

## Are We Naturally Un-Democratic?

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofin Palace, Forum Hall

Moderator: Jacques Rupnik

Panel Discussion: Frederik Willem de Klerk, Mona Siddiqui, Roger Scruton, Petr Pithart, Malek Adly

“Are we taking it for granted to the point where we have reached the peak of democracy and are disengaged amidst all these problems?” said **Mona Siddiqui**, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh, during the opening panel, “Are We Naturally Un-Democratic?” at Žofin Palace on Monday.

**Frederik Willem de Klerk**, Former President of South Africa and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, used the “survival of the fittest” theory as an example to show that humans are not naturally democratic, but also stated that it was not necessarily a negative thing. According to De Klerk, although “elections have become auctions, and politicians offer more and more for less and less” nowadays, citizens still have better opportunity and more rights in a democracy. In spite of all its critics, the “democratic system is still the best system,” as it “offers a way for discontent people to offer something new.” However, he also expressed that one of the greatest failures of current democracies is the governments’ “failure to acknowledge diversity,” as immigration is essential for globalization. The question of how we can “accommodate important minorities within the larger societies” is a critical challenge for democracies in this new era.

**Roger Scruton**, Philosopher, Political Scientist, and a Fellow at Oxford University, agreed with de Klerk, and added that the “fundamental truth is we are all naturally competitive.” In politics, he claims that competition comes in two forms: natural and artificial. The natural form occurs when “one strives to dominate the rest,” and if successful, the leader would impose his views upon the rest. The artificial form occurs when a person who succeeds does not prefer to dominate, but “simply wants to be heard,” and to this leader, the “notion of success lies in both personal triumph and allowing those who have not reached success to be heard.” Scruton believed the latter to be more effective and stressed that “we just need to allow others to be heard, as it’s “time for politicians to serve the people and not themselves!”

When asked if humans are naturally undemocratic, **Petr Pithart**, Former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, responded that “human nature is not to blame for the failures of democracy.” However, it is “unnatural for a democracy to be controlled by the market.” In order to stop the Parliamentary democracy from being controlled by money, “leading parties should allow people to differentiate without the help of PR experts,” since “personal choice must take precedence over the economic force that drives politics.” He believes that people tend to turn away from democracy during times of

distress and distrust of political corruption, and noted that recently, only half of the 400 million eligible voters for the European Parliament chose to participate.

*It's not a natural inclination of democrats to need to accommodate diversity, but in this time of age, how can we do that, and what's the right institutional framework for it?*

“I couldn't imagine my life outside a liberal democracy,” said Mona Siddiqui. However, she challenged her own assumption by asking, “If liberal democracy is the best we have, why people are so dissatisfied?” Siddiqui then explained the “paradox of democracy,” in which “half the world wants more democracy, pluralism, and freedom of expression, while the other half seems bored of democracy.” If we “lose the philosophical and active voice in citizenship, we become complacent.” Further, she states the ultimate goal for democracy is to offer everyone a voice, especially the minorities.

*Could democracy become a universal phenomenon?*

According to **Malek Adly**, Human Rights Lawyer at the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights is still very far from a democracy, as it currently holds the highest number of journalists behind bars, as authorities aggressively issue gag orders to censor sensitive topics from the public. Adly recalled the events of the 2011 Arab Spring uprising that removed Mubarak from presidency, as an event that could have opened doors for Egypt's potential for a democracy. At the end of the day, you need public spirit, involvement, and expression of culture to reach success, and “people with an active voice can start movements to correct the flaws of democracy.” But in many countries like Egypt, basic rights such as freedom of press and self-expression are still seen as crimes, and that must change in order for us to move forward.

### Can Citizenship Be Taught?

**Monday, September 14, 2015. Goethe Institut**

**Moderator: Ondřej Liška**

**Panel Discussion: Austeja Landsbergiene, Thomas Krüger, Zafarullah Khan, Ivan Vejvoda**

“Democratic values were born out of the tragedies of the past, but the struggle for a democratic society never ends. Can it reproduce itself naturally, or must it be taught?” asked **Ondřej Liška**, Former Czech Minister of Education and moderator at the Forum 2000 panel *Can Citizenship Be Taught*. Four panelists from the countries of Lithuania, Pakistan, Serbia, and Germany gathered together to discuss the topic of whether or not citizenship can be taught, and if so, how. Each panelist

discussed his or her view on the relationship between democracy and education in both the international and their respective national context.

**Austeja Landsbergiene**, Founder of a Private Chain of Preschools, discussed the fundamental importance of citizenship. “Our children are going to be a part of the global society, and one of the most important things we can do is help children understand this society they live in. This should be continuous, integrated, and sustainable. The biggest challenge is to make sure they have a voice and enable them to see they can make a difference.”

**Thomas Krüger**, President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education and Former Member of the German Parliament, believes that in teaching citizenship, it is also crucial to strengthen democratic values and foster a sense of unity. He states, “Democracy depends on discussion, dialogue, and participation. [It] starts in the domestic environment – the school, the neighborhood. We experience more and more that teaching is not an education; it is increasingly about activating, motivating, and empowering every citizen in participating in democracy.”

**Zafarullah Khan**, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education in Pakistan, described the role of education, democracy, and the nation-state. “I treat democracy as software of ideas, but it has to be compatible with the hardware, which is the nation-state,” he says. Additionally, this software of ideas can get infected with many viruses, e.g. politics based on money, which is why citizens must keep the conversation alive. He continues, “in many countries, education is, unfortunately, very colonially designed. Education is the cultural DNA; what is taught in the classroom will determine what kind of worldview we have.”

**Ivan Vejvoda**, Senior Vice-President of the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. and Senior Advisor to the Serbian government discussed the didactic process that is learning and teaching citizenship. “There are several steps before people and individuals can have that sense of empowerment and voice; it’s a plurality of institutional, individual, and collective efforts that help produce citizenship, to feel a part of one’s community and the world.”

After agreeing that democratization and citizenship is the right answer, and is a tool to preserve civic virtues, Liška asked the panelists, “Do we do enough in our current societies to enable this?” Krüger replies that in Germany there is good infrastructure and civic education on the level of the federal government, yet he believes not enough is done in the education system. Khan also responds by describing how in Pakistan, it is no guarantee for all children that they will receive an education. Clearly, then, the education system is in need of reform, and Austeja Landsbergiene expands on the issue by asking, “A lot of lessons are very boring, and children won’t pay attention to this, so why don’t we try working with and empowering teachers?” Thus, the education system has to be changed as a whole and not just various part of the curriculum. In addition more support should be given to the teachers. Most importantly, it is not the information about democracy, but the co-production of it, that teaches us about civic virtues.

### **Civil Society: Democracy and Education**

Monday, September 14, 2015. European House.

Moderator: Gabriela Dlouhá

Panel Discussion: Ivana Skálová, Ales Bialiatski, Pavel Pšeja, Maryia Sadouskaya-Komlach

“We need people to engage in Civil Society and begin discussion on issues like capital punishment, tolerance, and civic engagement,” said **Ales Bialiatski**, President of the Viasna Human Rights Centre, and a prominent human rights activist in Belarus.

While he believes that only education can help the next generation appreciate civil society, he laments that Belarus is a particularly difficult environment to cultivate civil society with education. Designed to be a closed system, Belarusian education has been divorced from civil rights for 15 years. In addition, the Belarus government refuses to recognize NGOs labeled as “non-conformist,” such as those advocating human and civil rights.

Given his circumstances, Mr. Bialiatski declared that his main mission is to give basic education on human rights to those whom show initiative, seeding the next generation with the values of civil society.

A more fundamental question, though, is whether or not democracy can be taught. **Pavel Pšeja**, Member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights, does not subscribe to “teaching” democracy. Teaching, he pointed out, runs dangerously close to indoctrination. Rather than preaching right from wrong, he believes in listening to individual’s experience and knowledge of democracy. In turn, he shares his own experience with democracy, both the successes and failures, the achievements and challenges. “Democracy is a process that can not be learned, only built,” he argued, and the best way to support an emerging democracy is to help the citizens understand what they can do.

He observed that, in democratic states, people increasingly perceive democracy as a given right rather than a luxury. By the same token, in emerging democracies, people perceive democracies as an absolutely necessary achievement that will bring about incredible results. The latter can be especially dangerous as unreasonable expectations lead to disillusionment, which undermines the credibility of democracy. “Flowers are only as strong as the strength of the root,” he explained. By sharing his own experiences with democracy, he grounds expectations and lays the bedrock and foundation of democracy.

He concluded stating “In sharing democratic experiences, we should keep in mind that good democracies take time to build. You can establish democratic rules and systems easily, but that does not mean you have a democratic society.”

**Maryia Sadouskaya-Komlach**, brought up under the Soviet Union, had her own personal experiences with suppressed democracy. She recalled her disillusionment with Belarus when her article meant to educate the youth on democracy was killed by her Editor-in-Chief in fear of government retaliation. “We can’t educate the majority of society because public education, media, and public institutions are against us,” she said.

Her primary concern today is youth outreach. She recalls her niece believing the shutdown of a social media website was due to “Ukrainian bombings of data centers in Moscow.” She emphasizes that, to compete with our opposition, we must also explore beyond traditional media in engaging with our audience.

*Democratic Education: Freedom to Think, Freedom to Learn*

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.

Moderator: Leila Alieva

Panel Discussion: Ivan M. Havel, Parth Shah, Oleg Derevianko

**Leila Alieva**, panel moderator and Political Analyst from Azerbaijan, began the discussion by emphasizing the need to distinguish formal education from education that develops values. The amount of time it takes for people to establish a sense of value varies, she says. She questions where and when democratic education should start. Alieva also wonders how we should best develop this democratic education. She argues that education should be democratic in itself in order to develop values. In its current state, “we can’t expect much from the education system.” Additionally, Alieva highlights that the source of democratic values is not necessarily the classroom; social media and everyday life play an influential role.

**Ivan M. Havel**, Czech Scientist, emphasized his particular interest in university studies. Referencing his observations from University of California, Berkeley, and Havel highlights how shocking it was to see students challenge their professors and survive in a competitive environment. Paralleling these observations to democracy, Havel emphasizes that both have free competition. He argued that students should have a spectrum of values and opinions, and they need to be exposed to different ideas. Competition is key for critical thinking. Havel also noted that diversity is a very positive thing; stating that private schools help diversification because the state does not have as much control over them.

**Parth Shah**, Founder President of the Center for Civil Society in India, criticized the factory-style educational system that has been created. He called for change. Shah explains that India’s education program is “built on excess and equity;” every school looks alike, and everything is equal. Shah warned that this standardization is creating the problem that we see today. He believes that children and their parents should have choices regarding the school, manner of assessment, and curriculum. Education needs to be personalized. Shah said, “Centralization is the key problem,” and we are destroying quality education.

**Oleg Derevianko**, Deputy Minister of Education and Science in Ukraine, argued that there are problems everywhere regarding the equality of education. Using his own country as an example, Derevianko explains how Ukraine has some institutions that are more advanced than others. He believes, “We need to change the system so that it teaches the skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” He supports the improvement of global and financial literacy. When asked where we should start, Derevianko replies, “We should start everywhere,” and we need to start educating parents on how to be good parents. He elaborates, “Generally, in our country, the first people to suppress the freedom to learn are parents.” Furthermore, Derevianko says, “In my mind, critical thinking ends where identity begins.” He believes it is hard to question one’s own identity. Derevianko believes that inclusivity and critical thinking are the most difficult topics he has to develop in his country.

In her closing remarks, Alieva reviewed three main concepts: diversity, competition, and choice. She explained that the issue at hand is not one of state versus private education. Rather, the conditions of these three ideas influence the success of educational systems. Strong diversity, competition, and choice, will lead to more responsible citizens in the future.

## Democratic Values in a Changing World Order

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.

Moderator: Roland Freudenstein

Panel Discussion: Barbara Haig, Ralf Fücks, Juan Pablo Cardenal, Jacob Mchangama

The panel began with Venture Capitalist Eric Li's TED talk projected onto screens beside the panelists. "Multiple parties fight for political power and everyone fighting for them is the only path to salvation to the long suffering, developing world...this time, the Chinese didn't buy it," said Mr. Li. He went on to address how Western democracy was irreconcilable in China.

**Barbara Haig**, Deputy to the President for Policy and Strategy at the National Endowment for Democracy, responded to the video, stating that Mr. Li's assumption that democratic values are a Western creation is incorrect. Democratic emergence "is not just Western Phenomena," she stated. "Democratic values are universal." Democracy is not a Western export, she further explains, but rather a replicable phenomenon.

