

Militant Democracy and the Rule of Law

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki · Association of Greek Constitutionalists

22–23 May 2026

Language: English

Democratic systems have been subjected to growing pressures arising from political polarization, democratic backsliding, and declining trust in public institutions. In this context, the concept of militant democracy — understood as the right of a democratic order to defend itself against forces seeking its destruction — has regained renewed prominence.

The Conference seeks to explore the evolution, justification, and limits of militant democracy, examining whether and under what conditions democratic self-defense can remain compatible with constitutionalism, pluralism, and fundamental rights. Particular attention will be paid to the role of courts, proportionality standards, procedural safeguards, and the novel challenges posed by digital disinformation, foreign interference, and authoritarian diffusion.

Friday, 22 May 2026

17:30 – 18:00 Welcome and Introduction

Prof. P. Glavinis, Dean, Faculty of Law, Aristotle University

Prof. K. Chrysogonos, Faculty of Law, Aristotle University; President, Greek Association of Constitutional Law

18:00 – 18:45 Keynote Speeches

Prof. R. Howse, NYU

The Trials of Militant Democracy: A Transatlantic Perspective

Hon. I. Sarmas, Former President, Court of Audits of Greece; Former Prime Minister of Greece

The Anti-Democratic Turn in the Digital Age: Is Militant Democracy Well-Equipped Against Silicon Valley?

18:45-19:00 Break

19:00-20:30 Session 1 — Concept and Evolution of Militant Democracy

Chair: Professor K. Chrysogonos, Faculty of Law, Aristotle University; President, Greek Association of Constitutional Law

Prof. E. Mérieau

Militant Constitutional Identity: Courts against Democracy

Prof. A. Kaidatzis

Militant Democracy as a Farce

N. Panou

Political Party Bans and the Protection of Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Spain, Portugal and Greece

You-Hao Lai

Beyond Borders, Beyond Content: Democratic Self-Defense in the Digital Information Environment

Saturday, 23 May 2026

09:30 – 10:00 Keynote Speech

Prof. S. Tănăsescu, Law Faculty, Bucharest University, Chief Justice, Constitutional Court of Romania
Guarding democratic values: A judicial quest for equilibrium

10:00 – 13:00

Session 2 — Political Prohibition of Parties and Cancellation of Elections

Chair: Prof. George Katrougalos, Democritus University of Thrace, Former Foreign Minister of Greece

Prof. L. Papadopoulou

The Prohibition of Hate Speech as a Manifestation of a Mildly Militant Democracy: Serving the European 'vivre ensemble'

Prof. Ch. Kouroundis

The Concept of 'Militant Democracy' in Greek Constitutional Discourse: From Party Bans to Presidential Powers — and Back Again

Prof. A. Kouroutakis

Why Militant Democracy Fails Where the Rotation of Power Succeeds

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

G. Karantzios

The Cancellation of Elections and the Preventive Exclusion of Candidates as Acts of a 'Defensive Democracy': The Case of Romania (2024–2025)

Dr. A. Nikolic

External Militant Democracy: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr. A. Tsiftoglou

Political Party Ban in Greece — Thoughts after Supreme Special Court Decisions 9 and 10/2025

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 17:00

Session 3 — Democratic Responses to Modern Challenges: National Case Studies

Chair: Prof. S. Esen, Law Faculty, Ankara University; First Vice President, IACL

Dr. F. Kamal

From Liberation to Subversion: The Awami League's Experiment with Militant Democracy

S.-R. Pasyanos

The Thread of Ariadne: A Riposte to Militant Democracy

C.B. Sora

Constitutions and Democracies in Crisis Scenarios: A Comparative Analysis

A. Gatti

Integration of Foreigners as Both Driver and Constraint of Militant Intervention

Prof. P.R. Sharma

Sub-national Militant Democratization in India

Dr. P. Matuska

Militant Democracy in Slovakia: Does It Uphold the Czechoslovak Legacy?

Prof. L. Nwauzi

Militant Democracy and Limitations on Fundamental Human Rights

Prof. D. Preshova

Neo-Militant Democracy in Practice: Constitutional Review and Abusive Lawmaking in North Macedonia

Dr. M. Pach

Comparison of the 1956 judgment of the German FCC and the 2025 judgment of the Polish CT pertaining to the communist parties

17:00-17:30

Closing remarks

Prof. George Katrougalos, Democritus University of Thrace, Former Foreign Minister of Greece
