

**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Conference Participants,
Esteemed Representatives of the Academic Community,**

The responsibility of public authorities – its scope, its mechanisms and its limits – constitutes a matter of paramount importance and enduring relevance. It speaks directly to the condition of the contemporary rule-of-law state and assumes particular gravity amid intensifying disputes over the interpretation of fundamental constitutional principles and the modalities of their implementation in the practical functioning of public institutions. This issue demands careful reflection, rigorous debate and a confrontation of divergent perspectives. It is with this imperative in mind that the initiative was taken to convene the international scholarly conference: *Accountability of Constitutional State Organs in the Context of a Rule of Law Crisis: A View of Young Researchers*.

The rule of law is not merely a normative construct or an ensemble of abstract principles. It is a living organism, whose resilience and credibility depend upon the actual functioning of institutions and upon due observance of the rules that delineate the exercise of public power. Central to this architecture is the principle of legality, pursuant to which public authorities act on the basis of, and within the boundaries of, the law. This principle, however, finds its necessary complement in accountability mechanisms, ensuring that transgressions of the law do not remain without consequence and that public authority does not evade effective scrutiny.

Within this framework, the constitutional accountability and criminal liability of those holding the highest offices of state assume a distinct and exceptional role. On the one hand, they serve as instruments for the protection of the constitutional order and as guarantors of its primacy over the actions of state organs. On the other, they must be applied in a measured and proportionate manner, so as to avoid destabilising the functioning of institutions or instrumentalising the law amid ongoing political disputes. Striking this delicate balance ranks among the most formidable challenges of contemporary constitutionalism.

The issues acquire added significance when considering the processes unfolding within the European legal space. The relationship between national law and European Union law – in particular, the question of the primacy of EU law and the protection of Member States’ constitutional identity – has emerged as a focal point of legal and political discourse. In practice, this engenders tensions that call for profound reflection and a responsible approach on the part of domestic institutions and European organs alike.

Nor can we overlook emerging practices that increasingly shape the functioning of the state and its institutions. Among these, particular attention is due to the use of financial instruments as a means of exerting influence over constitutional organs. This development demonstrates that formal constitutional guarantees may prove insufficient absent genuinely functional and material autonomy of state institutions.

At the same time, we are witnessing the evolution of the concept of digital sovereignty, which poses novel questions concerning the scope of state authority in the technological domain, data control and the security of digital infrastructure. The modern state must respond not only to traditional constitutional challenges but also to the rapid technological transformations that are redefining its ambit.

Against this backdrop, the perspective presented by the participants of the conference *Accountability of Constitutional State Organs in the Context of a Rule of Law Crisis: A View of Young Researchers* is particularly valuable. It is young scholars who undertake a courageous and searching examination of the pressing issues of constitutional, criminal and European law. Their voice constitutes a significant contribution to academic debate and bears testimony to the vitality of contemporary legal scholarship.

The conference and this accompanying publication showcase the multidimensional nature of the issues under scrutiny. They encompass matters relating to the functioning of state organs and their accountability, as well as questions concerning procedural safeguards, the interrelationship between legal orders, and the novel challenges confronting the modern state. Such a comprehensive framing enables a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that shape today’s constitutional systems.

It is my firm conviction that this volume will make a valuable contribution to the advancement of legal scholarship and will serve to enrich the discourse on the role and significance of state accountability within a democratic system. I further trust that the analyses and conclusions contained herein will inspire continued research and reflection on the future trajectories of the rule-of-law state.

Bogdan Świączkowski
President of the Constitutional Tribunal

