From the End of History to the Age of Imitation: Why the Post-1989 Westernization Imperative Failed

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Thursday, 23. January 2020, 18:30
Hörsaal II, NIG, Erdgeschoss
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Abstract:
Why did the West, after winning the Cold War, lose its political balance? In the early 1990s, hopes for the eastward spread of liberal democracy were high. And yet the transformation of Eastern European countries gave rise to a bitter repudiation of liberalism itself, not only there, but also back in the heartland of the West. Based on his book The Light that Failed, co-authored with Stephen Holmes, Ivan Krastev argues that the supposed end of history turned out to be only the beginning of an Age of Imitation. Looking at the history of the last thirty years, it seems that the most powerful force behind the wave of populist xenophobia that began in Eastern Europe stems from resentment at the post-1989 imperative to become Westernized.