

**30 YEARS AGO KEYS OPENED  
OUR DOORS TO FREEDOM**  
NOW THEY SHAKE SO WE DO NOT LOSE IT AGAIN



**RECOVERING THE PROMISE OF 1989**

23<sup>RD</sup> FORUM 2000 CONFERENCE

13–15 OCTOBER, 2019 / PRAGUE AND OTHER CITIES

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**CONFERENCE REPORT**

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# SUNDAY

## **Asian Middle Powers and Democracy Promotion**

October 13, 2019, 15:00 – 16:15, Goethe-Institut, Conference Room

In cooperation with East Asia Institute and Asia Democracy Research Network.

### **Moderator:**

*Ketty W. Chen*, Vice President, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Taiwan

### **Speakers:**

*Maiko Ichihara*, Associate Professor, Hitotsubashi University, Japan,

*Niranjan Sahoo*, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, India

*Sook-Jong Lee*, Senior Fellow, East Asia Institute, Professor, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

*Ketut Putra Erawan*, Executive Director, Institute for Peace and Democracy, Indonesia

The panelists opened the discussion by presenting their views on how Asian middle powers can collaborate together and bolster shared values within the region. Dr. Lee explained that countries such as South Korea, Indonesia, India and Japan – all of them represented on this panel – have benefited from the open market economy as well as recognized sovereignty. This places them in a position which allows them to cooperate both within the region and with other middle powers to promote democratic values. According to Dr. Erawan, these middle powers are important in helping to respond to Asia's "hot topic" issues and conflicts. Moreover, these countries can support their civil society in their activism efforts. Dr. Ichihara pointed out that Japan had supported various democratic initiatives; however, these efforts are always linked to China's presence in the region.

The moderator asked whether democracy should be articulated directly or should it be done more softly? The panelists from Japan and South Korea argued that pushing the promotion of democracy outright generated backlash from China, and other countries. Being so upfront about democracy might be seen as an anti-China position. As a result, their respective governments have decided to focus on promoting democratic ideals such as the rule of law, transparency, and accountability – democratic values that are less contentious. Dr. Sahoo highlighted that democracy promotion is a "no-touch" subject in India. He noted that democracy promotion is feared, while India is a powerhouse of democracy with 1.3 billion people. He advocates a middle-ground approach for India – neither purely American nor European. He also explained that state institutions should establish democratic practices internally first.

A common worry is China's influence on markets and military powers. While this does not often present itself as an issue in domestic politics, it is undeniable that China's power is taken into account when developing foreign policies.

## **Havel's Legacy: A View from Afar**

October 13, 2019, 17:15 – 18:15, Václav Havel Library

### **Moderator:**

*Ramin Jahanbegloo*, Political Philosopher, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, Canada/Iran

### **Speakers:**

*John Keane*, Author of *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Australia

*Nyaradzo Mashayamombe*, Executive Director, Tag A Life International Trust (Ta-LI), Zimbabwe

*Tomáš Vrba*, Chairman, Board of Directors, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

The panelist shared their views on the events of 1989 as well as the political and moral leadership of Václav Havel. They discussed the impact of Havel's legacy in the Czech Republic and in their countries.

John Keane, author of *The Life and Death of Democracy*, argued that the Velvet Revolution of 1989 transformed the meaning of the term "revolution". The events of 1989 showed a non-violent refusal of arbitrary power, which was also crucial for cultivating public space. Keane also talked about a past interview with Havel and referred to him as, "the great champion of living in the truth". Nyaradzo Mashayamombe, Executive Director of Tag A Life International Trust (Ta-LI), compared the transition that took place in 1989 to what has been happening in Zimbabwe since Mugabe's death. She pointed out that, "people are hungry for inspiration and such demonstrations of success when it comes to leading". Mashayamombe urged future leaders to include gender issues when democratic transitions take place. Tomáš Vrba, Chairman of the Board of Directors from Forum 2000 Foundation spoke about his experience with regard to the Charter 77 and remarked that, "signing it was not just a political gesture, but the more important aspect was an existential gesture".

## **Opening Ceremony**

October 13, 2019, 19:00 – 21:00, Prague Crossroads

### **Participants:**

*Zdeněk Hřib*, Lord Mayor, Prague, Czechia

*Jakub Klepal*, Executive Director, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Ivan M. Havel*, Scientist, Member, International Advisory Board, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Tawakkol Karman*, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Human Rights Activist, Journalist, Yemen

*Lavon Volski*, Musician, Belarus

Together with the introductory speech of Jakub Klepal, the Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, the Opening Ceremony of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Forum 2000 Conference did not only celebrate the spirit of freedom, optimism and civil responsibility, but also acknowledged that democracy is yet at another crossroads. Issues such as climate change and a volatile international political climate, growing social rifts, and the technological revolution will be at the heart of the discussions during the Conference. All this takes place in Prague – a city that, for decades now, has been an iconic place for the promotion of human rights and a resilient civil society.

The Mayor of Prague, Zdeněk Hřib, commented on the feeling of a “newly re-acquired freedom” that came with the fall of Communism and, thus, provided the link to the core topic of this year’s edition: Recovering the Promise of 1989. If authoritarianism was thought to be a thing of the past, some have come to unfortunately perceive democracy nowadays as being anachronistic. According to the mayor, “the current attacks on democracy can ruin it all or make it stronger”. The transition to democracy was further debated by Ivan Havel who identified the “mental transition” to democracy, as Mr. Klepal framed it, as having been painfully slow. The question naturally arising was whether more time, measured in generations even, is needed for a systemic change.

A global view on the interplay between freedom and democracy came with the keynote address of the Nobel Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman. Paradoxically, the advancement of technology led to new walls being erected. Despite the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the lessons of democracy seem to be dwarfed by some senior democracies which embraced policies of isolation towards migrants under the pretext of security. Stressing that tyranny, dictatorship and terrorism occur in states which aggress their own people, Karman noted that the “rise of racism in the West raises our fears and concerns”. In the aftermath of 9/11, terrorism has come to be misused in order to advance the undemocratic cause of authoritarian regimes.

Karman is convinced that people fighting corruption and human rights abuse will win the battle: “We will continue until we win”. Karman mentioned that the flight of the migrants towards Europe is not in pursuit of a better livelihood, but an attempt to escape the repressive regimes back home. Consequently, if mature democracies close the door, they will leave these people pray to despotism, racism, poverty and isolationism. Karman concluded her speech by reminding the audience that “peace means security from fear, hunger, and poverty” and that “security can only be achieved in an atmosphere of freedom

and rights”. The night ended with the musical performance of a Belorussian artist singing about the “simple things, simple words” that we should not take for granted – just as we must not take for granted freedom and democracy.

