

F2000 CONFERENCE AGENDA

Monday, October 12

14:00

Opening

EN

CONFERENCE OPENING

Discussion

EN

A NEW WORLD EMERGING?

The global struggle against Covid-19 is an unprecedented experience, shared by all humanity. International discrepancies in managing this crisis have led to tensions, attempts to play up identity politics, and ruthless push-ahead with powerful players' agendas. But the virus – a common enemy - may still prove to have a uniting potential. Historically, groups under siege often developed strong solidarity. Which direction will the humankind take? Might a new global ethos be in the making, defying trends of political fracturing? What can be done to help avert dangers and capitalize on opportunities? Can the virus tragedy eventually lead to a better future?

Discussion

EN

POLITICS OF FEAR, POLITICS OF HATE: FACING THE GROWING INTOLERANCE IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

In cooperation with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

In the current atmosphere of growing antipathy towards liberal democracy, due process, justice, inclusion, social diversity, competence and intellectual curiosity, fear and hate have become the key instruments of political mass mobilization. The easiest and most obvious target are minorities. Any minority will do: ethnic, sexual, gender, racial, political, regional, age, migrants. Skillful populist leaders have used it for centuries to rally support for their dictatorships. Today they are at it again, but very often they call their governments democracy and they use multiparty elections to legitimize them. Why do "bad guys" keep winning? Has the corona crisis bolstered politics of hate and fear? Are the voters more susceptible to lies than to truth? How can we restore good polity?

Zofin Conversation

EN

BRAZIL AND MEXICO: A TALE OF TWO POPULIST PRESIDENTS

Democratic Solidarity.

In 2018, the two largest Latin American economies – Brazil and Mexico – elected populist leaders representing the opposite political extremes. Both countries are also among the leading ten countries most affected by COVID-19. Mexico's AMLO cheering "You have to hug each other," and mocking the public health recommendations incarnated his lax response to the pandemic. Despite reversing his stance a few weeks later and declaring a national health emergency, his approval rating has dropped to its lowest since taking the office in December 2018. On the other hand, Brazil's right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro's approval rating is at its highest, despite the criticism of his controversial stance of ridiculing the disease, criticising social distancing measures and forcing out his health ministers. This conversation will examine the current position of the populist leaders of Brazil in Mexico, the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on their popularity, and whether we should expect rise or decline of populist tendencies in the post-pandemic world.

CHINA: A HUMAN RIGHTS CONUNDRUM

In cooperation with Václav Havel Library and Information Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in China.

Being a communist dictatorship since 1949, the human rights record of the People's Republic of China has always been dark. However, with the economic opening after 1978, the subsequent economic success and the rise of the middle class, hopes of a gradual improvement in the field of human rights emerged. Any expectations in this regard, however, have been quashed after President Xi Jinping assumed power. Disregard to international obligations, systematic efforts at forced ethnic and cultural assimilation, and modern concentration camps, combined with thorough digital surveillance, are the reality of today's „People's Republic“. What are the perspectives for human rights in China?

Discussion

CLIMATE CHANGE AFTER COVID

Over the years, climate change and its multiple impacts and increasing risks have been moving (not without countercurrents) to the top of concerns of the humankind. Now, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a profound game-changer; it affects daily lives as much as it affects global priorities. Together with the unfolding economic crisis, this poses a real danger of putting the climate agenda on hold. How to turn this fragile situation into an opportunity to promote progressive and climate-friendly economy? How to bridge the “governance gap” - a distance between what scientists deem to be appropriate for saving the planet, and what international community is capable of committing itself to? What shall / can we do to sustain climate change high on the international agenda?

Discussion

AFRICA: A CONTINENT OF THE FUTURE(?)

Africa plays – and will play - an increasingly important role on the world stage. But it will also be hugely affected by major trends, partly or fully beyond its control, such as climate change, population growth, the growing influence of China and others. Africa's destiny over the next years will be of crucial global importance. Despite the “Rising” literature, Africa and Africans are often still represented as objects and not historical actors. Six decades after the decolonization, democracy, the rule of law, and transparency are still not firmly established on the continent. What are the major upcoming challenges for Africa? What are the opportunities? How women and youth can have more leadership role in moving the democratic agenda?

19:45 – 20:00

Coffee Table Conversation

LESSONS FROM DAY 1: HIGHLIGHTS AND COMMENTARY

A quick overall view at the Day 1 of the Conference. What were the most interesting moments and the most relevant takeaways?

Tuesday, October 13

14:00

Opening

EN

DAY 2 OPENING SESSION

Discussion

EN

ACTIVATED CITIZENS

In cooperation with Carnegie Europe.

Large scale mobilisations have intensified around the world in recent years and the COVID pandemic has only pronounced this trend. Opinions still differ on how effective this energizing of the civil society is for democratisation. This panel will explore the evolving tactics of pro-democracy protests and draw out lessons from some of the most prominent revolts of recent times. It will ask what changes are needed to protests and how such direct action relates to other routes to democratic change, like the efforts of political parties. The panel will also examine the possible downsides of protests and the rise of citizen mobilisation that is not necessarily in favour of liberal democracy. Can democracy benefit from this newly found civic responsibility and activism?

Discussion

EN

#STANDWITHBELARUS

After a rigged presidential election, the people of Belarus gathered in the streets, demanding the right to choose their leader freely. The regime has responded with brutal force. A frank discussion about what needs to be done to enable Belarusians to decide their future.