"Democracy is not a key to Paradise, but rather a prevention of Hell," stated **Ralf Fücks**, President of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, in response to Barbara's remarks. However, he also voiced his concerns over the rise of right and left wing parties in Europe along with shrinking participation in recent democratic elections. Attributing the events to growing social inequality, loss of economic dynamic, and faith in the future, Ralf Fücks emphasized the crucial task of regaining global credibility and reinvigorating democracy at home. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, he observed, German youth see a darker future ahead of them.

**Juan Pablo Cardenal**, Journalist, Writer and Lecturer, brought the conversation back to China and its influence upon the Western democracies. He observed that the world perceives China as "economically unavoidable." As a result, countries are willing to take human rights, fair competition, and democratic values off the table when negotiating with China. He questions how the democratic world can claim to cherish human rights with such behavior. As final note, he warned that in tackling China, the world must begin to consider the non-economic factors as well.

**Jacob Mchangama**, Founder and Executive Director of Justitia, a Copenhagen based think tank focusing on human rights and the rule of law, agreed with Juan. He believes that democracies are increasingly unwilling and even unable to defend their basic principles. While global human rights are at an all time high, he noted that the concept is depreciating as the definition of human rights broadens. He asked, how can we demand human rights in China when we praise them at the same time for its growing middle class? He believes Western Democracies, in this sense, are too timid. He stated, "When you reveal that your fundamental values are for sale, that does not inspire confidence."

Ralf Fücks offered final insights into his vision for the future. He believes the challenge today is holding the European Union together while not neglecting human rights. The refugee crisis will be the “litmus test” of the resolve of Western Democracies.

### **Education as a Tool for Political Manipulation**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight’s Hall.

**Moderator: Jan Šnidauf**

**Panel Discussion:** Sepideh Jodeyri, Alex Chow, Ivan Kurilla, Nedim Dervišbegović

“Education,” **Jan Šnidauf**, Head of the Political and Economic Section, EU Delegation to Bosnia and Gercegovina, said, “is meant to act as a positive force, as cultivation for life; however, it has also been used as a negative force: a manipulative tool.”

Repeatedly throughout history, education has been used as a vehicle of political control to push ideas into vulnerable minds, leading to extremist ideologies. On September 14, 2015 in Prague, Czech Republic, a discussion took place through Forum 2000 highlighting the prevalence of this phenomenon in modern society. Moderated by Šnidauf, four diverse panelists, representing different countries and sectors around the world, began to articulate this manifestation.

The first speaker, **Sepideh Jodeyri**, Poet and Translator, displays her activism through poetry; in her speech, Jodeyri expressed the increasing polarity between the Iran political forces and university students: “Every day, students are forced to repeat what school books contain, which are often opposite to family values. All of the institutions reinforces in young students, the clear distinction of who is ‘good’ and who is ‘bad’.” She continues, stating, “Humanity majors are the symbol of this resistance.”

Also within the educational sector, **Alex Chow**, Student Activist in the Umbrella Movement, spoke about how students in Hong Kong have diverted the student’s attention from the public to private life: “The political ideology is implemented in the educational syllabus. National education is used to construct some kind of political identity, so all of them are coerced into conformity.” Thus, people are pushed to focus more on their personal lives and are discouraged from caring about the greater environment.

From a professor’s point of view, **Ivan Kurilla**, Professor at the European University at Saint Petersburg in Russia, observed that demands from authorities are becoming increasingly political and are trying to “control” Russian history: “The regime continuously uses history as a fundamental facilitator to unify Russia, subjecting teachers to threats and making them dependent on authorities: the systemic work of human education.” However, Kurilla recognizes that universities are now becoming more independent, as they have a right to elect directors; while teachers have a right to choose which textbooks to use in the classroom, there is still much pressure and resistance from the historical community.

Finally, **Nedim Dervišbegović**, Multimedia Producer, Balkan Service, RFE/RL, voiced that within his region, segregation prevents many students in certain ethnicities from learning: “Education is being used as a means of continuation of the war, cementing these divisions to prolong power.” Dervišbegović emphasizes that the only way to reconcile the past is to ignite substantial change in order to enforce new norms.

In all cases discussed, there is ample evidence of political tendencies diffusing onto the educational system: deliberate attempts for manipulation. As these attempts have significant bearing, it merits further study and inquiry to gauge exactly the level of influence it asserts. Even though the international level has little space for interference, as each educational system has a different construct and must be treated differently, each group, or sector, can look to common features in the others for mutual support, although short of interfering in any local sense.

### **Education in Europe: Towards Democracy and Prosperity**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Forum Hall.

Moderator: Jan Švejnar

Panel Discussion: Carl Hahn, Marco Antonio Fernández Martínez, Jan Macháček

“Google, Yahoo, Amazon, Facebook they all originate in the United States. And you will have in your pocket, I bet, no German devices, nor will you have in your offices much European equipment,” said **Carl Hahn**, Chairman Emeritus of the Volkswagen Group Germany, introducing a continuous problem in Europe, where new technologies are taken with skepticism, even hostility. However, it is important to think ahead and look into the future. Further on, it was suggested that 70% of Nobel Prize winners are currently working in American universities and one fourth of Silicon Valley companies were started by Chinese and Indian immigrants. This is what precisely the future is and what Europe needs to adapt to.

A quality of education was also one of the issues emphasized by **Marco Antonio Fernández Martínez**, a Research Professor in the School of Government, Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico. The problem with the quality of education in Europe is indeed something that all the participants agreed with.

Martínez further emphasized the importance of political coalitions and their stance in the matter of educational systems. He also noted the problem of inequality of education in Europe, and the need to integrate minorities successfully into the educational system, which is also one of the main points taken into account by Jan Švejnar, Director of the Center on Global Economic Governance at Columbia University.

**Jan Macháček**, Chairman of the Board in Institute for Politics and Society agreed with Hahn’s notion of Asia’s westernized atmosphere. However, Macháček said that though Germany does not have Apple or Facebook, their economy still is a star of the Euro zone. “Is it such a problem that European universities aren’t that hungry for size measurements of the results?” supposed Macháček. He also introduced some concrete problems, for example the lack of learning of foreign languages, bringing the comparison between Czech Republic and Albania, where dubbing television shows had stopped already five years ago, however that topic hasn’t been seen as a major issue in Czech political forums.

The emphasis on the European education must be therefore put on quality and not quantity. Europe can also learn from other countries, for example the United States, in how to implement reforms. What should be further emphasized is the importance to give everyone in society equal opportunities and make basic education accessible for everyone.

### **Europe’s Contributions to Development Goals: Focus on Education**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace Knight’s Hall.

Moderator: Jakub Kulháněk



Panel Discussion: Šimon Pánek, Zafarullah Khan, Andris Piebalgs

Many places throughout the world – whether developing, transitioning, or mature democracies – have made education a priority on their lists of millennium goals. This is because an educated youth will eventually grow into an educated electorate who fulfill their civic duty; a passionate, critical electorate has the ability to develop a nation further than ever before. Thus, naturally, governments place a high premium on this. However making it a reality, forming a curriculum, and targeting the right age group is something that many politicians debate over, and the panelists exemplified that debate. Each panelist agreed on three main dimensions of education that Europe should support: a focus on primary education, valuing quality over quantity, and supporting more developing nations.

Since the 1960s, secondary education and universities have been the main target for how to improve civic society. While this has had great results on improving critical thinking among this age group, the panelists worried that it was taking attention away from primary education. **Šimon Pánek**, Co-Founder and Director of People in Need, claimed that the best way to end the poverty cycle in developing nations is to reach children while they are young. If they have the ability to question their surroundings earlier in life, they have a better chance of not following in their parent's footsteps. Pánek claimed that empowerment in the sense of education could yield emancipation from poverty; which in turn could result in participation, which would eventually develop into a civic society.

Secondly a movement away from previous generation's emphasis on quantity of those educated to a focus on quality of education could have positive effects, according to the panel. **Zafarullah Khan**, Executive Director of the Centre for Civil Society, stressed the importance of cultivating student's abilities to think critically, consider others, and question their surroundings, rather than simply preaching it to them. Khan appreciates the efforts that the European Union has made in helping Pakistan put human rights in the "heart of Pakistani development." He would like to see more of these values in the schools to ensure their longevity.

In a similar vein, each panelist agreed that Europe needs to do more to help the education systems in developing countries. **Andris Piebalgs**, Former European Commissioner for Development, listed three criteria to end extreme poverty: stable peace, creation of jobs, and then resilience. Resilience, Piebalgs claimed, could only emerge if the nation had an educated populace. He strongly believed that with more education comes a greater respect for human rights, greater faith in the democratic system, and an ability to question and fix problems.

In order to make any of this a reality, the panelists agreed on a few necessary changes that would need to occur. First and foremost, greater funding for education is vital so that systems around the world can improve. Secondly, teachers need to be better equipped to cultivate active, critical, citizens. Both of which seem simple, but may require a shift in values.

### **From Relativization to Radicalization? Democratic Education and the Role of Western Academia**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight's Hall.

Moderator: Irena Kalhousová

Panel Discussion: Randall Filer, Jacques Rupnik, Zafarullah Khan, Mikuláš Bek

What types of curriculum do universities teach, are they embedded with old prejudices held by the 'white-man'? In a globalizing world, it seems natural that these types of questions are being asked, that the western world's higher education systems are being shaken to their core. Is it time for the marginalized views from the past several hundred years to take the forefront in education?

The practice of questioning universities' structure has been going on since their existence; however, this wave brings new and thought provoking questions. The panelists that met mulled over the ideas of 'white curriculum,' the existence of universal values, and the decline of humanities.

All of the panelists came to the conclusion that it is difficult to separate 'white ideas' and universities. **Randall Filer**, President of the CERGE-EI Foundation and Professor of Economics, stated, "the ideas that we think are western... are privileged not because they are western, but because over and over again they produce results" which is something that all cultures can value. Additionally, he noted that schools in developing countries do not consider the origin of theories, as long as they work. **Mikuláš Bek**, Rector of the Masaryk University, added that since universities were created by privileged, white, men they will always be rooted and biased towards that group.

The second topic discussed was if there was still safe, democratic, and open space to discuss hot topics. Filer mentioned professors today have to worry about losing their jobs if they say something controversial, thus their students are not learning how to handle sensitive topics and therefore not acquiring critical thinking skills. **Jacques Rupnik**, Political Scientist, added that there has been an "erosion of common background that used to be called humanities, where you would consider that we all inherited something in common." As a result, it is difficult for university students to talk to one another without misconception; they see themselves as an individual that is unattached to any social construct that previous generations felt innately a part of.

Humanities as a discipline on the decline were something that the panelists spent a significant amount of time discussing. Filer believed that teaching humanities is difficult because of how sensitive it has become, which is a reason for the decline. Rupnik, on the other hand, blamed the development of "pseudoscience" within the social sciences growing popularity. He believed that its visage of a science and its supposed ability to quantify society is more marketable, thus students are drawn to it. **Zafarullah Kahn**, Executive Director of the Centre for Civil Society, stressed how negative the loss of humanities could be to the world. Considering that engineers do not make as good of citizens as humanities majors do, and urging society to renew their value on this type of human capital.

In conclusion, the panelists were hesitant to call the current questioning of universities a crisis; rather, they see it as a natural, cyclical purge to invite new ideas in. Filer mentioned that we should not be worrying over university students questioning their institution at all, because this kind of questioning, critical thinking, and enlightenment is exactly the kind of behavior they should be exhibiting.

### *How Does the Czech Republic Support Education Reforms in Today's Ukraine*

Monday, September 14, 2015. European House.

Moderator: Vladka Votavová

Panel Discussion: Yehven Hlibovytsky, Oleg Derevianko, Michaela Šojdrova, Michal Kaplan

Participants in the panel on the Czech Republic's intervention in Ukraine's reforming educational system discussed the current state of impending legislation in Ukraine, the current interventions by the Czech Republic via the Czech Development Agency, and the integration of modern education and a post-Communist society.

**Vladka Votavová**, Director of the Association for International Affairs in the Czech Republic, began with an empathetic introduction: "I think that Ukraine is undergoing a transformation... and it is a process that is itself very painful, and we, the Czechs, have some experience with that... it is a process that hasn't finished yet [here]." Additionally, Votavová explained her intention for organizing the debate as a way to "collect the speakers and audience ideas on reforms of education in Ukraine and, if possible, to put them into practice."