# MONDAY

## **1989 Remains an Inspiration**

October 14, 2019, 9:15 – 10:30, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Keynote speech:**

*Maia Sandu*, Prime Minister, Moldova

Jakub Klepal opened the first panel of the 23rd Forum 2000 conference and started by recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. He acknowledged that this is a time of celebration, but he made it a point that, to this point, other countries still struggle for freedom. The keynote speech was given by Maia Sandu, the Prime Minister of Moldova, who shared her story and spoke about the history of Moldova. She pointed out the corruption that plagues her country, causing damage to its democracy and economy.

The panel on the democratic ambitions Europe has been nourishing since 1989 commenced with the keynote speech of Maia Sandu, the incumbent Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova. Sandu declared that Moldova “has never given up on democracy”, the fall of Communism being for it not the end of history, but rather the beginning. Though systematically challenged by the deeply-rooted Soviet institutions, the undue power of oligarchs and the economic hardships inherent to the democratic transition, Moldova pursues nowadays a pro-European path, Sandu’s agenda seeking to “clean up the state, and bring democracy back to Moldova”. Despite lacking a democratic precedent, “Moldova cannot live as an authoritarian regime”. Guided by the lessons of the democratic transition, Sandu reiterated that change must be spearheaded by responsible political elites, external support must be upheld, and strong, functional institutions have to be forged because “democracy must be built day by day”.

## **Ambitions of 1989? Ambitions of Today?**

October 14, 2019, 09:30 – 10:30, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Jacques Rupnik*, Political Scientist, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, France

### **Speakers:**

*Tawakkol Karman*, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Human Rights Activist, Journalist, Yemen

*Šimon Pánek*, Co-Founder, Director, People in Need, Member, International Advisory Board, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Rosa María Payá Acevedo*, President, Latin American Youth Network for Democracy, Coordinator, Cuba Decide Campaign, Cuba

*Mikuláš Minář*, Chair, Milion Moments for Democracy, Czechia

*Maia Sandu*, Prime Minister, Moldova

After the keynote speech, the speakers and moderator took the floor and opened the discussion with three main points. First, how do we remain faithful to the promise of 1989? Second, how do we deal with the winners and losers of democracies and the fragmentation of societies? And how to interconnect political and civil societies? Third, what are western democracies' roles? Democracy promotion always starts at home, so what is the commitment from others? The discussion began with the "home team," which consisted of Šimon Pánek and Mikuláš Minář. They shared their gratitude for the freedoms that 1989 brought to them, but both expressed that they want more from democracy. The other speakers represented the frontlines of democracies around the world. Tawakkol Karman represented the Middle East's fight. Rosa María Payá addressed the Latin America and Cuban fight for freedom. And Maia Sandu turned to the problematic situation that Moldova faces in its frontline for democracy.

The round table discussion inquired into how mature democracies ought to be a safe anchor for the young ones. Mr. Pánek herein referred to Havel's legacy of freedom which comes with a sense of responsibility, while Mr. Minář reinforced the idea since "it is hard to bear the difficult thing freedom is". Counterrevolutions were described by Miss Karman as disruptive of the liberation cause of genuine revolutions for "every people around the world deserve to live without dictatorship". Miss Payá brought Cuba as a living example of lingering Communism, but of an even more resilient desire to attain democracy. The panel ended with Sandu's call for action: "unless you get the honest people who desire democracy join politics, one won't have democracy".



## **30 Years of Czech Human Rights Policy Abroad: Achievements and New Challenges**

October 14, 2019, 10:45 – 11:45, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Moderator:**

*Martin Povejšil*, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Alexandr Vondra*, Member, European Parliament, Member, Board of Directors, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Carl Gershman*, President, National Endowment for Democracy, USA

*Arzu Geybullayeva*, Journalist, Azerbaijan

*Manuel Cuesta Morúa*, Activist, Founder, Progressive Arch, Cuba

Four human rights experts participating in the "30 Years of Czech Human Rights Policy Abroad" panel shared their thoughts on the role of the Czech Republic in human rights promotion around the world. Panelists praised the contributions of the country after the Velvet Revolution and elaborated on the need to develop new tools in a shifting global scenario.

Istanbul-based Azerbaijani e-journalist Arzu Gebullayeva emphasized the shift in needs and circumstances in still-democratizing societies. Activists face new challenges because "the way the regimes worked 15 years ago is no longer the case". In that spirit, she noted that media platforms are only a "component of a much larger process" on the road to progress. President of the National Endowment for Democracy Carl Gershman (USA) first began by noting that "there is no country in the world that has done most in the world for the struggle in Cuba" than the Czech Republic. Indeed, Gershman stressed the relevance of Václav Havel's legacy both in his country and overseas: "Prague is a global center for the fight of freedom and democracy in the world today". Finally, Gershman argued that we should strive to balance a sense of national identity with the idea of a universal democracy based on fundamental human rights. Cuban dissident Manuel Cuesta Morúa also paid homage to Havel's contribution to human rights in Cuba, stating that he was one of the first to "put human rights over politics". Finally, current Czech Member of the European Parliament Alexandr Vondra explained the importance of having a personal attachment to the fight for democracy – "it was not just an abstract concept but a way of life".

## **Can Democracy Deliver? How to Make Liberal Democracy Great Again**

October 14, 2019, 10:45 – 11:45, Žofín Palace, Conference Hall

In cooperation with the Centre for Liberal Modernity and the IDC Herzliya.

### **Moderator:**

*Amichai Magen*, Head, Diplomacy & Conflict Studies, The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel

### **Speakers:**

*Ralf Fücks*, President, Centre for Liberal Modernity, Germany

*Richard Youngs*, Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Europe, United Kingdom

*Karolina Wigura*, Sociologist, Journalist, Member of the Board, Kultura Liberalna Foundation, Poland

Amichai Magen opened the panel by asking three key questions: What should democracy deliver? Where did democracy go wrong? How can we fix democracy? To provide an answer to the first question, Karolina Wigura explained, “Democracy is not flawless, but it delivers something with no price: quality of life.” Ralf Fücks answered the second question by arguing that modern democracies have moved away from providing public goods that improve quality of life: social security, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. In terms of fixing democracy, Richard Youngs urged promoters of democracy to be open to different forms of democracy. Democracy has evolved over time and will continue to evolve in the future.

The panelists also discussed the relationship between liberalism and democracy. Youngs claimed that the two could not be completely separated, while Wigura pointed out that for the second half of the twentieth century many European governments were liberal without being wholly democratic. The speakers concluded that leaders should strive for a balance between liberalism and democracy.

The moderator concluded by warning against blindly believing that democracy is the inherently superior form of government. “We have to be able to contest that,” he explained, and have concrete examples to defend democracy from its opponents.

