



**Europe's
Futures**

Europe's Futures Symposium 2024

**29 May to 2 June 2024
Cres, Croatia**



Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen
Institute for Human Sciences



ERSTE
Stiftung



UNIRI

Wed, May 29

Arrivals day

20:00 Dinner **Restaurant Riva**

Thu, May 30

09:15

Welcome and introduction by Ivan Vejvoda and Hedvig Morvai

09:30-11:00

Kadri Liik: Democratisation in Russia: what does the perestroika experience tell us about post-Putin future?

Panelists: **Grigorij Mesežnikov, Dimitar Bechev**
Moderator and Panelist: **Tom de Waal**

For many long-time observers of Russia, the country has changed beyond recognition. The façade of democracy has been dropped, the cynicism and impunity of the powers that be has ballooned, while society's ability and willingness to resist seems minimal. Russia has now returned to habits that, during the perestroika era and 1990s, it was determined to leave behind.

Why is that? Was it inevitable? What was it that facilitated Russia's democratisation and liberalisation in the perestroika era, and what has happened to these forces? Can democracy make a come-back when Vladimir Putin loses power? What – if anything – does Russia's perestroika-era experience tell us about its potential post-Putin future?

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00

Ieva Česnulaitytė: Democratic Innovation and Citizens' Assemblies in the landscape of geopolitical instability

Panelists: **Oana Popescu Zamfir**
Moderator and Panelist: **Ivana Dragičević**

Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and Western Balkans is in a particularly vulnerable moment as it faces a wave of populism, polarization, and growing public disengagement against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. One of the antidotes to the weakening of democratic infrastructure and resilience is genuine democratic innovation.

Over the last few decades, governments across the world have been reaping the benefits of Citizens' Assemblies: a democratic model, grounded in ancient Athenian practices

that has been widely implemented and embedded into public decision-making as new institutions connected to power and underpinned by a legal basis (OECD, 2020).

This session is going to examine to what extent Citizens' Assemblies have been taken up by governments and civil society in Central and Eastern Europe & Western Balkans. It will explore the contextual challenges and peculiarities as well as opportunities for these emergent forms of democracy in the region and reflect what could be done to support and foster an enabling environment for them to thrive.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Restaurant **Belona**

14:00-15:30

Europe 2024: turning right?

Primer on Slovakia: **Grigorij Mesežnikov**

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:30

Ilir Deda: The Impact of the EU-Sponsored Basic Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on Stabilization, Democratization, and Integration of the Western Balkans

Panelists: **Ioannis Armakolas, Stefan Lehne**
Moderator and panelist: **Kristof Bender**

Against the background of the Russo-Ukrainian war, and the Israeli-Palestinian war, the security challenges are increasing rapidly in the Western Balkans. The main instability is the volatility between Kosovo and Serbia, and threats for implosion of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The EU and the US sponsored an agreement on path to normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia in late 2022. This agreement was "accepted" by the Parties in February 2023, and its Implementation Annex the following month. A year later, the agreement is not being implemented, while the relations between Kosovo and Serbia are approaching the red line, at a moment when the West is focusing on its own elections.

This session will examine the key obstacles to peace in the Western Balkans, the blockage on implementation of the EU-sponsored agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, and focus on key short and long term necessary objectives to both ensure long lasting peace the Western Balkans. It argues that only an accelerated EU integration can ensure peace, stability and democracy in the region.

20:30 Dinner **Restaurant Riva**

Fri, May 31

09:30-11:00

Katy Hayward: The democratic function of the University in a world of 'AI everywhere'

Panelists: **Sanja Bojanić, Luke Cooper**
Moderator and Panelist: **Bernd Marin**

The institution of the University is fundamental to liberal democracy in two ways: providing the *education* of good citizens and the *evidence* for good policy-making. Through education and evidence, the University enables the governed to hold the exercise of power in check, such as through alert political participation, rigorous accountability, civic imagination and independence of thought. These qualities are essential to the protection of civil liberty.

We are increasingly enmeshed in a world of 'AI everywhere'; few sectors, institutions or professions are unaffected by Artificial Intelligence and they are becoming increasingly dependent on it. The effective substitution of Artificial Intelligence for human intelligence potentially poses a threat to democracy.

This session considers what is imminent with respect to the AI challenge to the University's democratic function, and what might be done to protect it. It argues that because AI lacks the capacity for judgement, the human capacity for discernment is potentially redemptive.

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00

Vladimir Arsenijević: Down Njegoševa Street

Panelists: **Ivana Dragičević, Zoran Nechev**
Moderator and Panelist: **Hedvig Morvai**

Analysis of undue influence of the state on the steady rise of the culture of violence based on the example of the extreme ideological and aesthetical pollution of the urban landscape in central Belgrade committed by the far-right and hooligan groups

The lecture will attempt to explain both the hidden and also not so hidden mechanisms of undue influence of the state and its most prominent representatives regarding the evident steady rise of the culture of violence prevailing in modern day Serbia, using the example of Njegoševa street, a lively artery of the central Belgrade municipality of Vračar. Known as "the street of linden trees and coffee shops" and symbolically highly important for the development of the urban culture of the Serbian capital, this street, otherwise scattered with cafes, restaurants, beer gardens, wine bars, various stores and public buildings, has in the past several years been heavily saturated with numerous graffiti, stencils and wall paintings, all of them clearly belonging to the selfsame far-right, nationalistic, militaristic and warmongering paraphernalia.

