



Press release, October 5, 2017

The 21st Forum 2000 Conference commences in Prague this Sunday

This year's Forum 2000 Conference with the title *Strengthening Democracy in Uncertain Times* will take place on October 8 – 10, 2017 in Prague and other cities around the Czech Republic. Forum 2000 Foundation will welcome over 100 significant delegates, including Albert II Prince of Monaco, and former Austrian President, Heinz Fischer.

The Conference will react to the challenges faced by the current democratic world. Democracy is at a historic juncture, confidence in the institutions is in decline, and democracy is weakening. Quite paradoxically, democratic processes often become the vehicle for the rise of authoritarians and the undermining of democratic structures. Traditional liberal visions are losing power in the turbulent development of the world. Is it the end of democracy as we know it? Are we at the threshold of a systemic change? Did democracy lose the ability to respond to changes in society and technological progress? And how can these negative trends be answered? This year's Conference will seek the answers for all of these questions and many others.

Guests of the conference can visit dozens of lectures and discussions. Among the confirmed delegates are Albert II, Prince of Monaco; former Mayor of Reykjavik, Jon Gnarr; Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro; Human Rights and Environmental Activist and former President of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed; lecturer on Political Sciences at Harvard University, Yascha Mounk; President of Radio Free Europe, Thomas Kent; professor of Islamic and interfaith studies, Mona Siddiqui.

Coalition for Democratic Renewal

On October 10, 2017, the Coalition for Democratic Renewal (CDR), a global group of intellectuals, activists, and politicians, will officially be launched with the aim to help change the intellectual and cultural climate of society for the benefit of democracy. CDR was created in response to the expansion of power and the influence of authoritarian regimes and the simultaneous weakening of democratic systems from within.

"It is the coalition's aim to systematically and intellectually defend liberal democracy. It wants to help formulate convincing arguments, influence public debate, and seek solutions to the challenges that democracy faces," says Jakub Klepal, Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation and one of the CDR signatories. The founding document of the Prague Call for Democratic Renewal was signed by more than 180 personalities, including Garry Kasparov, Francis Fukuyama, Bernard-Héni Levy, Nathan Law, Anne Applebaum, Ivan Havel, Rosa Maria Paya, Timothy Garton Ash, and Richard Gere.



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Festival of Democracy

This year's Forum 2000 Conference will offer an accompanying program in the form of the Festival of Democracy, which will take place on October 5 – 12, 2017, in Prague and other cities. The highlight will be the Festival Monday, which will take place on October 9, 2017, in the square of Václav Havel (piazza of the National Theater) and will offer its visitors a rich and varied program. Over three dozen nonprofit organizations, including the Forum 2000 Foundation, will be present on the piazza to present their activities. There will be a number of exhibitions and visitors can gain “strength” at the snack stands. Visitors can enjoy a masked satirical parade by the Velvet Carnival, stand-up comedy by the School of Improvisation, or a music program by several bands, such as the Cuban dissident band, Porno Para Ricardo, or the Czech band, Johannes Benz. From October 2 to October 12, 2017, a photographic exhibition on the life and legacy of the Tibetan Dalai Lama will be displayed on the piazza, as well.

A Forum 2000 mobile application has been prepared for visitors and can be downloaded on the Conference website. The main program of the Forum 2000 Conference is traditionally held in the Žofín Palace and Goethe-Institut. Selected events will take place at the Prague Crossroads, the European House, and other venues.

The Forum 2000 Foundation fulfills the mission of Václav Havel by promoting democratic values and respect for human rights, developing civil society and strengthening religious, cultural, and ethnic tolerance. Leading world personalities, thinkers, and courageous individuals from all walks of life are provided with a space where they can share these critical themes and discuss them openly. For instance, Prince Hassan bin Talal, Yohei Sasakawa, Bill Clinton, Oscar Arias Sánchez, His Holiness Dalai Lama, Henry Kissinger, Simon Sores, Mario Soares, Shirin Ebadi, Sergei Kovaljov, Nicholas Winton, and Madeleine Albright have all been delegates of the Forum 2000 Conference in the past.

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