## **Virtual Insanity? How to Guarantee Transparency in Digital Political Advertising**

October 14, 2019, 10:45 – 11:45, Žofín Palace, River Hall

In cooperation with the European Partnership for Democracy.

### **Moderator:**

*Pavel Havlíček*, Researcher, Association for International Affairs, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Jan Lipavský*, Member, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic, Pirate Party, Czechia

*Miroslava Sawiris*, Research Fellow, Globsec, Slovakia

*Vitalii Moroz*, Head, New Media, Internews Ukraine, Ukraine

The panel discussion focused on the idea of regulatory solutions on a national as well as EU level to guarantee the transparency of political advertising online and to fight disinformation or interference from foreign countries. Speaker Jan Lipavský emphasized the importance of preparing a counter-narrative and working with society in order to fight false campaigns. He claimed that “the political parties are responsible for the messages they are conveying to the public.” Miroslava Sawiris’ team researched disinformation outlets around the Slovak presidential elections as well as EU parliamentary elections. The campaign against the newly elected president Zuzana Čaputová included false information, digitally altered pictures and the engagement of political actors with controversial figures. The Ukrainian experience was presented by Vitalii Moroz, who noted that – while social media is all about society – we often tend to forget that tech giants think in business models striving to increase their revenues. This was exemplified by the following case: Facebook removed around 100 accounts connected to disinformation in Ukraine after the presidential elections.

The solutions proposed by the panelists include enhancing dialogue within society and establishing conversation with tech giants which practice self-regulation as a first step. This, however, requires co-regulation and legislation on a national and EU level, as countries such as Slovakia, the Czech Republic or Ukraine are not “big enough” to negotiate with tech giants. To have the willingness of tech giants to allow countries to understand their internal work process is the challenge faced by civil societies.

## **Shrinking Space for Independent Journalists: How to Survive and Thrive**

October 14, 2019, 10:45 – 11:45, Goethe-Institut, Conference Room

In cooperation with European Endowment for Democracy.

### **Moderator:**

*Diana Moukalled*, Co-Founder, Daraj Media, Lebanon

### **Speakers:**

*Karam Nachar*, Executive Director, Al-Jumhuriya Collective, Syria

*Natalia Morari*, Investigative Journalist, TV8, Moldova

*Joanna Kurosz*, Russia Coordinator/Programme Specialist, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sweden

The moderator, Diana Moukalled, opened the panel by explaining the current state of independent media and the “collapse of neutral institutions”. She wonders if it is even possible to have neutral news. Natalia Morari spoke about her experience as a journalist in Moldova and noted there are few neutral channels for information. She expanded on that by talking about how journalism had become political in her country. According to her, “for someone it will always be behind the red line,” and no matter what they say, it will be seen as a political statement. Morari also explained that independent journalists need to “build trust between you and your audience” in order to survive. Karam Nachar continued and argued with regard to journalism and politics that “the notion of neutrality itself needs to be challenged, contested”. Moreover, “journalism by definition is a political pursuit.” Joanna Kurosz turned to Sweden’s initiatives to support independent journalism and how “another issue all the time is educating journalists”. The panelists went on to discuss the line between opinions and facts and pointed out how difficult it is to distinguish.

## **Democracy in Times of Zuckerberg and Xi**

October 14, 2019, 12.00 – 13.00, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

Information Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in China.

### **Moderator:**

*Peter Pomerantsev*, Visiting Fellow, Institute of Global Affairs, London School of Economics, United Kingdom/Russia

### **Speakers:**

*Xiao Qiang*, Founder, China Digital Times, Professor, University of California, Berkeley, USA/Chile

*Gerd Leonhard*, Futurist, Switzerland

*Benedetta Berti*, Head, Policy Planning Unit, Office of the Secretary General, NATO, Italy

Four analysts and policy advisors engaged in a discussion of the future of technology and both the potential threat and benefit it poses to democracy and human rights. Speakers took an overall optimistic stance on our future while discussing the tradeoff between convenience and independence, connectedness and privacy as the growing power of new technologies force a global conversation about the future of human rights.

Italian policy advisor and consultant Benedetta Berti discussed the significance of technology to the future of war and martial superiority. She also spoke of the emergence of a “techno-authoritarian system that can promise prosperity, that can promise stability, but without freedom.” Chinese research scientist Xiao Qiang referred to the Internet and other new technologies as a “new hope for a more liberal China” that has been recovering from suppression since 1989. However, he stressed the need to approach top technology companies in China and California to fight data control and manipulation. Swiss futurist Gerd Leonhard believes in the power of these technologies to do good – if we are careful about the way we use it. “It’s not the tools that we’re missing,” he says, “but it’s the discussion about what the tools should do.” British journalist Peter Pomerantsev agreed and stressed the necessity of this global discussion. He added that “we need to be on the same page about what we want; not what is possible.”

Developing structures to regulate artificial intelligence proves difficult. As the field moves quickly, policies often don’t account for everything when they come into force. The true challenge, thus, is managing regulation alongside with the development of artificial intelligence, Xiao Qiang pointed out. Adding to that, Gerd Leonhard thinks that it’s important to ensure a healthy interaction with technology. “Technology came and it’s the religion now. Now we need to say it’s not about technology, it’s about us,” he remarked. Furthermore, an international discussion is necessary in order to find a balanced solution for accountability, according to Benedetta Berti. Otherwise, democracies and its activists can quickly find themselves on the losing end.

## **60 Years of Communism in Cuba**

October 14, 2019, 12:00 – 13:00, Žofín Palace, Conference Hall

Democratic Solidarity.

### **Moderator:**

*Miriam Kornblith*, Senior Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, National Endowment for Democracy, Former Vice-President, National Electoral Council, Venezuela/USA

### **Speakers:**

*Tania Bruguera*, Artist and Activist, Cuba

*Dánae Vílchez*, Journalist, Nicaragua

*Wilhelm Hofmeister*, Director, Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Spain and Portugal, Germany

An artist and activist, a journalism student and a CEO shared their knowledge of Cuba's communist regime. In addition, they described its democratic transition.

In view of the continuity of the regime, the social, economic and racial inequalities as well as the inefficient economic situation in the country, Hofmeister's "perspectives regarding democracy in Cuba are not very optimistic". The U.S. and the former Soviet Union were referred to as the countries that supported the endurance of the system from the start. He concluded that "one of the weaknesses of the transition in Cuba is the internal weakness of democratic forces".

As a Nicaraguan, Vílchez stated that Nicaragua is labelled as a communist country. However, among the younger generations, the attractiveness of the communist regime is decreasing. "Ideological divisions in left and right wings are not clear anymore in our society". As new generations are speaking out, the panelist clarifies that politicians "are all dictators from the same textbook".