**Oleg Derevianko**, Deputy Minister of Education and Science in Ukraine, first spoke about education as the most important system "because it changes the future." He pointed out proof of Ukraine's recent independence, including the 65 percent drop in gas imported from Russia and the rise of Hryvnia in the national treasury from \$108,000 to \$45 billion in one year. The next step, he insisted, was education reform. "The biggest and most important thing that we have reached is the implementation of the new law in higher education that was passed last year. The overall process of implementation is very difficult," he said. He referred to a law granting financial autonomy to universities, allowing them to store funds in private bank accounts instead of the old system, where universities had to use treasury accounts.

Derevianko says that by the end of next month, the Ministry hopes to introduce a new framework of education to the Cabinet of Ministers. Overall, Derevianko discussed three laws: educational framework laws, secondary education reform, and laws regarding training schools that will transition the current Soviet style system into a system governed by councils of stakeholders in large regional centers.

**Michaela Šojdrova**, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on Culture and Education, offered advice and words of warning in response to Derevianko: "In the Czech Republic, the first law after our revolution was the law for higher education, and this law works today. It was [well] prepared, [well] voted with a big majority of parliament, and [it] still works." She focused on the risks involved in such a large transition to a decentralized education system, such as the potential exclusion of certain groups of children and inequality in school performance. However, she argued, these are challenges all post-Communist countries have to face. Šojdrova recommended that Ukraine partner with additional organizations, from NGOs to groups of parents, in order to make the transition successful. Her most notable critique was of the tertiary education plan, for which Ukraine has no accurate way of knowing if the new system will function or not. Thus, her focus was on the importance of strategy in education reform, finishing her statement with the reassurance that the European Parliament is "prepared to help [Ukraine with] finance... by our expertise."

Discussing how the Czech Development Agency is currently acting in Ukraine, Michal Kaplan, Director of the Czech Development Agency, stated: "Obviously, the political events in the last years and the conflict which is still going on in eastern Ukraine is the main drive for assistance by the Czech Republic." The CDA program for Ukraine is developed on three pillars: (1) using systemic change to

assist institutions on developing an educational system, (2) assisting universities on autonomous implementation at high standards, using programs like Erasmus as a model, and (3) delivering universities with material assistance and facility/equipment replacement and repair. So far, they have spent \$2 million USD on assistance. He concluded with the idea that the Czech Republic is just one small country, and thus needs to coordinate with other donors in order to accomplish more.

**Yehven Hlibovytsky**, the final panel speaker and the Founder of pro.mova, a think tank focusing on modernization issues in former Soviet countries, began: "We know that democracy is not natural... All the perks in this life, you have to work for. That's why education is crucial in receiving benefits of modern civilization... If we do not have formal education institutions, we cannot become a modern society." He made a point to praise the Ukrainian government in what they are doing, though did not neglect to note opportunities for improvement. Education in Ukraine, Hlibovytsky insisted, should be about children, their values, and their ability to integrate into modern European society. Ukraine must break down the Soviet tradition of mistrust to succeed. The role of the teacher is crucial, he insisted, in bringing up the entirety of the next generation of students with European educational values. However, this will not go without political pushback. Ideally, if the new system is to succeed, Ukrainian students will learn how to decision-make, lead, be led, and share experiences on an international scale.

#### **India as a Democracy Promoter**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace Knight's Hall

Moderator: Hrishabh Sandilya

Panel Discussion: Neelam Deo, Surendra Munshi, Paul Flather

Four panelists gathered at Knight's Hall in Zofin Palace Monday afternoon to discuss the role of India as a promoter of international democracy. The panelists touched on a number of topics but at the end three main points were **revealed**. The first point argued primarily by **Paul Flather**, Secretary General of the Europeum, was that India has been a "terrific democratic success story" however India has failed to by an international promoter of democracy **Neelam Deo**, Director and Co-Founder of the Gateway House, argued the next point which was that India continues to listen to other nations, namely western democracies, when it comes to the issue of spreading democracy. They should, she argued, worry less about what the other countries insist upon and instead focus on their own way to promote democracy. The third point stated by **Surendra Munshi**, Sociologist, is that democracy is something all countries should strive for however, it is not the responsibility of just one country to promote these values but rather the responsibility of all the nations of the world.

Further to the first point, Mr. Flather reflected on the history of India throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how its role has changed. He argued that in the 1950's India believed much more strongly in the exportation of democracy. However, as the century drew to a close India began adopting a much more realist perspective on democracy promotion. This shift towards a more realist ideology has caused Indian foreign policy to become less ambitious and focus more on the internal issues of the countries rather than the international exportation of values.

All panelists weighed in heavily on the second point. Ms. Deo stated that India is in a difficult position because Western democracies tend to send mixed signals about how India should be promoting democracy within the region. To further her point she used the example of United States foreign policy towards India's neighbor, Pakistan. The United States has been allied with Pakistan for 70 years yet Pakistan still does not have a democracy. Why then, should India be promoting democracy in Pakistan when the United States seems happy to ignore it? In addition to this, Ms. Deo remarked that India should approach its promotion of democracy with humility and modesty. This is in contrast to "western assurance" which leaves very little room for discussion. On this topic, Mr. Flather stated that India should no longer look at itself as a victim of the western world. Instead it should be taking strong stances on issues such as democracy promotion. Although the western democracies are sending mixed signals about the topic, India should look inside itself for the answers.

On the point regarding the promotion of democracy being an international issue rather than the responsibility of one country or group of countries. Mr. Munshi argued that the promotion of democracy is not such a simple issue. Violence should never be the precursor in return for spreading democracy. In addition, he points out the hypocrisy of the western world in democracy promotion, "The (Tony) Blair's and (Bill) Clinton's of the world are not going to promote democracy. They are going to promote themselves. If we want to promote democracy, we need Havel."

#### Online Response to Offline Repression in the Post-Soviet Region

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight's Hall

Moderator: Rostislav Valvoda

Panel Discussion: Emin Milli, Bektour Iskender, Filipp Dzyadko, Galina Timchenko

**Rostislav Valvoda**, Director of the Prague Civil Society Centre, explained that it is sometimes a little bit depressing to see how much censorship and political manipulation is present in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. On September 14 a panel at the Forum 2000 conference, gathered to discuss their projects and the innovative ideas they have developed to overcome these challenges facing in their countries.

**Emin Milli**, Director of Online Meydan TV, explained how Azerbaijan has been moving from authoritarianism to totalitarianism. Meydan TV is his media project that has been receiving recognition, both internationally as well as inside the regime. An example of his achievements was a report during the presidential elections. The incumbent President had released the rigged election results one day prior to the real elections. These 'results' were published by his project and went viral globally. After having been jailed twice and dealt with numerous threats directed toward him and his family, he has decided to start the project abroad.

**Bektour Iskender**, Director of Blogging Community Kloop.kg, described the project in Kyrgyzstan. Although Kyrgyzstan experiences more freedom of speech than any other country in Central Asia, it is not to say that the right is not suppressed. His project is first and foremost built around education, and it is online journalism school where all its students can publish articles while they are studying. His foundation has become the third most popular news sites in the country. Regardless of this and quite admirably, the majority of the students are very young, ranging from 14 or

15 years old to 20 years old. They have started covering events outside of Central Asia. There are typically journalism courses organized twice a year, and during the year there are around 40 enrolled students. In order to graduate from this school of journalism, there is no need to take tests or write papers but instead to publish a certain number of articles.

**Filipp Dzyadko**, Founder of the Online Educational Project Arzamas, explained his project in Russia, which, like Iskender's, is also centered around education and specifically in terms of culture. His project is one that is very peaceful, and which he believes has been an amazing process. Recently, there have been cases of very strong degradation of universities in Russia. A main problem there is that the government does not invest enough money in education (three times smaller than the amount that is invested into defense). The goal of his project is to preserve the scientists and teachers who work in the arts and sciences and to teach it to the Russian people. He considers his project to be a sort of library of humanities courses, literature, and the arts, among others. The idea was to record the best scientists by the best directors, film them, and to be the connection between these intellectuals and the general people. He concludes by stating, "in a way, it gives us hope."

**Galina Timchenko**, Executive Director of the Meduza.io, also explained her project. Although it is directed for the Russian audience, the office is in Latvia. She states that they are only sleeping outside of Russia, but that they are working and thinking inside of it – which is an example of the endless opportunities the small internet world can provide. Essentially, her project's main objective is to eliminate what is known as 'white noise.' As a tool of political manipulation, there is often too much false information circling around Russia. What she and her team want to do is separate the real and relevant information from the fake one. Additionally, there are great games incorporated into her project.

With such projects developed by these individuals, there is hope of perseverance in countries filled with political oppression.

#### Radicalization and Education Towards Hatred:

#### Is ISIS Partly a Product of Western Education Systems?

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Forum Hall.

Moderator: Alexandr Vondra

Panel Discussion: Flemming Rose, Gilles Kepel, Mona Siddiqui, Michael Žantovský

"Good education is not just sharing information, but also the formation of character. There is an element of goodness to be loyal to the place you call home, and a way to resolve problems without resorting to violence," said **Mona Siddiqui**, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh, during Monday's panel at Žofín Palace. The panel merged two current controversial issues that aren't often brought up in the same conversation: the rise of Islamic Radical movements and flaws of the current Western education system.

*Should Western education be held accountable for leading to Radicalism and ISIS movements?*

**Gilles Kepel**, Political Scientist and Professor at Sciences Po in France, mentioned the recent massacre in January, in which 12 were killed at *Charlie Hebdo*, a French satirical newspaper company. The armed attack on innocent lives led to a rallying cry of freedom and self-expression from the French public, as Twitter hashtags #JeSuisCharlie and #iamCharlie quickly surfaced online. Kepel stated that while most students in the affluent and middle class suburbs in France gathered and bolstered the movement of unity and self-expression, the students in Saint-Denis, one of the poorest suburbs in France, were either indifferent about the issue or believed the killings to be justified, since *Charlie Hebdo* had “insulted Prophet Muhammad.”

Kepel asked, “What is going wrong with education, and how did Jihadists come about and kill their own citizens?” He proceeded to state that since 2005, a “3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Jihadism” has surfaced which primarily targets young Western-raised people in Europe and in Southern or Eastern Mediterranean areas who quite often have trouble “fitting in.” Thus, the role of Western education is to fix it by promoting diversity and “reeducating ourselves about basic Western and European values.”

**Michael Žantovsky**, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library, stated that “Radicalism is not just present in poor areas, but can be seen in educated areas as well.” He relates the issue to the story of “Jihadi John,” the face of the ISIS beheading videos, who is a well educated man with a computer programming degree from the University of Westminster in London. He believes that Radical ideas in itself is not the issue, but instead, that “education needs to put them in context,” and teach the difference between right and wrong.

*Should we open up the education system to topics that could teach more fundamental morals and values to prevent the spread of Radical and Jihadist movements?*

Mona Siddiqui asked, “Why do so many people who live in the West feel as if they are not citizens of the West?” She explained that to be a true citizen, you need a moral and emotional bind to your home, because without it, your home “just becomes a place where you live.” In terms of education, Siddiqui emphasized that while Jihadists are “killing their countries’ own people, we need to provide education to the Muslim world, to show that there is no global omen.” The “biggest tool that the West has that Muslim countries want is not just freedom, but education,” and Jihadists are exploiting the lack of moral education to convert people to go anti-West.

**Flemming Rose**, Journalist and Foreign Affairs Editor at Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, told the story of Karim Sørensen, a Tunisian born man who plotted to kill Kurt Westergaard, a Danish cartoonist who mocked the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, in 2008. As a student, Karim received good grades, and had moved to Denmark to financially support his mother, but struggled to find his identity and lost his job, leading him to a dark state of absent confidence and excessive drug use. Instead of joining a local mosque, he joined a Radical mosque in Denmark, where he felt a sense of self-identity and comfort, leading him to convert to Radicalism and employ his eventual assassination attempt. Rose emphasized that the Radical mosque took advantage of the fact that “he was young, vulnerable, and [lacked] a sense of purpose in life,” which is a void that Western education must recover to prevent the educated young generation from falling into the wrong path.

## Religion and Education

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.

Panel Discussion: William Cook, Sein Di Da, Cyril Mooney, Rukiye Tinas,  
Moderator: Johanna Touzel

The importance of teaching religion and history of religion was discussed at a talk held on 14<sup>th</sup> of September at the panel *Religion and Education*. “If we do not teach religion, we are teaching a kind of lie,” said **William Cook**, Professor of History and Religion in State University in New York. Professor Cook claimed that there have been many important figures from history, for example Martin Luther and Jan Hus, whose religious views have not been fully emphasized or which have been omitted completely in some textbooks. Therefore changing the narrative on religious education. However, religion is a motivator and influences the way society is going to be shaped, therefore it is important to know and teach about it.

