

IEP-CATÓLICA COLLOQUIA

“There is no conversation more boring than the one where everybody agrees.” (Michel de Montaigne)

“Restless World, Restless Democracies”

May 8, 2026 | Catholic University of Portugal | Lisbon Campus

Scientific Coordinator: Livia Franco

Scientific Committee: Livia Franco, Mónica Dias, André Azevedo Alves, Miguel Morgado

CALL FOR PAPERS

In recent years, democratic regimes have been confronted with mounting pressures both from within and from an increasingly unstable international environment. Domestic political fragmentation, democratic backsliding, and declining trust in institutions unfold alongside rising geopolitical tensions, armed conflicts, and mounting challenges to the liberal international order. Together, these dynamics contribute to a pervasive sense of political restlessness shaping contemporary world politics.

The concept of political restlessness is understood not merely as episodic crisis or temporary instability, but as a condition of uncertainty, anxiety, and movement that is becoming persistent, and in which political expectations, political order, and political legitimacy seem to be eroding. A *restless world* is one marked by continuous disruption, shifting power relations, and growing conflict; *restless democracies* are regimes increasingly unable to generate durable consent, predictable governance, and shared political horizons. Restlessness thus captures both structural transformations and individual experiences of uncertainty that cut across domestic and international politics.

We invite scholars and researchers from a variety of sub-disciplines of **Political Science and International Relations** – Comparative Politics, Theory of IR, Political Theory and Political Philosophy, Public Policy, Foreign Policy Analysis, Regional Studies, Peace & War Studies, etc – **to submit proposals for papers that engage, from diverse perspectives, with these topics (but are not limited to):**

Democratic Challenges

- Democratic backsliding, erosion of liberal institutions, and constitutional stress
- Political polarization, populism, and radicalization
- Crisis of representation, participation, and political trust
- AI, media ecosystems and democratic instability
- Public policy-making under conditions of uncertainty

Geopolitics and the International Order

- Growing international conflict and geopolitical competition
- Challenges to the liberal international order and multilateral institutions
- Technology, militarization, and the governance of insecurity
- Global power shifts and structural polarity
- Mediation and Peace in international conflicts

Intersecting Dynamics

- The impact of international conflict on domestic democratic regimes
- External threats, internal security, and the tension between freedom and order
- Democratic governance in a conflictual world
- Transnational crises and peaceful processes
- Migration, asylum, and border policies in a conflictual context

Call for papers:

- We invite abstracts for individual (approximately 250 words) and a short biography (100 words). These should be sent by email to ci.iep@ucp.pt no later than March 16, 2026.
- Notification of acceptance will be sent on March 31, 2026, at the latest. After acceptance of abstracts, participants will be asked to register for the conference and to provide some personal details to this end.

About the conference:

- The working language of the conference is English.
- The conference will feature thematic panels composed of individual paper presentations followed by discussions. In addition to paper presentations, it will also have one keynote speaker and opportunities for networking.
- Individual paper presentations will be allocated 15 minutes for presentation. Each panel will have 40 minutes for discussion.

Registration and fees:

The registration fee includes participation, coffee breaks, lunch and conference materials.

- Early bird (from March 31 to April 7, 2026):

Researchers €80 and Students €40

- Regular registration (from April 7 to 17, 2026):

Researchers €100 and Students €50

- IEP-Católica researchers and faculty are exempted from registration fees but must register.

Calendar:

Final call: March 16, 2026

Notification of acceptance: March 31, 2026

Registration from March 31 to April 17, 2026

Contact Information:

For any inquiries, please contact the conference organizing committee at to ci.iep@ucp.pt

We look forward to receiving your submissions and to fostering meaningful discussions on the critical issues of sovereignty, borders, and conflict.