Bruguera focused her speech on the changes in Cuba in terms of its society and people. She described Cuba's propaganda as "one of the best examples of fake news". The transition to a democratic regime is a "Revolution of the Headlines", as she calls it. Basically, "the government is afraid of the people". Bruguera argued for better investigative journalism in order to provide more information on the democratic transition. She concluded that "artists are the ones making the revolution in Cuba".

## **Catalonia: What Lies Ahead?**

October 14, 2019, 12:00 – 13:00, Žofín Palace, River Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Per Nyholm*, Writer, Commentator, Columnist, Jyllands-Posten, Denmark/Austria

### **Speakers:**

*Jordi Solé*, Foreign Affairs Secretary, Republican Left of Catalonia, Spain

*Martin Mejstřík*, Associate Professor, Institute of International Studies, Charles University, Czechia

*Ignacio Martín Blanco*, Member, Parliament of Catalonia, Spain

In light of today's developments regarding the sentencing of Catalan separatist leaders, there was a polarized discussion about Catalonian independence. Three panelists and the moderator described the perceived historical context of the situation, the current climate in Spanish politics, and the way forward.

Journalist and moderator of the panel Per Nyholm left his mark on the discussion by referring to the Spanish role in trying to "provoke a conflict." Associate Professor at Charles University Martin Mejstřík delineated the history of Catalonian independence and argued that the situation is an ongoing conflict with "escalation on both sides." Speaker Jordi Solé, pro-Catalan independence and former member of the European Parliament for the Republican Left of Catalonia, stressed the importance of framing the sentencing of Catalan separatist leaders as political imprisonment. He opposed the reaction from the Spanish government against the independence movement and called for a "humanitarian" approach to the situation. Furthermore, he argued that the conflict will not be solved in the courtroom, but instead in Parliament as it is a political problem – a debate is needed to advance the impasse. In response, Ignacio Martín Blanco, member of Parliament in Catalonia and an opposer of Catalan independence, stressed that Catalonia is more diverse than it is made out to be by pro-independence supporters. Furthermore, he argued that Spain is a strong democracy and that adherence to its Constitution is imperative. In response to Solé, he argued that the convicted separatist leaders cannot be labelled as political prisoners as they were sentenced for their actions not their ideas. Moreover, Blanco addressed the perceived bias of the moderator, referring to his possible pro-independence point of view. To conclude, Mejstřík highlighted the need for a discussion of the prospects for a referendum in relation to for Catalonia's independence.

## **Youth: "How Will We Form Europe in the Next 30 Years?"**

October 14, 2019, 12:00 – 13:00, Goethe-Institut, Conference room

In cooperation with the European Commission Representation.

### **Moderator:**

*Tomáš Sedláček*, Chief Macroeconomic Strategist, ČSOB Bank, Lecturer, Charles University in Prague, Member, Corporate Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Grigor Yeritsyan*, President, Armenian Progressive Youth, Armenia

*Alina Aflecailor*, Activist and Human Rights Educator, Romania

*Antonio Argenziano*, Secretary General, Young European Federalists, Italy

*Dejan Kovač*, Presidential Candidate, Croatia

Representatives of the younger generation of Europeans and future leaders discussed the question "How will we form Europe in the next 30 years?" by sharing their thoughts and beliefs on what the future of Europe should hold.

Romanian human rights activist Alina Aflecailor thinks that the promises of 1989 were not fulfilled, as the poverty rate and the level of education are not what they were expected to be. She noted that "we come from countries where we are taught to be afraid." However, by fighting this fear and investing in young people there is hope. European Movement leader Antonio Argenziano regrets the divisions in Europe, and he argued for the destruction of "this cultural wall that divides Western and Eastern Europe." He explained that this can be solved by a European government that can tackle global issues and find answers for the people in need. Croatian presidential candidate, Dejan Kovač, believes that democracies should be more transparent and accountable. In addition, he observes that globalization is an economic force that democracy has to adapt to. The solution to this is a European government, not local governments. The president of the Armenian Progressive Youth NGO, Grigor Yeritsyan, stressed the necessity of regaining trust and mobilizing the youth to bring the people closer to the government. Using modern technology and promoting European values through education are the tools to achieve this goal.



## **America First! But What About the Rest of Us?**

October 14, 2019, 14:45 – 15:45, Žofín Palace, Conference Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Jan Šnidauf*, Chief Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Neelam Deo*, Director, Gateway House, India

*Michael Gonzalez*, Senior Fellow, The Heritage Foundation, USA

*Jerzy Pomianowski*, Executive Director, European Endowment for Democracy, Belgium/Poland

*Yang Jianli*, President, Initiatives for China, USA/China

The speakers discussed how the *America First* approach of the Trump Administration – with actions such as the withdrawal from multilateral agreements – is affecting global dynamics.

Neelam Deo, Director of Gateway House in India, pointed out that “Trump is the first Twitter president”. However, according to Deo, who referred to Nixon, Trump’s language is not new. She also pointed out that Trump has not started a war yet, unlike his predecessors, but this could change because of the situation with the Kurds. Michael Gonzalez, Senior Fellow of The Heritage Foundation in the U.S., thinks that leaders are meant to prioritize the well-being of their citizens. He also argued that the decreasing participation of the U.S. in multilateral settings has been beneficial so that they will be involved in partnerships with shared values such as NATO, instead of transactional ones. He highlighted that “our European friends have no reason to fear the *America First* approach”. Jianli Yang, President of Initiatives for China, when talking about current USA-China relations, argued that “the deep conflict is between their values” and that “as far as China policies are concerned, the current administration is on the right track”. Jerzy Pomianowski, Executive Director of the European Endowment for Democracy, stressed that Europe is not working against the U.S. and that nowadays “we are living in a state of certain confusion regarding the future of the world in the next 20 or 30 years”.

## **Indignados, Yellow Vests, or Fridays for Future: Can Social Movements Re-invent Democracy?**

October 14, 2019, 14:45 – 15:45, Žofín Palace, River Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Tereza Stöckelová*, Sociologist, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Nicolas Tenzer*, Chairman, Study and Reflection Center for Political Action, France

*Giuseppe Mastruzzo*, Director, International University College of Turin, Member, Five Star Movement, Italy

*Gadi Taub*, Political Commentator, Historian, Senior Lecturer, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Three social movement experts participating in the "Indignados, Yellow Vests, or Fridays for Future: Can Social Movements Re-invent Democracy?" panel shared their thoughts on the similarities and differences in current social movements, and their relation to democracy. Panelists elaborated on the reasons for the emergence of the above-mentioned movements, Attention was also given to the question whether they can claim to be a legitimate voice in political debates.