**Sein Di Da**, Monk from Burma and the Founder of Asia Light Foundation, introduced the Burmese educational system. Many of the schools there are monastic, where monkhood is part of the non-traditional educational system. He stated that it is not so easy to change governmental systems regulating the country’s education, monastic schools, however, are much more flexible towards innovative reforms. Though education in Burma is free of charge, these types of schools are also a way to reduce the amount of expenses that parents are supposed to pay.

Sister **Cyril Mooney**, Principal in Loreto Day School in India introduced the methodology used in her school to integrate children from different backgrounds and religions in order to give everyone equal opportunities to acquire education. It was further explained that at the Loreto Day School, a method of mixed classes has been developed – meaning that there are classes where 50% of places are gained by disadvantaged children and another half by those, whose families can afford to pay the expenses. “They were mixed together since they were 4 years old, they all wore same uniforms and had had their meals so their stomachs were full. No one talks about if they, or their parents pay the fees, about their background, all are equal,” Mooney explained.

**Rukiye Tinas**, Assistant Professor at the Eskisehir Osmangazi University in Turkey, explained that Islam is taught in all the schools and the holiness of state along with it, therefore making religion functionalized. Although she acknowledges that other religions are not being taught on the same scale as Islam, she believes they are not being discriminated against in Turkey, however there still remains isolation between them.

Both, Sein Di Da and Sister Mooney agreed that in the schools they are related to, the diversity of religions and cultures is seen as strength. In Loreto School, all holidays for all of religions of the pupils are celebrated and the monastic schools greet other religions, in fact it is expected for students to behave the way their religion has raised them. A common topic emphasized by **Johanna Touzel**, Press Officer and Spokesperson at COMECE, was that the leaders of the religious education must be very cautious not to produce extreme believers, something that all the participants agreed on. It was also pointed by Touzel that religion is not necessarily a problem, but part of the solution and that religious education can be used to teach basic values to build a world of tolerance and mutual understanding.

## Russia: Changing the European Mindset

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight’s Hall.

Moderator: Rostislav Valvoda

Panel Discussion: Konstantin von Eggert, Mykola Riabchuk, Mátyás Eörsi, Kenan Aliyev



On Monday, September 14, 2015, four panelists gathered together to discuss the very important issue of whether or not Russia has been changing the European mindset, and to what extent. **Rostislav Valvoda**, Director of the Prague Civil Society Centre and moderator of the panel, asked a very simple question to which there would be no simple answer, “What are the main leverages that Russian uses, ranging from business to media to politics, to influence European policy?”

**Konstantin von Eggert**, Journalist and Former Editor-in-Chief at Kommersant FM Radio, explained that Russia has a “very defensive way of preserving the current political regime, for the current people to stay in power and their assets for as long as they want to stay. The world view that is being promoted inside Russia by TV and other media organizations... deals with conspiracy theories. If you stand by Russia, Russia knows where it stands. And a third thing that is effective is that this particular message is well, sort of, fueled to different audiences.” **Mykola Riabchuk**, President of the Ukrainian PEN Centre, adds to von Eggert’s comments by explaining the problem in Russian society with a loss of identity, which has at one point been distorted. He also describes Russia’s very effective use of blackmail and exploitation of intellectuals. **Mátyás Eörsi**, Senior Advisor of the Community of Democracies, explains, “There can be many reasons why other countries support the Russian regime, such as anti-Americanism. It is not only extremist parties.” In trying to answer the extent to which Russia has been changing the European mindset, **Kenan Aliyev**, Executive Editor of “Current Time” and Former Director of RFE/RL’s Azerbaijani Service, asks what exactly is the ‘European’ mindset. There is the German mindset for example, he explains, as well as French mindset and the British mindset. In this case, it is likely that Russia be more successful in some countries than in others. He continues to discuss the corruption in Russia affecting Europe, the Czech Republic, and London and acknowledges that despite sanctions, many Russian businesses have not suffered.

The discussion then shifted gears, to whether the European Union has any levers to pressure Russia instead. Von Eggert thinks that it does, but that the issue is whether the EU wants to use these instruments. There is a war of ideas, he explains, where “Moscow is not offering a global, all encompassing, comprehensive vision. People in Russia use ideological constructs as a survivalist tool for the regime to remain where it is.” He then adds that we need patience, and a support of Ukraine, where after 25 years of an identity-less life, it is also, then, an issue of developing Russian identity. However, Eörsi states that “when it comes to Russia, the EU does not exist,” and continues to add that “the European Union cannot do anything until they are given the power to.”

This then means that we must not discuss issues on the national level, but on the EU level and come to a consensus where the Union has the power to change the conditions in Russia and push for democratization. The panel ended very powerfully, with von Egger stating, “one has to be mindful that in this constant exploitation of inferiority complexes and fears, there is no vision of the future.” He continued to explain that in the end, there has to be a positive narrative for Russia, which has to be created inside Russia, by the media, and there should also be support of such initiatives externally. The EU cannot create democracy for Russia, Russia has to do it.

Valvoda concluded the panel discussion by stating that hopefully next year we will not just be able to discuss these tips but actually have things to talk about that have already happened.

### **The Role of Economic Literacy in Democratic Reform**

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Forum Hall.

Moderator: Randall Filer

Panel Discussion: Oleg Derevianko, Ahmed Galal, Sandra Švaljek, Nicos Christodoulakis

Many dilemmas arise when analyzing economics and democracy in conjunction. The panel that met in September 2015 touched on several of them and was able to pinpoint three important conditions to cultivate more economically aware nations. The first condition is encouraging policy makers and economics students to have a proactive mindset in order to stay current with pressing problems and foresee upcoming issues. The second condition is the improvement of communication between governments and their constituency, and economists and the average citizen. Third and finally, the panel took an aggressive stance towards external actors, such as the International Monetary Fund and European Union, claiming that member states know best how to fix their problems and should be given that opportunity.

The ability to identify where a country stands politically and economically and to understand where it is headed requires an acute awareness of the current political-economic climate. **Oleg Derevianko**, Deputy Minister of Education and Science stressed that this was important not only to solve problems, but also keep a nation's constituency content. **Ahmed Galal**, Director of the Economic Research Forum for the Middle East added how important it is to have a stable economy in a developing or transitioning nation. Galal cited the Middle East many times throughout his presentation, showcasing how people want immediate results and that support will follow an ability to yield them.

The shortcomings of communication in the modern world were also a focal point in the panel's discussion. Firstly, they stressed how important it is for the government to clearly and accurately describe an economic policy to the electorate. Although they agreed this is not always possible, thus resulting in a dilemma: should the politician vote for what their electorate wants, or what their electorate would want if they had the necessary information. Galal believed that, at times, economic solutions had to be forced. He made an analogy to a doctor and medicine, because although the medicine does not taste good, it will work and the sick person must have faith. Secondly, the highly academic language that economists use is hindering a more economically educated populace. **Sandra Švaljek**, Former Deputy and Acting Mayor of Zagreb, stressed the importance of using language that everyone, including politicians, could understand so that more people could comprehend the situation.

Finally, the panel discussed recent actions of the IMF and EU, more or less in disdain. **Nicos Christodoulakis**, Former Minister of Finance and Professor at the Athens University of Economics, and Derevianko agreed that their blanket policy making and harsh rules often times does not work. Galal added that "you need to solve economic problem in a context of democracy," and often times the IMF does not respect social and governmental restrictions that do not allow them to meet the IMF's standards. Sandra Švaljek added that, in Croatia, the EU's policy was not specific enough for their small country, and that they often felt lost in the mix. The four presenters agreed that the countries that are dealing with these problems would be able to solve them more easily without interference from the EU and IMF.

### **The Soft Power of China**

**Panelists:** Juan Pablo Cardenal, Neelam Deo, Olga Lomova, Yi-Huah Jiang

**Moderator:** Martin Palouš

The moderator for the roundtable, **Martin Palouš**, President of the International Platform for Human Rights in Cuba and Director of Václav Havel Program for Human Rights and Diplomacy at FIU, opened the discussion by asking the question: what is China's soft power and how does it connect to Chinese culture? Palouš offered his own suggestion on what soft power means which was that the state has the ability to get what it wants through a source of attraction that ranges from culture, ideology and institutions. The roundtable ultimately offered their own suggestions on the meaning of soft power, particularly when discussing China, and made connections to political ideologies, culture, and economic power.

The first to speak on China's soft power in terms of political relations was **Neelam Deo**, Director and Co-founder of Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, India. She spoke on the bad relations of India and China and how this may be due to China's lack of soft power in terms of political and military power. Specifically, China's financial assistance to Pakistan has caused tension between itself and India. However, China has also projected its soft power to try to improve the relationship between the governments by inviting Mumbai to discuss issues pertaining to the G20.

**Yi-Huah Jiang**, Senior Advisor to the President of R.O.C. and Former Prime Minister of R.O.C., suggested that China, a doubtless rising power in the world, worked to promote its culture and political ideologies to the world which is a form of its soft power. Not only does China invest in business and cultural exchanges, it tries to persuade the world that its model which combines totalitarianism in a free market is successful without the liberalization and democratization practiced in the west. The Chinese government has also established Confucius Institute to promote its language in foreign countries. The cultural exchange institutions organized by the ministry of education in China not only creates scholarships, but conveys propaganda through its program - which is why many prestigious universities in the world reject it.

A common thread of agreement in China's soft power was that it had economic might. **Juan Pablo Cardenal**, Journalist, Writer, Lecturer, asserted that the soft power of China is money. "Since China puts out money, it makes the conditions," he said. Combined with the fact that China has not been as transparent as it should be with its financial output, which acts a form of self harm to the country, since it could be a way to explain to the international community "the good things that they are doing in the world."

The roundtable touched on China's soft power in the form of its cultural exchange, ideologies, and economic power. It was mentioned that China was imitating the success of the United States' soft power. Professor **Olga Lomova**, Head of the Far East Studies Department at Charles University, suggested that China's soft power depends largely on the West. We must make sure that we protect and rely on our progressive Western values in a time when "we too easily make economy the highest value in our society," an important point to consider when China is learning from the West. Jiang adds to this idea suggesting that democratic states should not abandon democracy and the rights of basic human equality when engaging with the Chinese market, which is too big to ignore.

### *Transferring Democratic Values: Education and Post-Colonial Migration in Europe*

Monday, September 14, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.

Moderator: Štefan Füle

Panel Discussion: Tarek Osman, Roger Scruton, Mona Siddiqui, Gilles Kepel

**Štefan Füle**, moderator and Former European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy, rephrases the topic of the roundtable as one about "refugees, education, and values." In regards to the panel subject, which focuses on the dynamic between education and

integration, Füle warns, “We need to have the relationship right between our interests and our values.” When our interests outweigh our values, there are complications.

**Tarek Osman**, Author of *Egypt on the Brink* and Analyst, presents two models to explain the Arab world: the Arab Nationalist Model, where the West should be blamed, and the Gulf-Centric Model, where states are cooperative with the West. Osman argues that in the last five years, “Arab state structure across the region has more or less failed.” Linking this to immigration, he explains that the combination of failed structures and growing demographics leave many young Arab people wanting to leave. The author reasons that the current migrations are the “damning result of what we’ve been experiencing in the Arab world in the last 60 years.” Osman also notes, “Exposure is far more important than education. Education is controlled. Exposure is not.”

**Roger Scruton**, Philosopher and Political Scientist, differentiates between present migrations and post-colonialism migration. He argues that currently, there is a “mass migration of people who are fleeing difficult situations or seeing an opportunity for a different type of life.” Furthermore, he contrasts the current Muslim community in Europe with the Jewish population in Germany before World War II. Scruton elaborates, saying that the Jewish community “survived by privatizing their religion; it was a matter of personal learning.” He does not believe this is the case with the diverse Muslim population, saying, “our goal should be to integrate these people.”

**Mona Siddiqui**, Professor of the Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh, argues that students take different messages away from education, and “people come to all kinds of conclusions based on their education.” From the UK perspective, Siddiqui explains that many second and third generation migrants have rebelled against their parents and their cultures. She poses the question of whether or not modern migration will destabilize Europe’s well-ordered societies.

