

# **Transformation of Austrian and Hungarian law during the First World War (1914 – 1918)**

## **Abstract**

The diploma thesis deals with the analysis of changes in Austrian and Hungarian law during the First World War with a focus on the Cisleithanian part of the monarchy. At the same time, it seeks to answer the question of whether the measures taken were proportionate to the circumstances of the war. Specifically, it examines changes in constitutional, administrative, criminal and civil law. Other branches of law are also mentioned in passing. The method is a comparison of the pre-war state with important legal norms adopted in case of war or in response to war developments. All this is complemented by a contemporary context with an emphasis on the history of the Czech lands. The thesis uses both primary sources, in the form of norms of Austro-Hungarian law, and secondary literature.

In general, it can be stated that the changes adopted were pervasive, in all areas examined. However, the intensity and proportionality varied according to the specific legal sector. At the level of constitutional law, there was a de facto change in the form of the state from a constitutional monarchy to a military-administrative dictatorship, and some civil rights were suspended. The change in criminal and administrative law is characterized by the growing influence of the armed forces on the civilian population. The war economy shifted a relatively liberal system to a centrally controlled economy. In civil law, the maturity of monetary claims was suspended, civil proceedings were suspended, and the General Civil Code was amended. This development was dynamic and responsive to external circumstances. A major turning point during the war was the death of Emperor Francis Joseph I on November 21, 1916 and the accession of Charles I. From this point could be observed a weakening of the army's influence. At the end of the war, state power declined until the complete demise. However, the examined changes survived the end of the state and were transferred to the legal systems of the successor states.

## **Key words**

Austria-Hungary; first world war; constitutional law; administrative law; criminal law; civil law