Israeli historian and political commentator Gadi Taub began the discussion by declaring that "populism is the most important social movement nowadays". Taub further stated that "when people say democracy, they actually mean liberalism", something that he finds hugely problematic. Indeed, Taub observes an increasing set of anti-democratic behavior around the world, creating a "liberal *élite* which is bent on delegitimizing any democratic reaction to this trend and calling it xenophobic". This results in citizens who feel they do not have a choice in their future. Current Director of the International University College of Turin Giuseppe Mastruzzo claimed that most recent protest movements share an "us vs them" narrative, a narrative that implies "we are the people and we are the excluded". However, Mastruzzo also warned about the fact that once a movement crystallizes into a real political form, "it is extremely difficult for them to make a new way of doing politics, extremely difficult to act in real discontinuity with the powers that were protesting against". Nicolas Tenzer, chairman of Reflection Center for Political Action, concentrated on the *Gilets Jaunes*. He commented that the Yellow Vests—as they are also known—have an "undemocratic way of expressing undemocratic ideas", with authoritarian claims to power; it is a minority movement attempting to question the legitimacy of both the executive and legislative branches of government. According to Tenzer, "democracy is an equilibrium between different stances" and, thus, movements that ignore this, such as the *Gilets Jaunes*, "show a true neglect for the real world".

## **How Media Can Help Restore Public Trust in Democracy**

October 14, 2019, 14:45 – 15:45, Goethe-Institut, Conference Room

In cooperation with Project Syndicate.

### **Moderator:**

*Jonathan Stein*, Managing Editor, Project Syndicate, USA

### **Speakers:**

*Mary Fitzgerald*, Editor-in-Chief, *openDemocracy*, United Kingdom

*Gayane Abrahamyan*, Member of Parliament, Armenia

*Tom Daly*, Director, Democratic Decay & Renewal, Australia

The three speakers participating in the “How Media Can Help Restore Public Trust in Democracy” panel discussed the origins of distrust in the media since 1989 and what the media could do to improve the situation.

Mary Fitzgerald, the British editor-in-chief of *openDemocracy*, emphasized that an independent media struggled financially. Furthermore, she criticized that nowadays the second largest source of revenue for media were advertorials, meaning sponsored news. Nevertheless, to her, “Media is not a tool, we are not there to instore trust in democratic institution”. To Gayane Abrahamyan, an Armenian journalist and member of Parliament, however, “media is a weapon”. In her opinion, journalists have to become activists if the government does not act. She explained that without the help of online media and live broadcasting, the Armenian Velvet Revolution would never have succeeded. She added that nowadays, on the contrary – having mostly been owned by the previous government – media refuses to support the new democratic government. Moreover, she vouched for financial transparency and a self-regulatory system. “I trust the government now, but I do not know what is going to be next”. The Australian Director of Democratic Decay & Renewal, Tom Daly, reflected that dictators – to undermine democratic systems – attacked accountability and institutions such as media and courts first. According to Daly, fake news and propaganda are nothing new, but the speed and volume with which they are passed on is new. He addressed the behavior of media and the accusation of having helped Trump with his campaign for financial benefits: “Media runs after the distractions”, he concluded.

## Running a Country According to "Likes"

October 14, 2019, 16.00 – 17.00, Zófin Palace, Forum Hall

### Moderator:

*Jamie Fly*, President, CEO, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, USA

### Speakers:

*Anna Lührmann*, Deputy Director, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, Germany/Sweden

*Jan Zielonka*, Professor of European Politics, St Antony's College, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

*Josiah Ober*, Professor, Political Science and Classics, Stanford University, USA

The panel was opened by Jamie Fly questioning whether democratic backsliding is an inherently European phenomenon. While Lührmann mentioned the current trend of “autocratization”, Zielonka complemented her stating that “*the EU in itself has a democracy problem [...] the EU wouldn't pass the democracy test*”. The debate brought to the forefront the issue of reinventing democracy in an age of digitalization, Zielonka wondering “*what will replace the democracy we have today?*”, especially in the absence of an ideological consensus. Ober looked at the turbulences shaking democracy nowadays and how its prerequisites – freedom of speech and assembly – are shaped on social media under the auspices of a “like”. Lührmann moved the idea of being liked into the realm of political parties. Lührmann explained how the illiberal parties – to the detriment of the traditional ones – by exploiting digital platforms, paradoxically use freedom to abolish freedom.

The panelists also run an assessment of democratic success in the context of topical transnational problems. Zielonka affirmed that “in the EU, we have too much emphasis on efficiency over participation” while Ober tuned in to explain how populists allegedly “*speak directly with the people*”, both singling out the challenge of bringing participation into a political system without losing efficiency. Lührmann stressed that “populism is a rhetorical style, it is not an ideology”; hence, Ober replied that “education has to be about learning to read the messages that are coming from the leadership to the masses”, and vice-versa. The discussion was wrapped up by the reiteration that politicians have no choice but to use social media, yet, it is a common responsibility to ponder the most adequate use of the tools of digitalization to rejuvenate democracy.

## **Central Europe: The Key to the EU's Future?**

October 14, 2019, 16:00 – 17:00, Žofín Palace, Conference Hall

In cooperation with the Polish Institute Prague.

### **Moderator:**

*Oana Popescu-Zamfir*, Director, GlobalFocus Center, Romania

### **Speakers:**

*Andor F. Dávid*, Executive Director, International Visegrad Fund, Slovakia/Hungary

*Iveta Radičová*, Sociologist, Former Prime Minister, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, Slovakia

*Claus Offe*, Political Sociologist, Hertie School of Governance, Germany

*Sławomir Dębski*, Director, The Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland

Panel moderator Oana Popescu opened the discussion by referring to Central Europe as a region that still believes in the European idea. However, she is concerned by the division between the East and the West. The region has not received much attention at EU level. Panel member Iveta Radičová, former Prime Minister of Slovakia, followed with the statement that despite many differences in the socio-economic and political context, Europe sees the best time in its history, and it has never enjoyed such freedom and democracy as it does today. Central Europe in this respect is fresh blood for the European Union. However, further integration is faced by certain challenges, and actions are required in order to overcome the differences. Speaker Claus Offe followed with his conclusion that rapid integration did not go as planned and liberal democracy has failed to meet the expectations of nations concerned. As a result, frustration has increased on both sides. Andor F. Dávid argues that differences exist but they are a motivation for further integration and economic growth. Moreover, the traditional Right Vs Left debate has now been changed to Federalists Vs "Sovereignists". Panel member Sławomir Dębski agrees with the idea that Central Europe might hold a key to Europe's future provided that is it not the only one. Other actors such as Germany and France are needed too. It is important to recognize the real issues concerning disparity, voter representation and polarization.

## **Can Business Help Reverse Democratic Decline?**

October 14, 2019, 16:00 – 17:00, Žofín Palace, River Hall

In cooperation with the Center for International Private Enterprise.

