Call for Papers
Special Issue of Bratislava Law Review:
"A (New) Fortress Europe?
Openness, Protection and the EU's External Borders"

The **Bratislava Law Review** (BLR) is an international legal journal published by the Faculty of Law of Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia.
The journal seeks to support legal discourse and research, promoting critical legal thinking on a global scale. It offers a platform for scholarly discussions through various channels, including scholarly papers, discussion papers, book reviews, annotations, and conference reports.

The Bratislava Law Review focuses on publishing papers in legal theory, legal philosophy, international law, EU law, and global business regulation. Comparative papers and those addressing national law trends that reflect global challenges are also welcomed.

The journal is indexed in Scopus, Web of Science (ESCI), and has been classified as "Class A" by ANVUR for the purposes of Italian national habilitation.

The Bratislava Law Review invites submissions for a special issue dedicated to exploring "A (New) **Fortress Europe? Openness, Protection and the EU's External Borders**".

Theme Overview:
The European Union has traditionally defined itself through openness: the removal of internal barriers, participation in international trade, international cooperation, multilateralism, and a legal order deeply embedded in the broader international legal system. At the same time, recent developments increasingly demonstrate efforts to protect the Union, its Member States, its markets, and its regulatory choices against external risks and dependencies.
This tension between **openness and protection** is becoming a defining feature of the EU's external relations.

It manifests itself in different ways and across different fields of EU law. The Union regulates access to its territory and asylum system, subjects foreign investments and subsidies to increasing scrutiny, deploys trade defence and economic security instruments, restricts economic relations through sanctions, protects strategic technologies and supply chains, and increasingly extends the effects of its environmental and regulatory policies beyond its territorial borders.

Against this background, the metaphor of **"Fortress Europe"** raises a broader legal question. Rather than referring exclusively to migration and border control, it invites examination of the extent to which the European Union is redefining the boundaries between openness and closure, integration and protection, cooperation and strategic autonomy.

The Special Issue therefore seeks to explore whether, and in what sense, EU law is undergoing a broader shift towards **protective, restrictive or strategically selective forms of external openness**, and what consequences this development has for the Union's constitutional identity, external relations and position within the international legal order.

Contributions may address the legal instruments through which such boundaries are constructed, their underlying rationales, and the constitutional, international and institutional limits placed upon them. The Special Issue particularly welcomes papers examining whether developments commonly described in terms of economic security, strategic autonomy, resilience or sovereignty amount to isolated regulatory responses or indicate a more structural transformation of the EU's relationship with the outside world.

Suggested Areas of Contribution

The Special Issue welcomes theoretical, doctrinal, comparative and interdisciplinary contributions, including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- **Security and EU External Relations:** the emergence of security as a cross-cutting consideration in EU external action; the relationship between security, strategic autonomy, resilience and sovereignty; and the constitutional and institutional implications of this development;
- **Sanctions and Restrictive Measures:** the increasing use of EU restrictive measures as an instrument of external policy, their extraterritorial implications, enforcement, circumvention, and their relationship with fundamental rights and international law;
- **Migration, Asylum and Border Management:** access to EU territory, externalisation of migration management, cooperation with third countries, asylum and return policies, border procedures, and the fundamental-rights implications of EU border governance;
- **EU Trade and Commercial Policy:** trade defence instruments, tariffs and other restrictions on international trade, economic coercion and the Anti-Coercion Instrument, export controls, trade dependencies, security considerations in the Common Commercial Policy, and the relationship between EU protective measures and WTO law;
- **EU External Relations and International Law:** the compatibility of emerging protective instruments with the Union's international obligations, the relationship between unilateral EU measures and multilateral governance, and the implications for the EU's role as an international actor;
- **Climate and Environmental Regulation:** the external dimension of the European Green Deal, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, deforestation and supply-chain regulation, environmental conditionality in international trade, and tensions between environmental objectives and market access;
- **Technology, Data and Strategic Autonomy:** export and transfer of critical technologies, digital sovereignty, data flows, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, semiconductors and other strategic sectors, and the role of EU regulation in shaping access to the European market;
- **Internal Market and External Actors:** conditions imposed on undertakings, goods, services and capital originating outside the Union, the external effects of EU regulatory standards, and the relationship between internal-market regulation and external economic policy;
- **EU Constitutional and Institutional Law:** the division of competences between the Union and the Member States, institutional balance, fundamental rights, proportionality and judicial review of measures adopted in the name of security, resilience or strategic autonomy;
- **Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives:** the legal meaning of openness, protectionism, strategic autonomy, sovereignty, resilience and economic security; whether "Fortress Europe" adequately describes contemporary developments in EU law; and whether the emerging legal framework represents a departure from, or rather a transformation of, the EU's traditional model of external openness.

The above list is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Contributions examining other legal dimensions of the changing relationship between the European Union and its external environment are equally welcome.

We encourage submissions that engage with these themes from both theoretical and practical perspectives, drawing on historical, comparative, or contemporary contexts. Contributions from scholars of law, political science, and related disciplines are especially welcome.

Submission Guidelines:
Deadline for Submissions: **March 15, 2027.**
Anticipated Publication Date: **September 30, 2027**.
Manuscript Length: Articles shall have a length of **36,000 – 72,000 characters** (except the title, abstract, tables, figures, and references list).
Formatting: Submissions should follow the Bratislava Law Review style guidelines, which can be found on our website.
Submission Process: Please submit your manuscripts via journal webpage which enables authors to follow editorial process.
All submissions will undergo **a double-blind peer-review process** to ensure academic rigor and quality. For more details about our review policy see here.

For queries: should you have any questions or require further information, please contact us at blr@flaw.uniba.sk

We look forward to receiving your contributions and to advancing the discourse on this pivotal topic.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ondrej BLAŽO
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