**Gilles Kepel**, Professor at Sciences Po Paris argues, “Much of the anxiety in Europe comes the fact that there is a fear that this model of integration is not working anymore.” Additionally, Kepel believes that we have to be more critical about what we believe is a European citizen. He worries that if the current challenge is not addressed, Europe will become polarized between right-wing policies and radicalized ideology. Moreover, Kepel highlights, “there is an issue of having to be able to be distanced from one’s own sanctities.” Immigrants are clinging to their communities, which give them a false feeling of security; “you do not put trust in education anymore if you do not think education will align with the sanctities of your community.”

In his closing remarks, Füle highlights three main points. First, he emphasizes the importance of education. He cautions, however, that education without integration is ineffective. Secondly, he reminds the panel and the audience that “it is about democracy.” Finally, Füle explains that the right to education, right to asylum, right to security, etc. does not have a hierarchy.

## How to End Segregation in the Czech Educational System

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Austrian Cultural Forum.

Moderator: Ivana Čonkova

Panel Discussion: Jiří Dienstbier, Klára Laurenčíková, Miroslav Klempar, Lenka Karvayová,

“Segregation is unacceptable at any time. It’s a question of human dignity,” said **Jiří Dienstbier**, Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation, during his opening remarks, while everyone around him shook their head in agreement. The panel that met to discuss educational segregation of Roma children in the Czech Republic came to accord that the repercussions of prejudices in Czech society are having a negative impact on the Education system. The discussion centered around three main topics: the difficulties of making ideas a reality through creating and implementing policy, how to restructure the Czech education system, and the importance of stability in government, schools, and policy.

The idea that Roma children should be integrated fully into Czech schools is something that all panelists agreed on; however, difficulty arose when attempting to find a method of implementation. Each panelist had a different view on who should be the main target of efforts in order to cultivate an accepting school environment: **Klára Laurenčíková**, Educational Expert and Former Deputy Minister of Education, wants to create a support staff for teachers, school psychologists for example; **Miroslav Klempar** believed that Roma parents should be the main actors since they know their situation best; **Lenka Karvayová**, Fellow of the Roma Initiatives Office, argued for more training for teachers so they are better able to handle diverse classrooms; and Jiří Dienstbier thought politicians were the most able to make changes, so efforts should focus there. Because the issue is so multifaceted, many believed that a combination of these ideas would have the best effect.

The Czech education structure is also something that was a main focus during the discussion. Panelists converged on the fact that the modern set-up must be altered in order to make long-term changes. **Ivana Čonkova**, a Roma Activist, stressed that although there are currently three types of school systems dealing with Roma and non-Roma children in the same district, none successfully integrate the two groups. Both Čonkova and Karvayová claimed the only way to reach full integration would be to have mixed classrooms, both deeply upset that this is still an issue. Laurenčíková added that the new, more open, school inspectors should have a positive impact on making this change.

Finally, stability is something that each presenter stressed. The relationship that NGOs, activists, and Roma parents have made with policy makers is promising because it allows all groups

to make persistent efforts that will be heard. Although, if the government structure were to change or politicians who did not support this change were elected, most of their work would be in vain. The panelists agreed that the electorate is the only group that can maintain stability, and urged the Czech voters in the audience to elect candidates that will support integration in the education system.

### Internet Education and Democracy

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Goethe Institut.

Moderator: Parth J. Shah

Panel Discussion: Manfred Spitzer, Jan Sokol

In today's ever-changing society, technology has evolved from an efficiency improving tool into a constant necessity that people indulge in, a habit that continues to occupy a large portion of our daily lives. The "Internet, Education, and Democracy" panel, held at Prague's Goethe Institut on Sunday, posed questions regarding the balance between real and cyber life, along with the role and potential dangers of using technology as a driving force for education and democracy.

According to **Jan Sokol**, Politician and Philosopher, education and democracy, along with the real power to make decisions, are fundamentally low-tech and should stay that way. Though he believes that Google and Wikipedia are powerful tools that grant common people the access to find answers to solutions and form a database to share ideas, it is not a necessity. Likewise, advanced technology does not foster independent minds, make responsible citizens, or motivate people to act on their beliefs.

When asked about his views on education, Sokol underscored society's "tendency to see education only as means to obtain knowledge," as the traditional education system that has remained nearly the same over the years has merely taught children the solutions to "closed answers." He believes that core education should lie in motivation, and should strive to "let children experience that working has some purpose and can achieve some goal." In other words, if children are motivated at a young age, they will most likely grow into the active leaders who will start the movements that are necessary to fix the flaws in today's society.

**Manfred Spitzer**, Director of the Psychiatric University Hospital in Ulm, was not shy about his distaste for our current state of technological dependence. As an expert of ongoing brain research for the past 30 years, Spitzer states that the brain constantly changes, especially during the first 20 of life, with formations of billions of synapses. However, he claims that when "you use computers, you

outsource mental activity.” Instead of relying on Google and Wikipedia as primary tools of research and teaching, Spitzer believes that physically engaging in note-taking and obtaining reading material from libraries provide much better results. “Everyone can use Google with their preexisting knowledge,” but “the more you know, the more you can Google.”

Spitzer rejects the common misconception that favors technology as the tool for closing the gap of educational inequality which exists between the rich and the poor. He worries that an effort to cure the lack of education for the poor may result in counter productivity: simply providing computers to the poor children, while the rich are privileged with the best teachers, which cannot be replaced by technology.

Aside from academics, Spitzer also believes that exposure and reliance to technological devices at a young age can stunt social growth since the social brain is the last to develop, and “if you give youngsters a screen, they can’t develop a social brain.” He also argues that a “lack of empathy is created by information technology,” a danger that can pose issues for a society that is leaning towards building stronger moral values and stronger democracy.

In conclusion, both Sokol and Spitzer suggest that the growing presence of the internet could pose great dangers for democracy and education, that technology cannot replace the lesson plans from a great teacher, and that the primary purpose of education should be to form responsible, empathetic and well-informed citizens.

#### New Schools for a Changing Society panel

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Goethe Institut.

Moderator: Jan Macháček

Panel Discussion: Austeja Landsbergiene, Andreas Schleicher, Anders Schultz

“Stop bringing children to the books and start bringing books to the children!” said **Austeja Landsbergiene**, CEO and Founder of private pre-schools such as Six Senses International Preschool and Queen Morta School, during Sunday’s Forum 2000 panel on “New Schools for a Changing Society” in Prague. One of the core issues discussed on the panel was whether technology is the correct path for improving educational standards, student integration, and the classroom environment.

According to Landsbergiene, unlike today's evolving job industry, the education systems remain traditional and outdated. Furthermore, schools should foster individualized learning and allow students to formalize their independent thoughts by moving away from the "segmented one-size-fits-all" educational model. She advocates the integration of new artificial intelligence and technological advances to help change the way classes are taught. For example, in certain locations where forests are not accessible to students, a virtual forest could be presented in class for students to learn and interact with.

Although **Andreas Schleicher**, Director of the Directorate of Education and Skills in the OECD, agreed with many of the points that Landsbergiene mentioned, he disagreed with her notion of the prioritizing the integration of more technology into the classroom. In a traditional classroom setting, students learn and test on their own, but we must teach children to learn collaborative problem solving skills, as the "degree of personalization has nothing to do with classrooms or new technology." "Throwing tablets to people has not made learning better" since "technology can never replace a good teacher."

Addressing the concern of finding a solution to change the traditional system that still relies heavily on testing and regurgitating information, Schleicher proposed an initiative to reshape the ways children collaborate with others, to allow for more diversity and degree of individuality and personalization. He believes schools should provide more study abroad opportunities, similar to the government sponsored trips provided to many Singaporean students, which helps them to learn more about today's pressing social issues, as the "world no longer rewards people for what they know, but more of what they can do."

**Anders Schultz**, Head of Global Citizenship Programme at Rysensteen High School in Denmark, also emphasized that there are strategies other than technology that could be used to revamp the traditional classroom setting, as "we should never make technology a goal in itself" but rather "make learning the main goal." Schultz also challenged the traditional system of testing and grading students based off of the ability to reproduce the information spoken by an authority, since "if we only teach for the test, things will be missed." He argues that it is not about teaching a hundred topics on a superficial level, but rather delving deep into fewer topics while relating them to the outside world. By doing this, education can "create more democratically minded students" who have the "ability to think for [themselves]."

### **Opening Ceremony**

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Prague Crossroad



Moderator: Daniel Stach

Speakers: Jakub Klepal, Ivan M. Havel, Ales Bialiatski, Alex Chow, Leila Alieva, Lilian Tintori

The opening ceremony of the 19th Annual Forum 2000 Conference set a reflective tone for the first of the three day event held in the center of Prague from September 13th through the 15th of 2015. **Jakub Klepal**, Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, initiated the conference by encouraging the audience to share their experiences, hopes and dreams, concerns, and ways of thinking. Consistent with this goal, the speakers who followed Klepal's introduction each shared how their own thoughts and experiences are linked to the main theme of this year's event: Democracy and Education.

"Scholarship about freedom does not necessarily bring freedom into our hearts," remarked expressly skeptical Dr. **Ivan M. Havel**, Scientist and Brother of Václav Havel. Havel provided three options to educate towards democracy: theoretical, empirical, and practical education. Theoretical education about democracy consists of deep conversations in mostly specialized classes led by political scientists and theorists, while empirical education is based on observing actual practices of democracy. The third option, practical education, places students in an "authentic democratic environment," which Havel noted as a way to have "education about democracy... emerges from democracy in education." Despite his initially noted skepticism, Havel indicated that he is optimistic for a system that can successfully teach students about democracy through experiencing democracy firsthand.

Four human rights activists, **Ales Bialiatski**, President of the Viasna Human Rights Centre, **Alex Chow**, Student Activist from Hong Kong, **Leila Alieva**, Political Analyst and **Lilian Tintori**, Activist and Wife of Leopoldo López, followed Havel's remarks with their own experiences and thoughts regarding democracy and education. Though the four activists each come from different backgrounds and locations, they all have the experience of living under an authoritarian government in common.

"Independent Belarus will be a European Belarus," said Bialiatski, who emphasized the power the EU, holds for the possibility of bringing freedom to those in Europe who live under authoritarian rule.

Independence is also a strong motivator for Chow, Alieva, and Tintori, who all highlighted their desires for freedom in their countries by telling stories of friends, family members, and colleagues who were or are currently political prisoners. They each noted that their hope for a better future is stronger than their fear of political imprisonment.

“In the face of tyranny, we cannot rest,” stated Tintori, encapsulating the general attitude of the activists who shared the stage with her and suggesting the importance of democracy and education to a fair, just, and safe environment.

### **Russia: A Non-Democratic Regional Power**

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Embassy of Germany

**Moderator:** *Martin Bútorá*

**Panelists:** *Leila Alieva ; Konstantin von Eggert ; Ralf Fücks ; Yevgeniy Zhovtis*

In introducing the panel, a guest speaker said that it is worrying that Russia contrasts itself from Europe as a different and superior culture. Russia isolating itself from the international community leads to the question: how should the west respond? Martin Bútorá, the moderator for the panel session, *Russia: A Non-Democratic Regional Power*, wanted panelists to focus on both domestic and foreign policy towards its neighbors which lead to a discussion of Russia’s attack on democracy, continuing sanctions, and its relationship with Ukraine.

The panel kept considering Russia’s identity crisis in the session. **Konstantin von Eggert**, Journalist and Former Editor-in-Chief at Kommersant FM Radio, suggested that there is really “no foreign policy” in Russia, in order to emphasize that everything is driven by its domestic policy. Putin is focused in preserving his political regime and the administration is concerned strictly with survival, “which is the key element in understanding the conflict with Russia.” Eggert also mentioned that Russia has continued to move away from democracy when Putin leadership basically offered prosperity in exchange for civic rights. This becomes more problematic considering that after 2012, the regime expressed to its citizens that if you are against Putin, you are against Russia. Cynicism is also a tool in countering democracy, another example in Russia’s dealing with domestic policy and to Eggert’s idea that “without addressing what happens inside Russia, one can’t tackle foreign policy in Moscow today.”

In considering sanctions, **Yevgeniy Zhovtis**, Chair of the Board, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, emphasized that there was a methodological mistake in pragmatism in choosing whether to speak about certain issues in regards to long-term and short-term perspectives in dealing with Russia. This adds to Political Analyst **Leila Alieva**’s assertion that sanctions are an important step in the right direction for the west in dealing with Russia. She pointed out that if the west shows that it is serious in Russia’s behavior in the international arena, it will be a good thing in toughening measures and constructive engagement with the regime. **Ralf Fücks**, president of Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, also suggested that sanctions were the only remaining instrument in drawing political lines that put the Kremlin under pressure, but on the other hand they are reinforcing relationships with the Kremlin and the Russian people by allowing Putin to put the blame on the west. Fücks also added that it was important to stick to principles when dealing with Russia and commended Chancellor Merkel for keeping the European Union together, keeping sanctions going, and offering Russia a political way out the current political conflict, given the fact that “Russia is not so mighty as Putin would like it to appear.”