### **Moderator:**

*Abdulwahab Alkebsi*, Managing Director, Center for International Private Enterprise, USA

### **Speakers:**

*Ionut Sibian*, Executive Director, Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC), Romania

*Péter Árvai*, CEO, Prezi, Founder, Bridge Budapest, Hungary

*Martin Hála*, Sinologist, Director, Sinopsis, Czechia

*Rumena Filipova*, Research Fellow, Center for Study of Democracy, Bulgaria

Abdulwahab Alkebsi opened the panel by explaining the current situation of the “democratic recession” in Europe as a result of globalization. While some people were lifted out of poverty and experienced an improvement in quality of life, other people felt abandoned by the growing private sector. He posed the question “What is the role of business in democracy?” First, Ionut Sibian spoke about how creative companies and the IT sector aided the Romanian public during protests against the government. These companies provided artistic and technological resources for the protestors and demonstrated how businesses could work in favor of democracy. Péter Árvai added his observation of the cooperation between the private sector and civil society in Sweden, and the lack thereof in Hungary. His foundation, Bridge Budapest, is working to increase such collaboration. Rumena Filipova discussed her research on corrosive capital from Russia in Balkan states and the harmful effects it has had on the financial, energy, and real estate sectors. Martin Hála described a similar situation in the Czech Republic where reliance on Chinese companies has resulted in government corruption and a lack of transparency. All the speakers agreed that increasing international and intranational transparency in both the public and private sectors should be a top priority if democracy is to be revived.

## **Challenges to Democracy in Latin America: Can the International Community Help?**

October 14, 2019, 16:00 – 17:00, Goethe-Institut, Conference Room

Democratic Solidarity in cooperation with CASLA Institute.

### **Moderator:**

*Cristiana Chamorro*, Founder, Director, Violeta Chamorro Foundation, Nicaragua

### **Speakers:**

*Edita Hrdá*, Managing Director for the Americas, European External Action Service, Czechia

*Michael Gonzalez*, Senior Fellow, The Heritage Foundation, USA

*Hasler Iván Iglesias Yañez*, Youth Political Leader, Voluntad Popular, Venezuela

Two representatives of Latin American countries, Cristiana Chamorro (Nicaragua) and Hasler Iglesias (Venezuela), discussed the challenges that democracy faces in the region with two speakers from the international community: Edita Hrdá (Czech Republic) and Michael Gonzalez (the USA).

Cristina Chamorro, a human rights activist promoting democracy in Nicaragua, moderated the discussion. She opened the panel by stating that the wave of freedom of 1989 “hit Nicaragua”; the country had its free elections that same year. Hasler Iglesias, a youth leader of the *Voluntad Popular* party in Venezuela, voiced his concerns regarding the amount of efforts human rights activists need to make to be heard. He also stressed that the situation in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela are connected and that it is possible to speak of the “criminal gang getting control of the Latin America”. Michael Gonzalez, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, pointed out the situation in Cuba, saying that without liberating Cuba, the international community won’t have a chance to help Venezuela. Supported by Edita Hrdá, who is the Managing Director for Americas of the European External Action Service, Mr. Gonzalez argued that there is a need for combined efforts from the EU, the U.S. and other foreign actors. Speakers also discussed various means of forcing the governments of the above-mentioned countries to change the regimes. While Ms. Hrdá considers peaceful negotiations and targeted sanctions as “the EU way” of doing it, Hasler Iglesias thinks that “a military intervention has to be on the table”.

## **A Collapsing Global Order?**

October 14, 2019, 17:05 – 17:35, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

In cooperation with the Center on Global Economic Governance, Columbia University.

### **Moderator:**

*Sook-Jong Lee*, Senior Fellow, East Asia Institute, Professor, Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

### **Speakers:**

*Jan Švejnar*, Director, Center on Global Economic Governance, Columbia University, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, USA/Czechia

*Szu-chien Hsu*, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan

Jan Švejnar, Director of the Center of Global Economic Governance, argues that the dominant liberal model has been challenged in the last ten years, due to the rise of China as a major power. He states that “the western power is nowhere as appealing as it used to be, economically.” As a result, Švejnar claims that “we are seeing the rise of a new empire.” Deputy Foreign Minister of Taiwan, Szu-chien Hsu, believes that the U.S. is returning to the region to answer to the Chinese aggressive posture. Both speakers agree that China is using its “party-state capitalism” to push its own model abroad. However, they differ on the consequences of the Chinese economic growth. Švejnar believes it is mainly beneficial to the global economy. Hsu argues that Chinese economic growth comes with costs, both for the Chinese people and the rest of the world. More specifically, he explains that the competition with Chinese companies is unfair as they are subsidized by the state. He notes that the *Belt and Road Initiative* offers infrastructure projects that are more accessible, but of lesser quality than the western-type private-financed alternatives. Hsu concludes that “the more it [The Chinese economy] grows, the more damage it will cost to the global free market.”



# TUESDAY

## **Responsible Politics for a Livable Planet**

October 15, 2019, 09.30 – 10.25, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Keynote speech:**

*His All-Holiness Bartholomew*, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome, Ecumenical Patriarch, Turkey

### **Moderator:**

*Bedřich Moldan*, Director, Environment Center, Charles University, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Lucie Smolková*, Regional Coordinator, Fridays for Future, Czechia

*Alexandr Vondra*, Member, European Parliament, Member, Board of Directors, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Ralf Fücks*, President, Centre for Liberal Modernity, Germany

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew offered a panoptic view of human rights and religion. Referring to Fukuyama and Huntington, His All-Holiness claimed that “the next world war, if there will be one, will be a war between civilizations”. Deeming globalization to be a misnomer for development, His All-Holiness declared that “the way globalization unfolds needs to change”, subsequently calling for “globalization with a human face.” The universality of human rights – understood as a form of Western imperialism – was contrasted to more theocentric cultures, hereby arguing that the former poses a threat to cultures’ plurality. Lastly, His All-Holiness stressed the public role of religion, for “religion functions as a factor of unity, solidarity and peace” while “solidarity holds together the unshakeable pillars of humanity: justice and love”.

The panel that followed focused on climatic changes and the necessity for mankind to change its relationship with the environment. Moldan commenced by asking how to shape the politics, the dealings with nature and other human beings in order to withstand the dire climatic changes. Fücks added that “we are in a historic moment, when the future of mankind is at stake”, because there is constant growth – population, production, and consumption – within planetary boundaries. Thus, the true challenge of decoupling growth from destructing the environment was further framed by Smolková as a responsibility inherent to freedom. Vondra reiterated that the environmental issues are one of the greatest challenges of our planet, while Fücks emphasized that “we are in a race against the clock”. However, it was concluded that climate change should not be framed in a language of threat, but in a language of maturity and under the ideal of global cooperation.

