

Press Release, October 17, 2023, Prague

Attendees of the Forum 2000 Conference spoke out strongly against Russian aggression in Ukraine

The 27th edition of the Forum 2000 International Conference, entitled "For a Democratic World Order", drew to a close today, October 17, 2023. Over the course of the three-day conference, held at the Prague Congress Centre, hundreds of important world figures participated in nearly five dozen discussions and workshops on democracy and human rights.

The opening ceremony took place on Sunday evening, where the Mayor of Prague **Bohuslav Svoboda** welcomed attendees and the world-famous intellectual and Stanford University professor **Larry Diamond** was keynote speaker. **Shahab Tolouie**, an Iranian-born musician living in Prague, accompanied the evening with a live performance.

On Monday morning, the conference opened with a speech by the Czech Foreign Minister **Jan Lipavský**. President **Petr Pavel** also addressed the conference, noting that *"Forum 2000 has always played a unique role in the public debate, not only as a legacy of Václav Havel, but also as a crucial platform for raising our voices and speaking out in defense of universal human rights around the world."*

The President of Moldova, **Maia Sandu**, delivered a keynote speech, stating *"Russia's war is designed to end Ukraine's existence as a sovereign state and the Ukrainian people as a nation. If Russia would have succeeded, it would have ended Moldova's existence as a free state too. Because democracy is essential to Moldova, the desire to be free, to live in dignity and decide on our own destiny comes from within, from the Moldovans themselves. I'm certain you will not abandon us."*

Monday's programme also included panel discussions on the situation in Slovakia following the elections and the global impact of Russian aggression in Ukraine. In this context, the second edition of the **"Fórum for Ukraine"**, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, took place. [The Forum 2000 International Award for Courage and Responsibility](#) was announced in the evening and awarded to the Russian political activist **Vladimir Kara-Murza**, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for "spreading disinformation" about the Russian military and condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine. Vladimir Kara-Murza's wife, **Jevgenija Kara-Murza**, received the award from the President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, **Miloš Vystrčil**.

On Tuesday, many discussions and workshops were devoted to the growing influence of authoritarian regimes in Africa and Latin America. A debate on Olympic ideals in the shadow of authoritarian regimes was also held and featured **Kryscina Tsimanouskaya**, a Belarusian sprinter and critic of the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko. The final discussion, "Foresight on the Future of Democracy", was attended by, among others, **Markéta Pekarová Adamová**, Chair of the Chamber



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of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, and **Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze**, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for the Integration of Ukraine into the European Union.

In addition to the guests mentioned above, this year's conference was attended by **Luis Almagro**, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), **Oleksandra Matviichuk**, representative of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Center for Civil Liberties, **João Gomes Cravinho**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, **Miroslav Wlachovský**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, **Joan Chirwa**, founder of the Free Press Initiative, economists **Danuše Nerudová** and **Jan Švejnar**, and hundreds of other distinguished guests from around the world.

The recordings of the panel discussions are available to the public on the official website of the Forum 2000 Foundation. Here, "5 BIG IDEAS", summarizing the main themes of this year's conference can also be found.

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