DebtCon9

May 24-26, 2027, Vienna, Austria

The Department of International Law of the University of Vienna and the CEU's Department of Legal Studies will host the 9th Interdisciplinary Sovereign Debt Research and Management Conference (DebtCon9), May 24-26, 2027, in Vienna, Austria.

DebtCon9 will convene amid rising sovereign debt distress, compounded by the rising food and fuel costs in the wake of the Iran war as well as shrinking foreign aid flows from many countries of the Global North. These pressures coincide with acute refinancing risks from elevated global interest rates and a wave if emerging market maturities through 2027. Additional challenges include geopolitical fragmentation, the intensifying climate crisis, fiscal rigidities from increasing defense and social spending, and political polarization – all demanding interdisciplinary solutions, as these dynamics echo historical crises yet require fresh policy innovations.

Since DebtCon was launched at Georgetown in 2016, it has brought together academics and practitioners across disciplines, government officials, civil society representatives, and market participants to inform and marshal cutting-edge research to address public debt challenges. After conferences in Geneva, Florence, Princeton, Paris, and Washington, D.C, DebtCon will be held in Vienna for the first time in 2027.

As in previous years, DebtCon9 will include high-level roundtables and keynotes, with research presentations in parallel sessions. Past conferences have shown that valuable insights emerge from joining academic, market, policy, and advocacy debates on sovereign debt and engaging leading experts across disciplines. Continuing our tradition, we reaffirm our collective commitment to cross geographic, disciplinary, and institutional boundaries to find creative solutions to current debt policy challenges.

We welcome **research submissions** in law, economics, finance, history, anthropology, sociology, political science and political economy (among others!) and **policy discussion proposals** from public and private sector practitioners and civil society representatives. DebtCon does not normally reimburse speaker travel expenses; however, in exceptional cases, limited need-based funding may be available for emerging scholars and practitioners, and for speakers traveling from developing countries.

Submission topics for DebtCon9 may include, but are not limited to

- Sovereign debt in a high-interest rate world: refinancing risks & market access
- The rise of non-traditional and private creditors and their impact on restructuring outcomes
- Fiscal constraints and high debt levels
- Novel forms of restructuring of debt and debt forgiveness (e.g., debt for nature swaps)
- Green, social and sustainability-linked sovereign bonds: promises, pitfalls, and implications for debt sustainability
- Climate-vulnerable states, loss and damage finance, and innovative debt instruments (e.g., climate-resilient debt clauses)
- Sovereign debt, security, and war: debt distress in conflict and post-conflict settings, including reconstruction finance
- Domestic politics, political polarization and sovereign debt
- Artificial intelligence, risk models, and the governance of sovereign credit assessments
- Historical Parallels in Sovereign Debt Crises: Lessons from past defaults for today's refinancing risks and creditor fragmentation

As this list is non-exhaustive, other contributions related to all aspects of sovereign debt and related topics are welcome. If you're curious whether your debt-related research fits the remit of DebtCon9, it probably does, but feel free to ask the organizers prior to the submission deadline.

To apply, please upload an abstract, precis, or complete manuscript no later than October 31, 2026. Submissions will be administered with ConfTool. Our organizing committee will evaluate proposals and issue invitations to participants in December. Invitations to paper presenters are contingent on uploading complete manuscripts via ConfTool no later than April 1, 2027. We will add program and logistics information to this page in the coming months. You can check back regularly, or subscribe to our mailing list.

DebtCon9 Organizers

- Michael Waibel (University of Vienna, local host)
- Tommaso Soave (Central European University, local host)
- Anna Gelpern (Georgetown Law IIEL and Sovereign Debt Forum)
- Martin Kessler (Finance for Development Lab)
- Layna Mosley (Princeton University)
- Ugo Panizza (Geneva Graduate Institute)

We look forward to seeing you in Vienna in May 2027!

Sincerely,