## **Gallery**

October 15, 2019, 10:30 – 11:00, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Ivana Štefková*, Member, Board of Directors, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Rushan Abbas*, Executive Director, Campaign for Uyghurs, USA

*Glanis Changachirere*, Founder, Director, Institute for Young Women Development, Zimbabwe

*Hamid Arsalan*, General Director for Stratcom, Ministry of Interior, Afghanistan

First, Rushan Abbas described the torture and oppression that Uyghurs face under the Chinese regime. The Chinese government claims it has set up “vocational training” centers for the Uyghurs, but, to Abbas, they are concentration camps where Uyghurs are enslaved, tortured, and raped. Abbas urged the international community to speak out against the Chinese oppression of the Uyghurs: “What do you think is going to happen if this continues unchecked?”

Next, Hamid Arsalan shared his perspective on the situation in Afghanistan. Despite Afghanistan’s bloody history, Arsalan remained hopeful. “The Afghanistan of 2019 is not the Afghanistan of the 80’s, or the 2000s,” he explained. Close to 50% of Afghanistan’s population was born after 2001, and thus have been raised in a democracy. Arsalan was optimistic that this new generation will be able to push democracy even further in Afghanistan.

Finally, Glanis Changachirere shared her experience during the 2017 Zimbabwean coup d’état. At first, when she heard the news of the coup, she anticipated a stronger, more democratic Zimbabwe. However, after contested election results in, the new government released the army on protestors, and six people were killed. The protests and violence are ongoing. “Zimbabwe has deserted us,” she despaired. “If we do not have support for the international community, we will perish.”

## **Let's Make Democracy Sexy Again!**

October 15, 2019, 11:15 – 12:45, Zofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Facilitators:**

*Irena Kalhousová*, Head, Herzl Center for Israel Studies, Charles University, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

*Hrishabh Sandilya*, Political Analyst, India

The audience participating in the unconference with the title “Let’s Make Democracy Sexy Again!” debated the role of emotions and facts in the climate change discussion and the impact of these discussions on democracy.

The first question “Does Greta exaggerate?”, referred to Greta Thunberg’s emotional speech “How Dare You!” at the UN on September 23, 2019. The audience mostly defended Greta’s emotional outbreak, stating, “When we see what is going on in the world, how can we not have emotions?”. Participants agreed, that Greta was addressing the entire world, speaking up for those most affected by climate change. The audience also thought that people should not only raise their voices, but also listen, find solutions, “stop looking outdoors, and start looking indoors”. Furthermore, participants criticized strongly that politicians mainly ask themselves if a climate policy looks or sounds good to citizens instead of asking what the best thing is to do. Moreover, part of the audience criticized that people feel they are not heard by politicians. They, thus, described the movement “Fridays for Future” as a process of democratization, which allows citizens to finally take their right to govern back from their own governments. This led the moderators to launch a more general discussion about possibilities to strengthen democracy. Participants suggested to reinforce the political education of people, as they did not always know what they lost by losing democracy. The help of social media, however, was seen as controversial. Someone explained that the problem is not the media itself, but the way how it is used against or in favor of democracy.

## **Saving Democracy from Economic Power?**

October 15, 2019, 13:45 – 14:45, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

In cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

### **Moderator:**

*Jan Komárek*, Professor of Law, University of Copenhagen, Denmark/Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Abdulwahab Alkebsi*, Managing Director, Center for International Private Enterprise, USA

*Veronica Anghel*, Associate Fellow, Bologna Institute for Policy Research, Romania

Veronica Anghel and Abdulwahab Alkebsi discussed the role and influence of economic power on the democratic process during the panel “Saving Democracy from Economic Power”.

Associate Fellow at Bologna Institute for Policy Research Veronica Anghel starts by declaring that “democracy requires boundaries between the state and businesses.” She continues by criticizing that in post-soviet European countries, some businesses managed to circumvent those boundaries, thanks to insufficiencies of the state, in order to maintain their privileges. Managing Director of the Center for International Private Enterprise Abdulwahab Alkebsi reminds us that “economic power has had influence over politics for a very long time.” According to him, removing this influence is impossible. It is, however, necessary to regulate it. Both speakers agree that no solution can be found at the level of the nation-state, as the size of the issues is too important. Alkebsi regrets that people are left behind in the current system, which feeds the populist movement. Anghel answers that populism only distracts attention from the real problem, i.e. elites are using business leverage for personal interests at the expense of the population. She emphasizes the fact that elites came to power to preserve the privileges they have. She advocates for solidarity to bridge the wealth gap in society. Alkebsi notes in response that the problem is not economic power itself but the misuse of it. According to him, competition is good as long as it is regulated. He adds that being independent from the state “should be the dream of everybody.”

## **1989 Seen from the Muslim World: From Kabul to Prague**

October 15, 2019, 13:45 – 14:45, Žofín Palace, Conference Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Jana Hybášková*, Diplomat, Former EU Ambassador to Namibia and Iraq, Czechia

### **Speakers:**

*Gilles Kepel*, Director, Middle East and Mediterranean Program, Ecole Normale Supérieure, France

*Jacques Rupnik*, Political Scientist, Member, Program Council, Forum 2000 Foundation, France

The defeat of the Soviet army in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1989 had important implications for the revolutions in Central Europe. Two experts shared their knowledge on consequences of 1989 for both Central Europe and the Muslim world.

The discussion's moderator and Czech diplomat, Jana Hybášková, opened discussions by identifying the asymmetries of revolution in Central Europe and the Middle East. French political scientists and Arabist Gilles Kepel highlighted the crucial importance of the 1989 defeat of the Red Army in Kabul and how it was fundamental to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Moreover, he stated that "the end of communism and the rise of political Islam are intertwined." He argued that the defeat of the Soviets in Kabul was followed by a growth of Jihadist nationalist sentiments – later felt by the West in full with the September 11 attacks. French political scientist Jacques Rupnik added that the military defeat of the Soviets partly led to the "renunciation of force", a factor he argued would be crucial to the success of the Central European revolutions. When questioned about the heightened threat perception of Islam in Central Europe, Rupnik argued it could be attributed to a lack of understanding stemming from low levels of migration from the Middle East to Central Europe. In the context of recent developments, both speakers made clear their concern about the recent Turkish offensive in Northern Syria.

## **Authoritarians in the Post-Soviet Space: The Need for Democratic Solidarity**

October 15, 2019, 13:45 – 14:45, Žofín Palace, River Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Miriam Lanskoj*, Senior Director, Russia and Eurasia, National Endowment for Democracy, USA

### **Speakers:**

*Leyla Yunusova*, Director, Institute for Peace and Democracy, Azerbaijan

*Yevgeniy Zhovtis*, Director, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Kazakhstan

*Zamira Sydykova*, Former Ambassador to the United States and Canada, Founder, Editor-in-Chief, Res Publica Newspaper, Kyrgyzstan

*Konstantin von Eggert*, Russian Affairs Analyst, Deutsche Welle

Four participants of the panel are from four different countries with authoritarian regimes. The speakers discussed the current authoritarian regimes in their home countries and asked what kind of democratic solidarity is needed.

