Abstract
This lecture addresses the topic of environmental justice (EJ) from a critical political perspective. It starts from the observation that there is a dramatic expansion of environmental conflicts at a global scale (take, for instance, the thousands of cases listed in the EJAtlas!). It briefly discusses these conflicts as indicative of the ways in which economies are based on compulsory growth and a logics of exploitation of socio-ecological conditions for (non) humans and environments. It proposed the term ‘prospective injustices’ to debate the multiple dimensions of EJ, from the increased killing of environmental activists around the world to personal and collective traumas, as further illustrations of a system that destabilizes communities, destroys collective ties. I propose to look deeper into various forms of ‘slow violence’ which (re)produces vulnerable communities as ‘surplus’ populations and fosters a future of disposable laborers and consumers. The cases of anti-mining movements in Eastern Europe (Romania and Bulgaria) will offer illustrations in this respect. I propose to push our thinking about socio-environmental justice beyond procedural dimensions of distribution, recognition or participation. Finally, I propose to rethink justice not as a formalised and preconceived ‘thing’ to be demanded or applied but as an open egalitarian ideal that movements across the world continuously re-enact and transform.