplines need academic freedom not only to be independent in their research but also to be socially critical and engaged.

Science policy, in its various forms and at various levels, has been the key element in the very existence of social sciences and humanities that more than others depend on public funding. From the international level to the institutional self-government, the question of funding or redistribution of funds, of quality assessment or of scientific management remain vital. Next to the post-socialist ‘catching up’ with the West after 1989, science policy was soon confronted with challenges that were new to both the former East and the West such as the neoliberal emphasis on productivity, marketization, and internationalization. Current illiberal attitudes, de-globalization, and repressions may be a reaction to the development of the previous decades.

This issue of Střed/Centre calls for papers analysing science policy towards social sciences and humanities in Central European countries and their production, social position and reputation in the present and recent past. Comparative and transnational approaches are especially welcome.

The issue suggests following topics:

- Funding and defunding of social sciences and humanities
- Quality assessment and output measurement
- Marketization of humanities and social sciences
- Internationalization versus de-globalization
- Vanishing and establishing of disciplines and institutions
- Publication strategies and development of scientific journals
- Public images of and discourses on social sciences and humanities