Discussion

EN

ASIA: THE NEW CENTRE OF THE GLOBAL BATTLE OF IDEAS?

Information Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in China

The rise of nationalism, authoritarianism, and populism, contempt for international institutions and international solidarity, or the erosion of Western influence have coalesced to create a rather dangerous moment for international community. On this backdrop, and sustained by dynamic economic and social development, Asia is slowly moving to the central stage of global politics, where key geopolitical fault lines of the day are being drawn and where major battles of ideas, with global consequences, are increasingly taking place. The Sino-Indian competition, the ongoing tensions in the Korean peninsula, the international fallout of the Hong Kong crisis, or the origin of COVID pandemic itself are just some recent examples of intra-Asian events setting the global agenda. What can we expect from Asia's more prominent role on the global stage? Are we witnessing the beginning of the Cold War II that will be shaped in Asia? How should the US, the EU, and other major international actors approach this development?

Discussion

EN

TECH RULES: WILL AUTHORITARIANS SHAPE THE NORMS OF THE DIGITAL ERA?

In cooperation with the European Commission Representation.

Technology increasingly is central to our politics and day-to-day life. Rapid and sweeping technological change brought open societies to an inflection point, even before the onset of the coronavirus. Today, the stakes are higher. Technological

innovations, such as facial recognition, that arise within open, democratic settings pose increasingly serious risks, a situation that will be even more complex in the post-COVID-19 context. For democratic states, a further complication arises from the rapid spread globally of technologies developed in authoritarian settings, especially China. How can democracies establish critically needed rules and norms around emerging technologies?

Zofin Conversation

EN

BOLIVIA ELECTIONS: WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Democratic Solidarity in cooperation with Casla Institute.

After multiple postponements caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bolivian presidential elections have finally been scheduled for October 18, 2020. However, setting of the election date was preceded by a series of turbulent events. The disputed presidential elections of October 2019 and the OAS report indicating irregularities in the electoral process led to massive civil protests resulting in the resignation of the country's longest-serving president Evo Morales and installation of interim government led by interim President Jeanine Áñez. Ever since, the country has been dealing with a divided democratic opposition and currently counts with six competing presidential candidates. Only a month before the scheduled elections, Bolivian interim President Jeanine Áñez withdrew from election race to avoid splitting the vote for opposition candidates running against the Morales' party. This conversation will analyse the possible results of the Bolivian presidential elections and their implications on the (in)stability of the Latin American region.

Discussion

EN

US FOREIGN POLICY POST-COVID AND POST(?) - TRUMP

Donald Trump presidency has not only deeply shaken the political system in the United States, but it has profoundly affected the international order. Alliances and bonds of trust, that have been in place since the end of the Cold War, the World War II, or even before, have suddenly been questioned. Global American leadership has receded and many new uncertainties were introduced. Much of the world looks with hope to the November contest for the White House. What should we expect from the US foreign policy after the November elections? Are Joe Biden's and Donald Trump's foreign policy objectives indeed so different? What US role in the world can we expect in the longer term, beyond the next four years?

19:45 – 20:00

Coffee Table Conversation

EN

LESSONS FROM DAY 2: HIGHLIGHTS AND COMMENTARY

A quick overall view at the Day 2 of the Conference. What were the most interesting moments and the most relevant takeaways?

Wednesday, October 14

14:00

Opening

EN

DAY 3 OPENING SESSION AND RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Zofin Conversation

EN

CAN WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DISASTER? THE ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR A NEW WORLD

In cooperation with Project Syndicate/Columbia University.

While it is still too early to assess the full global implications of the COVID-19 crisis, it is already clear that the era of “small government” fundamentalism inaugurated by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan has come to an end. In responding to the economic fallout from the pandemic, many politicians from across the political spectrum have accepted that massive interventions by the state are necessary in order to prevent an economic and societal collapse. Moreover, there is a growing consensus that post-crisis policies will have to include reforms to broaden and strengthen the welfare state and public institutions. In all of these instances of proactive government action, how should policies be shaped – both in the short and the long term – to ensure effectiveness while avoiding the risks of authoritarianism and other possible negative side-effect of increased state power?

Gallery

EN

AUTOCRACIES ON THE MARCH

Information Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in China.

Despite the optimistic expectations at the end of the Cold War, democracy has not (yet) gained the overwhelming global dominance that some of us have hoped for. Today, autocracies in their different forms continue to limit freedoms, oppress their citizens, murder opponents, and spread instability and fear internationally.

Václav Havel Human Rights Symposium

EN

WOMEN RIGHTS IN TIME OF CRISIS

In cooperation with Václav Havel Library.

17:30 - 18:30

Discussion

EN

THE IMPORTANCE OF EUROPE IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

In cooperation with Prague European Summit.

Europe, and the EU in particular, have long been considered the non-entity of the global politics, lagging behind the power and influence of the US, China, India, or even Russia. To some extent, this view seems justified. As a diverse group of 27 member states, the EU is bound to be slow, sometimes chaotic, and often ineffective. On the other hand, seven decades of European integration, despite constant crises, have brought an unprecedented era of freedom, prosperity, and peace - an evidence that Europe is doing something right. Today, in the period of a US retreat from the global stage and with a new multipolar world (dis)order emerging, there seems to be a growing need for Europe as the remaining normative power on the key issues of democracy, governance of digital technologies, or environmental challenges. Is Europe capable of meeting these expectations? What is Europe's place in the 21st century world?