



Press release
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“Populists will wreck us,” said Jeffrey Sachs in his speech during the closing day of the Forum 2000 Conference.

The 24th Forum 2000 Conference was held online from Monday to Wednesday.

Prague, October 14, 2020 – Today the third day of the Forum 2000 Conference, which takes place online this year, ended. The event was attended by a number of civil society leaders, politicians, economists, activists, and journalists, including President of the Republic of China (Taiwan) Tsai Ing-wen, the leader of the Belarusian opposition Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Tomáš Petříček, Prague Mayor Zdeněk Hřib, Professor of European Studies at Oxford University Timothy Garton Ash, the EU Human Rights Special Representative Eamon Gilmore, human rights activist Garry Kasparov, US economist Jeffrey Sachs, and Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee David Harris.

Jeffrey Sachs addressed the global impact of the pandemic and its impact on the development of democracy in the world. *„This is really the most unusual moment that the world has faced since the start of Forum 2000, arguably really since WW2. ... Our government is not driving by science, they are driving by emotions or silly debate,“* he said and added: *“Populists will wreck us.”*

In his Tuesday's speech **Garry Kasparov** focused on democracy in relation to the rapid development of modern technologies. *„The tech is evolving far faster than our political process. ... We have to concentrate on the advantages of democracy and to make sure that those who are trying to interfere in the process from outside of the free world, whether it's Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, they have to be met by the most decisive response,“* he said.

The leader of the Belarusian opposition, **Sviatlana Tsikhanovskaya**, at the Forum 2000 explained the attitude of the Belarusian public protesting against the rigged presidential election. *„We want respect from our authorities, we want our rights to be respected as well, we understand that we are nobodies to our authorities.. ... Nobody is striving for power, we're only thinking about future Belarus without violence, without regime, without dictatorship,“* Tsikhanovskaya said.

The very importance of the Forum 2000 conference was highlighted by Taiwanese President **Tsai Ing-wen** in her opening speech on Monday: *„During this pandemic, one of the most critical issues we must resolve, has been how to safeguard our democratic system and way of life. This is what makes this gathering of Forum 2000 so important.“*

Photos from this year's conference can be downloaded on this link:
<http://bit.ly/Forum2020fotky2020>

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THE FORUM 2000 FOUNDATION

The Forum 2000 Foundation fulfills Václav Havel's legacy by promoting democratic values and respect for human rights, developing civil society and strengthening religious, cultural and ethnic tolerance. It provides a space for world leaders, thinkers and courageous individuals from all walks of life to share and discuss these key issues.

THE FORUM 2000 CONFERENCE

The Forum 2000 Foundation pursues the legacy of Václav Havel by supporting the values of democracy and respect for human rights, assisting the development of civil society, and encouraging religious, cultural and ethnic tolerance. It provides a platform for global leaders, as well as thinkers and courageous individuals from every field of endeavor, to openly debate and share these critical issues.

THE FESTIVAL OF DEMOCRACY

The Festival of Democracy is an accompanying program of the Forum 2000 conference. It includes lectures, discussions, exhibitions and other cultural or educational activities that complement or further develop conference topics. The Festival of Democracy is attended by non-profit organizations, universities and many other partners of the Forum 2000 Foundation, who present their activities to the festival visitors and offer a different perspective on the issues addressed by the main program of the Forum 2000 conference.