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# Preface: Crises and Development – The Impact of Multiple Crises on the Evolution of EU Law

The Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, organised an international conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Hungary's accession to the European Union and the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union on 11–12 April 2024 in Budapest.

With the conference 'Crises and Development – The Impact of Multiple Crises on the Evolution of EU Law', the Faculty wanted to express its continued commitment to European integration. On 1 May 2004, Hungary rejoined the family of European nations, led by the conviction that the long-term freedom, safety and prosperity of our country can only be safeguarded within the European Union. This conviction has only become stronger over the past two decades.

The purpose of the conference was to analytically reflect on the evolution of EU law under the influence of multiple crises. The underlying assumption of the conference was that the EU has been confronted with crises that have affected very different aspects of its operation, but had at least two common features. First, the magnitude of the crises had the potential to rattle the very foundations of European integration. Second, at the beginning of each crisis, the EU did not seem to have clear-cut competences suitable for meeting the challenges. Yet, despite the challenges posed by the numerous crises, the EU always found ways to identify appropriate competences or develop creative legal solutions within its constitutional restraints. In other words, even if certain measures could not be foreseen fifteen or twenty years ago, the inherent capacity to implement these measures was provided for by the founding treaties. As a result, the operation of the EU may have changed in several areas quite significantly. What is more, the change in the perception of certain fields may have been even more significant. But the constitutional fabric on which this operation is based stayed as it was. This allows us to be optimistic about the resilience of the European Union and its ability to respond to future crises.

The conference commenced with a two-day plenary session, which was opened with welcome speeches by Prof. Dr. László Borhy, Rector of the University, Dr. János Bóka,

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Minister for European Affairs and H.E. Jeroen Vergeylen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Hungary. Prof. Dr. Koen Lenaerts, President of the Court of Justice of the European Union, gave the keynote speech, in which he highlighted the role of the Court of Justice in addressing crises. The panels of the plenary session addressed four crises of the many the EU has been confronted with: the consequences of the financial crisis of 2008–2009, the rule of law and democracy backsliding, the resilience of the internal market, as well as the challenges posed by the war in Ukraine. The lectures of the plenary session were concluded by Daniel Calleja Crespo, Head of the Legal Service of the European Commission. The plenary session was followed by lectures and discussions in workshop panels which explored the delicate interplay between EU law and national law in various fields of public and private law, including internal market law, criminal law, family law and tort law.

The event brought together prominent scholars of European law and gave Hungary, as well as ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, the opportunity to discuss the far-reaching consequences of the crises of the past decades on the development of EU law. The significance of the conferences was demonstrated not only by the excellence of speakers but also by the high number of participants. The event constitutes a contribution to European scholarship. It emphasises the inestimable value and importance of academic exchange, signals the will and ability to develop common ideas that support the future of Europe and, above all, promotes a positive image of the European Union as a community of law. The conference showed that the exchange of ideas and experience between scholarship and practice is essential for meeting the challenges of our age.

This issue of the ELTE Law Journal offers a selection of the written versions of lectures delivered at the conference for those interested in EU law and integration.