When it comes to Ukraine, Eggert says that we must support the country through “thick and thin.” While Russia moves away from democracy, the “Ukrainian people are much more ready for reform” and in cooperating with the West. This goes along with Fücks’s suggestion that we should “be firm in conflictive issues especially with Ukraine” and that the west needs to “walk the talk.”

Overall, in light of these three summarizing points of the panel discussion, the panelists suggested a level of positivity and patience when dealing with Russia. Leila Alieva affirmed that Russia has the

potential to have a positive role in the world, and while being affirmative on issues, we should work positively and give positive output. Eggert stated that we need to find out what our interests are first and to not treat Russia like children but to have patience and to put the trust in the people. Fücks also added that we should not “buy the story that Russia is not made for democracy” while looking for every opportunity to strengthen civil society and contacts and exchanges within the region.

### **Visegrad Democracy Platform**

Sunday, September 13, 2015. Hotel Intercontinental.

On September 13, 2015, Forum 2000 organized a closed discussion on the role of the Visegrad countries and their Eastern Partnership movement. The discussion was held under the Chatham House Rule at the InterContinental Hotel in Prague. Representatives included leaders in the journalism and NGO community.

The moderator began the discussion by pointing out that the political picture has become far more diverse since 3 years ago. “There was a goal, timeframe, and eastern partnership summit.” However, political turbulence such as the Ukraine Crisis and Donbass conflict blurred all established assumptions under which the V4 operated. The purpose of the discussion would be to question how to influence the larger EU and optimize coordination between the Visegrad countries.

It was mentioned that one fault of the Eastern Partnerships is the temptation to reduce external support when patrons face internal conflict, such as the current situation in Europe. However, this undermines the notion that democracy is a universal right. As such, it is necessary to establish conditions under which democracy should be supported.

Another point was the need to find natural allies in regions where V4 hopes to establish democratic values. A participant mentioned the 2011 incident in Egypt, where a lack of natural allies resulted in Islamists and military filling the void. Such regimes like Egypt and Azerbaijan are unsustainable, though, the speaker stated. As the oil reserves of Azerbaijan shrink, so will its international political presence. Therefore, V4 should continue asking, who are the alternatives?

The migration policy was also a center of focus during the discussion. A speaker observed that the current reaction is hope based and only discussed within the circles of Human Rights communities. That circle has to be widened before it can be taken seriously. The government needs to start discussing real solutions.

Further points were made on forces undermining the credibility of Eastern Partnerships. One such factor is GONGO's domination of representing the interest of nations such as Azerbaijan. Allowing such behavior in the European Council diminishes the credibility of Eastern Partnership as the "Democratic Values" are built upon the foundations of government funded interests. Contradictions extend to countries such as Belarus when efforts are made to encourage Civil Society while sanctioning the dictatorial government at the same time.

The moderator wrapped up the discussion by emphasizing the need to continue having conversations on optimizing and better coordinating efforts to establish emerging democracies and how such ideas can resonate with the greater EU. He posed the question "what should democratic assistance in Eastern Europe look like from now on? He believes to move forward, there needs to be a clear partnership with NGO's on the ground.

### **40 Years from Helsinki**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.**

**Moderator: Flemming Rose**

**Panel Discussion: Alexandr Vondra, Manuel Cuesta Morua, Martin Bútorá, Steve Crawshaw**

A conversation discussing the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act took place in the Conference Hall of Zofin Palace on Tuesday. The panel consisted of a diverse range of panelists beginning with **Alexandr Vondra**, Director of the Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations, who was in Czechoslovakia when Helsinki was signed, to **Manuel Cuesta Morua** an Activist in Cuba where the spirit of Helsinki continues on. The panelists discussed a number of issues but, by the end of the discussion, one clear conclusion could be made. The moderator, **Flemming Rose**, Foreign Affairs Editor in Jylland-Posten, summed it up, "it is worth going back and looking at this process (of the signing of Helsinki Final Act) and evaluating it. This will help to create a context for trying to figure out what is going on today."

After Mr. Rose began the discussion, he gave the floor to Mr. Vondra who spoke about the inspiration behind Helsinki. He gave three reasons for the signing of the Helsinki Final Act: 1. The Soviet Union was trying to petrify the status quo; 2. The United States was in a position of weakness after the Vietnam War; 3. The policy of *Ostpolitik* in West Germany had been rekindled under Chancellor Willy Brandt. At the time it was viewed by many as an unimportant document legitimizing the power of the Soviet Union. However, the third "basket" of the agreement guaranteed the recognition of human rights within the Warsaw Pact countries. Human rights activists used this third basket as the basis for their argument against the regime.

Next to speak was **Martin Bútorá**, Former Advisor to Vaclav Havel and Sociologist. Mr. Bútorá brought up the fact that the Soviet Union had overlooked the third basket because they were looking to solidify their territorial gains from previous wars. He next brought the discussion to the present, asking what does Helsinki mean for today? He believed that parallels can be drawn between the Soviet Union and the Russian state today. Russia has declared a war on liberal democracy and is trying to dismantle the European Union. There are, however, many dissidents still inside Russia and Helsinki can be viewed as an inspiration to those still fighting for democracy and human rights.

**Steve Crawshaw**, Director of the Office of the Secretary General of the Amnesty International, was the next speaker. Mr. Crawshaw spoke briefly about how workers movements, like Solidarity in Poland, seemed at the time impossible but yet they still happened. He equated it to a workers union being created in North Korea today. Mr. Crawshaw continued to speak in present terms, bringing up the issue of China's violations of human rights. He notes that the Chinese government is gravely concerned with its citizens starting a human rights movement reminiscent of Helsinki. In fact, activists in China have created a document called Charter 08, of course inspired by Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. This document calls for the recognition of human rights by the Chinese regime. Although, it only has a few 100 signatures the document is a symbol of freedom of expression.

Finally, Manuel Cuesta Morua spoke about the situation in Cuba at the moment. He believed that the spirit of Helsinki is certainly alive not only in Cuba but other Latin American countries as well. He stressed that Helsinki and the current situation in Cuba shouldn't be viewed as just a single event but rather a long process, which is leading towards democracy. He also stressed that the democratic world should not be isolating countries under authoritarian rulers. Rather, they should be working to secure human rights, similar to how they did in 1975 with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

### **Democracy in Education through Dialogue Actors**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Goethe Institut.

**Moderator: Bohumil Kartous**

**Panel Discussion: Jana Dlouhá, Jaroslav Anděl, Tomas Sedláček, Ilona Fejer Wiss**

A discussion called "Democracy in Education through a Dialogue of Actors" took place at the Goethe Institut in Prague on September 15. The conversation, which included four panelists from the Czech Republic and one from the United States, was moderated by **Bohumil Kartous**, Head of Communications in EDUin. After a quick introduction by Mr. Kartous, each participant was able to give an opening statement.

First to speak was **Jana Dlouha**, Researcher for the Environment Center at Charles University. Ms. Dlouha spoke about the larger participation of outside actors in the education system in the Czech Republic. She mentioned there is an increasing number of NGOs within the country and a dialogue with these NGOs is developing in a positive way. However, the Czech Republic is still behind other countries in terms of promoting democracy through education and the number of actors involved needs to be broader. In addition, these NGOs need to have more independent than they currently have and the vision regarding the future of the education system needs to be through real change not bureaucratic change.

**Jaroslav Anděl**, Artistic Director of the DOX Center for Contemporary Art was the next to speak. Mr. Anděl began his opening remarks with a couple of interesting videos. The goal of the first video was to point out the flaws in the current Czech education system by interviewing children who seem to be acting more adult than their adult teachers. The second video was a bit more humorous. It showed a monkey who was happy to receive piece of a cucumber every time it gave the scientist a rock. However, when a second monkey was introduced who received grapes instead of cucumbers, the first monkey felt slighted. Through this experiment the video was able to portray that feelings of equality and justice have developed through evolution. Mr. Andel concluded that we are thinking too short term in a view on education in order to improve we must think more long term. Moreover, he stated that we cannot teach democracy when our schools are taught in an authoritarian manner; classrooms must become more democratic.

**Tomáš Sedláček**, Chief Macroeconomic Strategies at ČSOB and Lecturer at Charles University, was the next speaker of the panel. Mr. Sedláček brought some interesting inconsistencies in democracy to light. He pointed out that not everything in a democratic society is decided through a democratic process. For example, judges are not voted on by the public rather they are appointed by an elected official. In addition, these judges do not make decisions based upon democratic principles they make their decisions based upon the laws in place within the society. Mr. Sedlacek points out that this is a positive thing. Another example is the head of the national bank, one of the most important positions in the country, is not democratically elected either. Mr. Sedlacek uses these example to show the limits of democracy and how not everything can be solved via a democratic process.

The final speaker was **Ilona Fejer Wiss**, President of the Behal Fejer Institute in the United States. Ms. Wiss spoke about the importance of education in society and how it is part of our civic duty to improve it. She continued on to discuss a program her company has created call C21 symposium. Originally created in the United States she has brought this system to the Czech Republic. The goal of C21 is to decentralize the education process and work with NGOs in order to achieve the best results possible. She stated that in only 14 years C21 has been adopted by 19 states in the United States and continues to grow.

To conclude the discussion, Mr. Kartous provided three key points. The first, argued primarily Mr. Sedlacek, is that we need to define exactly what democracy is and realize that education is a way to develop democracy. Second, discussed by all participants, is that we

prepare our children in an “authoritarian” system. We need to find a way to democratize education, an example would be student council. The final point, again addressed by all participants, is that we need to understand the obstacles in providing a democratic education for children.

### **Democracy Perspectives in the Southern Mediterranean**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight’s Hall.

Moderator: Michael Žantovský

Panel Discussion: Youssef Amrani, Hussein Shobokshi, Tarek Osman, Malek Adly

On Tuesday, September 15, four Forum 2000 panelists, **Youssef Amrani**, **Hussein Shobokshi**, **Tarek Osman**, and **Malek Adly**, addressed the democratic landscape of the Southern Mediterranean region in the Knight’s Hall of Prague’s notorious Žofín Palace. Moderating The discussion was moderated by **Michael Žantovský**, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library. The discussion was a chance to understand what democracy means to North African countries and how democracy can successfully be achieved in the region.

Beginning the session on a hopeful note, **Youssef Amrani**, Minister-Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, explained his ideas for how Southern Mediterranean countries experiencing conflict can follow countries like Morocco and Tunisia’s lead in developing freer, more liberal societies. His main points of interest were based around compromise, cooperation with the EU, and “[responding] to the expectations of the young generation.” These strategies, according to Amrani, are essential to productive democratization.

Following Amrani’s input was **Hussein Shobokshi**, Businessman and Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, who agreed with Amrani’s points and took his ideas a step further by explaining how democracy can be achieved from a Saudi Arabian perspective. “We don’t like [democracy] to be imposed upon us, forced upon us,” said Shobokshi. He stressed freedom and stability “our way,” making it clear those sacrificing values that are important to the region’s culture would not be productive or fair.

Similarly, **Tarek Osman**, Author and Analyst from Egypt, spoke of the suspicions many in the Northern Africa have of what Europeans define as a civil society. He expressed that those in the Arab World “have lots of suspicion when it comes to politicized values—for the idea of values itself coming into politics.” Because of this suspicion along with the current social transformation of the Arab World, Osman reflected, liberal democratization of the region is a long and complicated process.

**Malek Adly**, Human Rights Lawyer, added to the conversation with his input on how countries in the Southern Mediterranean can take steps toward democratic reform. Staying true to this year’s main theme of Forum 2000, Democracy and Education, Adly described the educational landscape of the region. “Our education system... does not teach democratic values such as tolerance, freedom of speech, [or] freedom of participation.” In order for a democratic environment, he explained, this educational system must be reformed and freedom of speech must continue to be pursued.

Michael Žantovský later mentioned the underlying thought that tied each panelist’s ideas together, which he described as “the impossibility of judging the development in one country by the developments in other countries.” What remained conclusive in this discussion is the fact that countries in the Southern Mediterranean will handle their concerns using strategies that are most relevant to their cultural context.

## Do You Hear Us? The Role of Young Citizens in Today's Society

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Forum Hall.

