


 REWI  
UNI GRAZ  
Thinking  
law

# SOVEREIGNTY – THE POWERS OF A PARADOX

**Keynote by Prof. Martti Koskenniemi**

and Round Table Discussion

The Graz Law School is honored to host **Professor Martti Koskenniemi** for a keynote discussing the paradoxical nature of sovereignty: its historical evolution, ideological functions, and performative significance. The keynote will be followed by a distinguished roundtable discussion marking the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Review of Central and East European Law**.

**9 September 2025**

16:30–18:30

SZ 15.21, RESOWI, Part A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**RSVP by 31 August 2025 at**  
**[voelkerrecht@uni-graz.at](mailto:voelkerrecht@uni-graz.at)**

— Review of —  
Central and East European  
— Law —  
[trill.com/rela](http://trill.com/rela)

**GILDS** GRAZ INTERNATIONAL  
LAW DISCUSSION SERIES



## ABSTRACT

The talk addresses “sovereignty” as a polemical concept by discussing the variable content it has received in legal and political history as it has been invoked in order to defend or attack particular arrangements of power. The talk points to the nature of sovereignty as a “limit” concept, one that both addresses the “supreme” nature of some power while simultaneously transgressing the limits of the technical discourse within which it is invoked. In this way, bringing sovereignty into play in some situation also points to some other, apparently more “fundamental” set of concepts that endow sovereignty its supposed powers. After initial examples of how that concept has operated in the international legal world, the talk will turn to its uses in the historical, sociological and ideological registers. Finally a word will be said about its performative significance, that it to say, how its stabilization signals the stabilization of a specific pattern of powers, rights, and privileges.

*Martti Koskenniemi*

We work for  
**tomorrow**


 UNI  
GRAZ