

WHAT IS “CHALLENGE”?

The concept of secure communities living within well-defined territories and enjoying all the celebrated liberties of civil societies is now seriously at odds with the profound restructuring of political identities and transnational practices of securitisation that we see today. CHALLENGE (“The Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security”) is a European Commission-founded project (2004-2009) that seeks to facilitate a more responsive and responsible assessment of the rules and practices of security. It examines the implications of these practices for civil liberties, human rights and social cohesion in an enlarged Europe. The project analyses the illiberal practices of liberal regimes and challenges their justification on grounds of emergency and necessity.

The objectives of this project in 6th Framework Programme is:

- to understand the merging between internal and external security and evaluate the changing relationship between liberty and security in Europe;
- to analyse the role of the different institutions in charge of security and their current transformations;
- to facilitate and enhance a new interdisciplinary network of scholars who have been influential in the re-conceptualising and analysis of many of the theoretical, sociological, legal and policy implications of new forms of violence and political identity;
- to bring together an integrated analysis on the state of exception (Exceptionalism) as enacted through illiberal practices and forms of resistance to it.

The network comprises 23 universities and research institutes selected from across the EU (King’s College London, University of Keele, Copenhagen, Leeds, Genoa, Barcelona, Szeged, Rouen, Athens, Utrecht, Nijmegen, Malta, Cologne, Centre for European Policy Studies, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, European Association for the Research on Transformation, Groups de sociologie des religions et de la laicite, Stefan Batori Foundation, London School of Economics, Centre d’Etudes sur les Conflicts, International Peace Research Institute). The project is organised around four types of issues:

- Conceptual. An investigation of the ways in which the contemporary re-articulation and disaggregation of borders imply an increase in exceptionalism practices. It covers on changing relationship between new forms of war and defence, new procedures for policing and governance, threats to civil liberties and social cohesion.
- Empirical. Mapping the merging between internal and external security issues and their transnational relation to national life, analysing new vulnerabilities (targeted others, critical infrastructures) and social in-cohesion (such as the perception of other religious groups, etc).
- Governance, polity and legality. An examination of threats to liberty and the use of violence, when the state no longer has the last word on the legitimate use of force.
- Policy. An examination of the implications of the dispersal of Exceptionalism for the changing relationships between government departments concerned with security, justice and home affairs; the securing of state borders and the policing of foreign interventions.

The Challenge project operates a database in order to follow in details the changes that are occurring to the concept of security and the relationship between danger and freedom. This Observatory traces the major transformations of institutions, internal and external security, policy and military functions. The resulting database of thousands of articles, documents, reviews and literature is fully accessible to all actors involved in the area of freedom, security and justice. To keep up to date with the network’s activities, you can visit the www.libertysecurity.org homepage.

This volume of *Fundamentum* supported by the Challenge Project contains some of the recent articles on its Working Package dealing with enlargement, democratic changes and new-born rule of law.

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