**Moderator: Tomáš Sedláček**

**Panel Discussion: Karel Schwarzenberg, Max Kugler, Alex Chow, Filip Jelínek**

“What’s the role of young citizens?” **Alex Chow**, Student Activist from Hong Kong, repeated back to moderator Tomáš Sedláček, Chief Macroeconomic Strategist at ČSOB Bank and Lecturer at Charles University in Prague. This question, reflected upon by all panelists, aptly summarized the theme of the discussion.

**Max Kugler**, 18-year-old student from Rysensteen High School of Copenhagen, responded by speaking about his experience as a student at a progressive high school where he and his peers feel “a sense of belonging.” He continued, “Between the students, I see the spirit to think critically and be independent in the choices they make... This [participation] shows something about the Danish school system as a whole... it comes from the self-governing students... You have answered the question yourself by inviting students to participate here,” Kugler told Sedláček.

Kugler and Chow disagreed on how they felt their young voices were “heard”: “[In Hong Kong] you are being systematically oppressed, so your voice can be kind of transparent. Even if you speak, your voice cannot be heard,” Chow said.

“I live in a very different situation because I... live in a system where it’s very important to have quality between teachers and students... Yesterday I had a talk with one of my teachers about my love life,” Max responded to Chow’s sentiments.

Talking about student engagement in big-picture issues, **Filip Jelínek** from the Czech High School Students Union, said, “Liberal democracy cannot work alone. It needs people who understand how society works... to make it better for the future.” He added that, therefore, students need to leave their “bubble” and engage with society in order to democracy to be successful.

The last panelist to speak, **Karel Schwarzenberg**, Former Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted, “There’s much less difference than we think [between the young and old].” However, he pointed out that, in his opinion, “the young people are now a minority in comparison with the old people.” Many of his points revolved around the idea that, though the world has changed, the people and their problems stay the same.

Sedláček discussed the unnatural aspect of democracy, to which all of the panelists agreed: democracy must be protected if it is to thrive. Jelínek emphasized a potential root to the problem, that there is, in fact, a large number of students who are open minded to discussing issues of democracy in order to protect it, “But this problem is that there is no public discussion.”



In his three main points to take away from the panel discussion, Sedláček concluded, ignorance, laziness, and lack of education are the largest obstacles to engagement of the young voice; regardless of modern technology and worldwide connections, the youth do not seem to be a well-connected body of people; and we must protect systems of democracy along with democratic culture, as democracy may lose its effect otherwise.

### *Education for the Future*

**Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Forum Hall.**

*Speakers: Bohuslav Sobotka, Tomáš Vrba*

“A country that does not put democracy and education at the front of its priorities puts itself at risk,” Prime Minister **Bohuslav Sobotka** stated as the first major point of his address on “Education for the Future” at the Forum 2000 Conference. The Prime Minister continued to highlight the world’s most relevant and current issues in his introduction: the effects of climate change on access to crucial natural resources; poverty; lack of access to both healthcare and education; all of which, accumulated, can lead to war or major migration.

While development aid can provide assistance to struggling countries in the form of limited supplies – like food and clean drinking water – good education, Prime Minister Sobotka emphasized, is the ultimate solution for better survival and the first step to progress. He declared his support for one of the UN’s annual goals, which states students should be ensured a standard, basic level of education. “The situation has improved to an extent,” he said, though also admitted that achievements in education are “shaky,” and the goals surrounding widespread education were not ambitious enough at their origins.

In speaking specifically about the Czech Republic’s educational system, the Prime Minister noted that there is room for improvement, regardless of how developed the nation is. It is not always true that education is accessible to all students in the same degree. Thus, Prime Minister Sobotka suggested eliminating barriers surrounding education, such as “religion, ideology, or political convictions,” as the government’s priority, even mentioning Malala Yousafzai as a role model for progressive education.

On the intersection of education and democracy, the themes of this year’s conference, the Prime Minister said economic and social barriers to education are simply proof of systemic flaws in democracy that can affect entire generations. “We must seek answers to the question of how the education system should respond to such a situation [of economic downturn]... It is clear that quality [of education] has to do the relevance of education for life,” he said.

In his concluding remarks, the Prime Minister discussed the challenge of renewing the trust in public school systems. He explained that trust in the school systems will only come after a consensus on the type of education and level of education provided by the government. “Education must mean

good and meaningful prospects, and it is [its] public responsibility for offering such prospects,” he added.

**Tomáš Vrba**, Chairman of the Board of the Forum 2000 Foundation and moderator of the Prime Minister’s address, responded to the closing remarks by asking Prime Minister Sobotka what he considers to be the best prospective education system for the Czech Republic, and what the next steps would be in implementing it. The Prime Minister responded, “We are a relatively rich country, we have a democratic tradition and a good public education system, but for some groups of the population, public education is not accessible enough.” Thus, most of his point revolved around ideas of accessibility. Additionally, the Prime Minister noted the government’s desire to improve the integration of students with various disabilities and other isolating factors from “special schools” into a mainstream education.

In his final words of the discussion with Vrba, the Prime Minister asserted that, for the future, the Czech Republic should focus on creating a stronger link between education and the fields of science and research.

#### Flawed Transitions as a Cause of Rising Security Threats

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Conference Hall.

Moderator: Pavel Fisher

Panel Discussion: Amin Tarzi, Shadi Hamid, Thomas Ruttig

“What is decent life about in 21st century? What is a decent society we would like to build and promote? What kind of lessons can we already draw from our engagement in some of the countries?” were a few of the questions raised by **Pavel Fischer**, Former Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To these questions, finding correct and absolute answers is not an easy task. The need to share the best practices from examples throughout history and to learn from concrete cases how cautious it is needed to be was emphasized during the discussion.

What does democracy actually mean? For many citizens, it is a stand-in for something they think is good, for example job or social security, as was told by **Shadi Hamid**, Senior Fellow in Brookings Institution’s Center for Middle East Policy. At the same time, he continued, how it is possible then that people can turn against democracy so fast, referring also to events developing since the winter and spring of 2011 in Egypt.

“They [people of Afghanistan] don’t say they don’t want democracy, they say if this is democracy which has been pushed on us, we don’t want it,” told **Thomas Ruttig**, Director of Afghanistan Analysts Network in Germany, referring to the ambiguity of the concept of democracy. “What happens if non-democratic government comes to power in non-democratic countries with the help of democratic countries?” was also one of the questions raised by Ruttig.

“If we talk about democracy, blasphemy, apostasy and the rights of women must be accepted,” said **Amin Tarzi**, Director of Middle East Studies in Marine Corps University in the United States. “It is also needed to look into the history, to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in order to understand the “post-earthquake” situation the Middle East is in,” claimed by Tarzi.

Developing democracy and promoting its’ main ideas and values is a long-term process. History shows different ways it has advanced and how some of the transitions are flawed, and these are the practices countries should learn from.

## Challenges and Tasks for Education to Democracy

Moderator: Šimon Pánek

Panel Discussion: Cyril Mooney, Emin Milli

In concluding the discussion on education to democracy for the 2015 Forum 2000 conferences, three individuals gathered together to discuss the challenges we face in the future for education and how this can effect the course of democracy around the world. **Šimon Pánek**, moderator of the panel and Co-Founder and Executive Director of People in Need, asked the two panelists, “Do you believe that proper education can also build the basis for values and ethics in life, or is it more about the reading, writing, and technical orientation?”

**Cyril Mooney**, Principal at Loreto Day School and the 2007 Winner of the Padma Shri Award, stated that if we look back to history, not everybody had access to education. “Now,” she explains, “we are widening the access to education, but in our current situation, our education is lately quantity over quality.” She explains that our society has been fixated on quantity-based methods, such as mass production of consumer materials, which is also affecting our education system. Additionally, she insightfully explains that “we put our children in a very competitive system and expect them to emerge in this society brought up in democracy. But they were not brought up in democracy, since they were brought up to be highly competitive with each other.” Therefore, she believes that we should develop an education system which focuses on competing with one’s own best performance as opposed to that of another. We were all born with different talents, and it is only natural that some might succeed in some areas more than others. Instead, we should compete with ourselves and reach the highest potential possible of the talents we were given. She concludes by urging a we “introduce into our education system this atmosphere of quality. And therefore, we need to redesign or look into our education system.”

Pánek then turns to **Emin Milli**, Director of Meydan TV, and asks him to share his experiences opposing the propagandistic instruments and plans used by authoritarian regimes used to fuel and rule the people. Milli describes his and his family’s experiences with the government in Azerbaijan and his imprisonment. He then focuses on the importance of education, not just as school projects but in the broader picture. “Journalism,” he states, “is another very important form of education so that people can make informed choices in society accordingly.” He concluded that now is the moment to redesign policies - especially in post-soviet regions – and to scale up support for dissidents which in turn would weaken the power of authoritarian governments.

As a conclusion to the panel and the previous discussions of the conference, Pánek explains that there is a new wave of authoritarianism in the world, and there are many NGOs and independent activists being labeled as threats to society. In terms of education, he explains that there are two traps we are facing, one that affects democratic countries and the other transitioning countries. For transitioning countries, with a lack of proper education and western assistance, there lies the trap of falling too far on the left of the spectrum and taking democracy beyond what it should be. Additionally, without a proper level of education, it is difficult to mobilize the public considering they might not feel empowered enough to do so. The second trap, for democratic countries, is that being raised in a democracy has made its citizens already very comfortable in their lives. As a result, there is the risk of becoming passive citizens, and with those come weak leaders. Therefore, it is extremely important we invest in education in schools to teach about democracy and continue the debates and increase of self-confidence. Because, without education, there will be no strong leaders; with no strong leaders, we will have a grave problem in the future.

## Journalism as Public Education

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Goethe Institut.

**Moderator:** Daniela Retková

**Panelists:** Amin Madaqiq ; Oana Serafim ; Gordana Knezevic

The roundtable, Journalism as Public Education, included some of the most well respected journalists from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in the international community. **Daniela Retková**, the moderator and Special Programs Coordinator at DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, focused on the importance of concentrating on democracy in journalism. By asking if journalism is powerful enough to push a large group of people to an ideology, the panelists produced responses that in essence advocated for rising the “power of the powerless,” investing in human rights and mutual communication, and countering the elites.

Panelist **Amin Madaqiq**, Director of RFE/RI’s Service to Pakistan, works at FATA, Federally Administered Tribal Areas bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan. Throughout the long history of the area’s lawlessness and violence, people had no other means of getting unbiased information. A need to have counter propaganda from the free world arose. A 24 hour channel was established in 2011, “resulting in a dangerous mechanism that started to intimidate.” But regardless, Madaqiq and others working with him feel that educating the public is far more important than the threats that they face. One particular program is designated for women where it “calls them to achieve the goal of higher education and invite them to talk in their own language about women empowerment.” Public health is also a main concern in an area that has seen decades of war and produced no health service. The sick do not know how to get to a doctor or how to recognize signs of serious illness. Overall, their aim is to inform the people about the principles of democracy.

**Oana Serafim**, Director of RFE/RL’s Service to Moldova, dealt with different challenges in journalism but with the same international importance. Particularly, when addressing media corporations that seek to please their owners, it does not matter if “you have colorful press since it doesn’t mean you are speaking about free media.” Private channels cause division in interest between the owner of the press and the interests of the people they should be serving. This causes the press to “serve the commercial interest of the owners,” while compromising information that a majority of a state needs to know. This is why local journalists “need the freedom to not heed to higher order” instead of political parties playing a “kind of game” where they appoint the directors of radio stations. According to Serafim, the most important thing is to bring together people of different opinions and not persuade a certain type of perspective.. One program illustrates how she and her team attempt to communicate and give the marginalized in Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, a chance to express what they are feeling by putting cinematic tools to great use.

**Gordana Knezevic**, Director of RFE/RL’s Balkan Service, offers her own insight saying that there are things that media can not do. While much can be done in educating the masses, it can not change events in history. The best that can be done is to teach people that they have the power to change things. One of her programs, Perspektiva, for instance, exposed differences in what is happening in the education system and the division of hatred and fear in Bosnia between Muslims and Catholics. The result showed the prejudice that has been produced, not by parents but by politicians, and the implemented challenges in removing these barriers.

The panelists advocated for journalism that helps raise the “power of the powerlessness.” This means investing in mutual communication, active citizenship, and self-confidence that counters elites. The panelists laid out the standards for traditional journalism and the accountability, responsibility, and integrity that accompany it, while being amongst the best in setting the example for journalists in the rest of the world.

## New Horizons in Cuba-U.S. Relations

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. European House.