The horrific mass murder that was committed in May last year by the 13-year old student in the primary school in the close

vicinity of this street only proved the point and finally raised the question of what living in such an environment does to our children's overall well-being and mental health. Unfortunately, most of the proposed solutions emerging within the society were far from promising and thus far nothing appeared that seems to guarantee a positive resolution of such state of things. And there is a sound reason for that.

By analyzing the most prominent writings on the walls which line both sides of Njegoševa street, I attempt to prove that, disregarding the subjective question of whose hand holds the spray can, it is the Serbian State which is the main objective violator and the Serbian Society which is the sole victim of this long-drawn-out criminal activity that for a very long time (ever since the end of the last of the wars of the 1990's) has been holding the whole population in its tight and vice-like grip.

13:00-14:00 Lunch Restaurant **Belona**

14:00-15:30

Hanna Shelest: Right-wing politicians and Russo-Ukrainian war: between populism and national interests

Panelists: **Piotr Buras, Balázs Jarábik**
Moderator: **Valbona Zeneli**

The last decade characterized with the raise of the right and far-right politicians in Europe has witnessed several serious crises that could define the future of the European continent. Crisis of Atlanticism, Brexit, migration crisis, Russian-Ukrainian war all required a univocal position and hard political choices.

If the migration crisis or position regarding EU followed a general ideological line, the reaction towards Russian aggression against Ukraine and further European involvement presented the whole spectrum of positions. Hungarian accommodation of Moscow position is in contract with Italian full support. Marine Le Pen's broken ties with the Kremlin in contrast to Alice Weidel's embrace of Russian politicians.

As the elections to the European Parliament most probably will bring more of right and far-right politicians to power, it is important to analyze what determines their positions on foreign policy issues and especially Russian-Ukraine war. When populism prevails over national interests or what puts forwards their increased cooperation with Moscow.

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:30

Alberto Alemanno: The European Union: Can there be ownership by the People

Panelists: **Rosa Balfour, Nikola Dimitrov**

Moderator: **Heather Grabbe**

After 70 years of unprecedented socioeconomic integration, the EU continues to evolve through processes that largely marginalize citizens' input. It remains virtually impossible for an EU citizen – not to mention its residents – to express his/her desire for a change in the Union's direction and hold its institutions accountable. If the post-Lisbon EU has constitutionally embraced a model of democracy under which citizen participation forms an additional source of legitimacy for the Union in its day-to-day decision-making, this has not translated into a major transformation in how citizens participate in the Union's democratic life, on EU Election Day and beyond. This is concretely due to the absence of both a pan-EU electoral party system and pan-EU public sphere. This research project examines existing reform proposals and suggests new ones aimed at democratizing the EU project at a critical time for the continent.

20:00

Bus ride from **Hotel Kimen** to dinner venue restaurant **Bukaleta**, Loznati.

Return ride at ca 23:00.

Sat, June 1

11:00-14:00

Europe's Futures Alumni Network Session

Inputs: **Boris Marte, Hedvig Morvai**

14:00-15:00 Lunch Restaurant **Belona**

19:00-20:00

Erhard Busek Memorial Lecture

Contestation - The New Dynamic Driving Global Politics

By **Wolfgang Petritsch** Introduced and moderated by **Ivan Vejvoda**

20:00 Dinner Party at **Moise Palace**

Sun, June 2

Departures

Participants

Europe's Futures Fellows and Alumni

Rosa Balfour, Stefan Lehne, Piotr Buras, Alida Vračić, Bernd Marin, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Péter Krekó, Julia De Clerck-Sachsse, Ioannis Armakolas, Dimitar Bechev, Valbona Zeneli, Oana Popescu-Zamfir, Zoran Nechev, Luke Cooper, Heather Grabbe, Ivana Dragičević, Balázs Jarábik, Thomas de Waal, Kristof Bender, Nikola Dimitrov, Alberto Alemanno, Vladimir Arsenijević, Ieva Česnulaitytė, Ilir Deda, Katy Hayward, Kadri Liik, Hanna Shelest, Karolina Wigura

Austrian Institute for International Affairs / Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation

Wolfgang Petritsch

ERSTE Foundation

Hedvig Morvai, Marianne Schlögl, Boris Marte

University of Rijeka Center for Advanced Center for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe

Sanja Bojanić, Tina Perić, Stefania Petris, Petar Bojanić

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Gazela, Pudar Draško

Institute for Human Sciences

Katharina Hasewend, Ivan Vejvoda, Felix Filnkössl, Dino Pašalić