Azerbaijani human rights activist, Leyla Yunusova, argues that the authoritarian regimes are kept in power through corruption, nepotism, and a weak and corrupt judicial system. This was confirmed by the other panelists. She states that Western organizations should stop financing these authoritarian regimes and start paying attention to the crimes that they commit. Former ambassador and journalist from Kyrgyzstan, Zamira Sydykova, believes that there is a loss of faith in democracy due to the corrupt judicial system. As a result, “we lose our young generation, because they migrate or turn to radical Islam.” She calls for international solidarity that wants authoritarian regimes comply with democratic standards. Russian journalist and affairs analyst, Konstantin von Eggert, describes how regimes stay in power, i.e. by deriving legitimacy from foreign policy; constantly eliminating real opposition; reminding the people that “Putin is the ultimate grandeur;” and avoiding a potential link between local protesters and those with political power. He explains that additional civil society and solidarity is needed. Kazakhstan human rights activist, Yevgeniy Zhovtis, identifies four main enemies to democracy in his country: oil, gas, war on terror, and geopolitical considerations. In addition, he defines today’s authoritarian regimes as a hybrid of authoritarianism and democracy, i.e. with seemingly democratic regime, but authoritarian at its core. He argues that Western societies should deal with their own governments. When they solved their problems, they can be democratic models again for countries like his.

## **Fulfilling the Promise of 1989**

October 15, 2019, 15:00 – 16:00, Žofín Palace, Forum Hall

### **Moderator:**

*Carl Gershman*, President, National Endowment for Democracy, USA

### **Speakers:**

*Natan Sharansky*, Politician, Human Rights Activist, Israel/Ukraine

*Lech Wałęsa*, Former President, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Poland

*Glanis Changachirere*, Founder, Director, Institute for Young Women Development, Zimbabwe

The Closing Panel began with a warm welcome as Lech Wałęsa walked to his seat, and the crowd erupted into applause. Gershman opened the discussion by highlighting three main points to be discussed during the panel: the issue of solidarity in the international community, the challenge of individual rights around the world, and the problematic views of national identity. The speakers shared their opinions and personal backgrounds on the discussion points. Lech Wałęsa made it a crucial point that global solidarity is needed to be able to defeat the authoritarian regimes. He also added two comments on democracy. First, democracy has three elements. The first element is the law and constitution. The second is the participation of the people. And the last element is linked to how much money a democracy has. According to Wałęsa, "Democracies today are in a state of crises." In a democracy, the majority wins, but what happens if the majority doesn't vote? He believes that society needs to be better organized. To close the panel, Gershman issued a strong statement regarding the stance on Hong Kong and how we must stand with the people of Hong Kong.

## **China: Human Rights in the 21st Century Digital Surveillance State**

October 15, 2019, 18:30 – 20:00, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Information Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in China in cooperation with One World, Amnesty International, Sinopsis, Association for International Affairs, Lungta, Czechs Support Tibet

### **Moderator:**

Ondřej Klimeš, Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences

### **Speakers:**

*Lobsang Sangay*, Sikyong, Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet

*Dolkun Isa*, Uyghur Politician, Activist, President, The World Uyghur Congress, Germany/China

*Yang Jianli*, President, Initiatives for China, USA/China

*Cardinal Joseph Zen, SDB*, Cardinal, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

The moderator opened the discussion by asking the participants, “How does the Chinese neo-totalitarian arrangement work? And how sustainable is it?” Cardinal Joseph Zen began by comparing Hong Kong to Shanghai. “In Hong Kong, we don’t want to fall into the same situation as China,” he explained, referring to the strict communist regime. Lobsang Sangay described how Chinese surveillance technology that was invented to control Tibet is now used all over the world. “What happens in Tibet, happens in the rest of the world,” he stated. Then, Dolkun Isa observed how the Chinese government has completely cut off contact between East Turkestan and the rest of the world. Jianli Yang concluded that in order to protect human rights not only in China, but all over the world, democracies should band together to draft a new human rights treaty. This would be separate from the UN’s Human Rights document, as the UN receives large amounts of funding from the PRC.

In answer to the second question, all of the speakers agreed that the Chinese government oppresses people because it is insecure. Sangay closed the discussion by saying “Europe, do not give up hope, because we have not given up hope.”



## **Exiled**

October 15, 2019, 19:30 – 19:30, Langhans, People in Need Center

### **Moderator:**

*Clara Gonzalez*, Project Manager, Center for Democracy and Human Rights, People in Need

### **Speakers:**

*Leonor Zúniga*, Film Director, Nicaragua

*Dánae Vílchez*, Journalist, Nicaragua

*Christiana Chamorro*, Founder, Director, Violeta Chamorro Foundation, Nicaragua

The discussion highlighted the dehumanizing effect of sexual abuse in its victims and how this documentary laid bare Zoilamerica's humanity, pain, and brave resilience amidst a powerful force fighting against her. Both speakers gave insights into how the story developed in Nicaragua, commenting on its immense political, social, and moral impact. Additionally, the speakers commented on how the word "Exiled", the title of the film, held particular meaning for many Nicaraguans who have also been forced to leave their country during its strenuous history. Chamorro commented that Zoilamerica's inability to pursue a case or gather media attention was a clear example of the corruption in the Nicaraguan government and the extensive control it holds. While the case of Zoilamerica and the allegations against Ortega were not new to Nicaraguans, it was not until the unrest seen in 2018 when the true nature of the president and his past with sexual abuse allegations received increasing attention in the media. Dánae Vílchez remarked that this was an important case that showed the importance of one's private life and actions and how they translated into ones behavior in office, particularly when it came to powerful individuals. The discussion then emphasized the role of Daniel Ortega's wife and Zoilamerica's mother, Rosario Murillo. This included the conflicting arrangement of power they shared and how a daughter was traded for political power.

The speakers commented that the film focused on an important topic that gets left out in political discussions: the treatment of women. While this film was a story of pain and a representation of the many women who have been raped and abused by perpetrators, it nevertheless embodied a story of resilience and of new beginnings. While sexual abuse is at times a taboo subject in Latin America, both speakers agreed it is important to continue to speak up and bring cases such as Zoilamerica's to the attention of the people. To conclude, Vílchez and Chamorro remarked that investigative films and filmmakers have an important job in showcasing the unexplored battles of injustice and continuing to bring attention to a worrisome situation in Latin America and its ongoing fight for democracy.