Moderator: Enrique ter Horst

Panel Discussion: Francis Sánchez, Barbara Haig, Martin Palouš, Manuel Silvestre Cuesta

On September 15, in Prague's European House, a discussion took place speculating what is to come regarding relations between the United States and Cuba. As the two countries have recently undergone a re-establishment of diplomatic relations, panelists agree that the nations will continue to experience further change. Moderator Enrique ter Horst, Diplomat and Former UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights (Venezuela), emphasized that this discussion takes place at an "optimal time when the vast majority of the Cuban people want a return to democracy and full respect of human rights." As the international democratic community will also play a primary role in this debate, it has become increasingly imperative for them to reach agreement on a set of incentives and penalties in order to move this process forward in a peaceful and democratic way.

The first speaker, **Barbara Haig**, Deputy to the President for Policy and Strategy, National Endowment for Democracy, highlighted the importance of democratic pluralism and discussed the presence of electoral reforms in the near future: "In March 2016, Cubans will hold the next National Party Congress. This will produce reform for electoral law for the national assembly, which will then choose the next leaders of Cuba." She also touched on the topic of the impact of Cubans in Washington: "The more we listen to Cubans, the less political demonization there is. The more Cubans come closer and define their agenda, the closer we are to helping them."

**Martin Palouš**, President of the International Platform for Human Rights in Cuba and Director of the Václav Havel Program for Human Rights and Diplomacy at Florida International University, agreed that these steps are the beginning of a very good process. He supported the idea of approaching the problem from an international perspective: "Our role is to help Cubans become more effective; this type of integration is a good step in the correct direction." While he agrees that there must be focus on the relationship of the Cuban government with other national governments, he urges the priority should be placed on first repairing the relationship between the Cuban government and the Cuban people.

**Manuel Cuesta Morúa**, Activist and Founder of Progressive Arch, also commented on this stressed relationship, speculating what needs to be done: "For the first time in many years, we have moved from resistance to proper politics. We now have a unique opportunity to participate in the political process of normalization because we have the support of the international community. The next step is to create a feeling of urgency that we need to unite ourselves."

Finally, **Francis Sánchez**, Writer, Journalist, and Director of *Árbol Invertido* Magazine, served as the voice of the people in Cuba during this debate: "Change cannot be brought by another foreign government, but must come internally." He and the rest of the panelists ultimately remain optimistic about what the future holds. Sánchez articulated this sentiment in the last moments of his speech: "We lived in the times of the Cold War, and for the first time, we feel that something new is coming. People have regained hope. There is a strong civil will in Cuba, and it has been brought back to life."

### **Reform or Perish**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Goethe-Institut.

**Moderator:** Marianne Abrahamsen

**Panelists:** Gintaras Steponavicius; Parth Shah; Václav Hampel

Although the name of the panel session might be overly dramatic, the moderator, Marianne Abrahamsen, from the Institute of Educational Science, University of Southern Denmark stated that it is important to consider what is at stake if an educational system of a nation lacks needed reform, economic growth, and a democratic state of thinking. She laid out considerations important for

education reform such as reforms being based on real thinking and growth through free choice, human production that will produce right qualifications for labor markets, and committing to further to a educated electorate who know their rights. The discussion of the roundtable ultimately touched upon competition vs. free choice, how the government should spend their money in education, and the importance of encouraging creativity and autonomy in schools.

The topic of free choice and competition in education was a common theme in the panel. **Gintaras Steponavicius**, Former Minister of Education and Science in Lithuania, stated that higher education is the most challenging thing. "There is no single recipe," he said when dealing with education reform. He continued to state that every institution should realize that all students are different, and should be cautious in making sure they get the right answers before they embark on something. Therefore, the most important idea for him was that he does not believe that education should have too much regulation and that one must "trust and empower the teachers, parents and students," and give everyone a chance of a quality education. According to **Parth Shah**, Founder President of the Centre for Civil Society in India, reform is best when parents and students are able to choose which college they want to go to regardless if it is a private or public institution. For him, abolishing the distinction from private and public schools is a course of action that would benefit his country, and eliminating the battle of public vs. private so that all schools will attract and become available to all students.

On the role of government spending in education, **Václav Hampl**, Member of the Senate of the Parliament, is adamant in raising salary levels in teaching, especially for teachers in elementary and high school. Low salaries are related to the larger problem of the low esteem of teachers in the profession, when it should be respected and praised. Steponavicius believes that educational financing should be the master of the business model from a day to day basis that is on par with Sweden. Shah also touched upon this topic, saying that the best motto is to "fund students not schools." Parents and students should be able to choose which school they would like to go to and the department of education will fund their decision and pay the fees.

Creativity and autonomy in schools was a topic agreed upon by the panelists. On the question of providing students and parents the right qualifications for the future job market, Steponavicius said that creativity is the answer and should be encouraged on all levels of education, and new ideas and approaches should be supported. Václav Hampl added that a combination of creativity and the ability to constantly learn is the key aspect of future prosperity, while it is also important to provide students with the knowledge of what has already been created. He also suggested that there should not be a technical managerial approach from teachers but that the central idea in education should be the personality in the teacher and how they can explain the subject and, perhaps more importantly, the type of example and challenges they provide for the students.

The panelists focused on free choice for parents and students in education, how government should be funding their education system and the importance of encouraging creativity in the classroom. Abrahamsen outlined the framework for education reform stating that it is important that reforms are based on real thinking and growth through free choice, when "human beings and citizens are seen in earthly production to secure prosperity of the country." Education, seen as a modern concept, should commit to a "democratic people and develop citizenship where people know their rights."

## **Rights of Migrants in Democratic System**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. Žofín Palace, Knight's Hall.

Moderator: Steve Crawshaw

Panel Discussion: Péter Balázs, Mona Siddiqui

“Migration is the problem of the day,” said **Péter Balázs**, Director of the Center for European Enlargement Studies and Former European Commissioner for Regional Policy. He warned that the situation on the southern border of Hungary is increasingly dangerous with the strong push of the migrants and resistance from Hungary. He explained that because few countries are the actual entry and target points of migrants, it's easy for uninvolved countries to shirk their responsibilities.

He cited successful, historical examples of individual countries extending invitations to migrants, and encourages the European Union to do so. He states that most migrants already have in mind where they want to go, leading to popular destinations like Germany to expect over 1 million migrants. Individual countries extending invitations would greatly alleviate tensions and concerns.

“It's not about how many refugees each country takes, but rather how Europe will represent human rights,” stated **Mona Siddiqui**, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at University of Edinburgh. She pointed out that if Central Europe plans to emerge as the new face of Europe, they must ask how they tackle new challenges will reflect upon Europe.

“What are the alternatives?” Ms. Siddiqui posed to the audience. She clarifies that she is not advocating the acceptance of all migrants, but encourages people to realize the human facets of the issue that most refugees are educated and do not want to leave their homes.

“We need to think beyond our immediate safety” if we want to defend universal human rights, she exclaimed. She further warned that the battle is not only with the migrant crisis on the ground, but also an intellectual battle. The latter is a much harder battle to win. The alternatives could antagonize Europe on the world stage as close-minded and hypocritical. At the end of the day, Ms. Siddiqui stated, this has to be a collective effort.

Mr. Balázs offered his closing thoughts on the issue, explaining that only 10% of Syrians refugees are actually leaving the region and the expected migrants in Germany comprise less than 1% of the population. He believes the numbers are manageable, financially and logistically. He says, “This will prove whether integration can work with people outside of the European Union.”

#### Russian influence on Educational System In Post-soviet Space

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. European House

Moderator: Ivana Skálová

Panel Discussion: Taus Serganova, Volodymyr Kazarin, Alyona Marchkova

In a non-democratic environment, teaching young children to be patriotic is absolutely critical in order to ensure a loyal electorate in the future. Russia is no exception. Since the years of the Soviet Union, there has been a legacy of this type of education system in the satellite states. This involves teaching a patriot-military curriculum above any other educational disciplines. The panel that met discussed the nature of this system, its realities, and shortcomings. Three topics underlined the discussion: the bureaucratic nature of the system, the goals of the system, and the future it might bring.

Russian-influenced spaces are “bureaucratic machines” as **Volodymyr Kazarin**, Head of the Department for Russian and Foreign Literature, Taurida National Vernadsky University, stated in his opening remarks. Between the paperwork and set curriculums, there is little actual room for schools

and universities to exist in their natural nature. Teachers and professors are not able to say their views, they are not able to build relationships with their students, and schooling actually loses its status as a priority. “The main job of the teachers,” recalled **Taus Serganova**, Russian Activist and Professor at Grozny State Oil and Technological University, “is to be a translator from the government to the children so that they can digest, mull over, and soon believe what the Russian government wants them to.”

The nature of educational systems in post-soviet space is a purely patriotic one. It is centered on creating loyal citizens above all else. No matter their intellectual knowledge, skills, or well roundedness – as long as they love and respect their nation, the government is pleased. **Alyona Marchkova**, Activist and Director of the Information and Legal Center Apriori, claimed that education is completely based on “military-patriotism,” whether it is in formal schooling, after school programs, or summer camp.” She used the example of her own homeland, citing an incident where Russia bought the independent state’s textbooks for their elementary schools – and they only contained information about Russian history and concepts. This kind of schooling will lead to a warped national identity in the upcoming generations, which is something the panel as a whole was concerned about. In fact, her country’s youth is actually starting to identify as Russian. In her homeland and Taus Serganova’s as well, they Russian influences is slowly squeezing out other foreign languages and cultures to create a more homogeneous society that will be easier to control.

What the panelists feared the most is what these systems will bring in the future. Because of their worries about the actual knowledge and skills being instilled in their youth now, they are not hopeful for the future. Furthermore, many of the best, most aware, intelligent, and active youth are leaving the region looking for better opportunity elsewhere. Thus, what will happen in the future, who will lead, who will solve problems? These are questions the panel could not answer, but would like the audience to consider. Volodymyr ended his comments by stating that “the system cannot exit, it’s degrading.”

### **European Identity from the Perspective of Václav Havel**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015. New York University Prague

**Moderator: Pavel Fischer**

**Panel Discussion: Irina Lagunina, Radko Hokovský, Jiří Pehe, Johanna Touzel**

On September 16, 2015, Forum 2000 moderator **Pavel Fischer**, Former Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, set the tone of the panel at New York University Prague, by providing some historical background: “Three years ago, European representatives spoke about global responsibility; Europe must first prioritize appeasing its own neighborhoods.” In the context of the migration crisis, the panel analyzes and developed the major criterion of international engagement: respect of their needs as human beings regardless of their belief; taking into account the fears and apprehensions of Europe; and developing a long-term perspective, as the short-term is influenced heavily by the media.

**Irina Lagunina**, director of RFE/RL's Russian Service, Radio Svoboda, engaged the audience with evidence of such damaging broadcasting, displaying some Russian social media attacks on refugees.



When these posts become increasingly viral, they further “distort reality and undermine democracy,” harming European values and morale. **Radko Hokovský**, Executive Director of the European Values Think-Tank, highlighted this phenomenon: “The word ‘refugee’ is now a negatively-connotated term. Historians should address this issue; instead of pushing them away, Havel would have said, ‘These refugees need our help.’ He would call for a responsibility to act, instead of waiting for refugees to come to him asking for assistance.” As there is currently no moral leader in Europe, Lagunina emphasized that “there needs to be someone to step up to define clearly European values.”

The concept of “world peace” was proposed with the Schuman Declaration in 1950; however, as Johanna Touzel, press officer and spokesperson at COMECE (Belgium), explains: “It could not start with democracy because everyone antagonized each other, and this absence of democratic approach has carried with us to modern times.”

As democracy is a “complicated business,” **Jiří Pehe**, Director of the New York University Prague, maintained that “people have to learn to be democrats by implementing civil society as a cushion.” The integration process so far has been met with extremely technical attitudes and execution methods. While this practicality is important, Pehe stressed that it “does not help general sentiment that these refugees are human beings, as there is a predominant lack of compassion and empathy from Central Europeans.” He partially attributed the development of this mindset to the Communist regime period, in which xenophobia was frequent: “To protect yourself, you must block out everyone else and hide in your own cocoon.” Nonetheless, **Johanna Touzel**, Press Officer and Spokesperson at COMECE, remained optimistic about the future: “Perhaps now we are ready as citizens to talk about a European democracy; maybe it is a task for our generation to start this work in progress.”

The discussion dissected how Havel would have thought about contemporary European society. Many facets of the European public sphere were addressed, including the prevalence of lies, manipulation, and mistrust. However, the panel eventually comes to a conclusion that there is a citizen-based approach that should be invested in to fortify European values.