INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

AGENDA

TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER
Venue: Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, Jēkaba street 6/8, Riga

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

9:30 - 10:00 Opening remarks

Eduards Smiltēns, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia
Kristīne Zonberga, Director of the Civic Alliance - Latvia

Keynote speaker:
Marja Ruotanen, Director General, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity at the Council of Europe

10:00 - 11:15 Panel discussion I. Impact of the regional security challenges and multiple crises on the sustainability of democracy

Unprecedented levels of civic activism and government efforts, in light of multiple crises and a changing geopolitical situation, bring together stakeholders from all sectors—politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs, the academia, and CSOs. At the same time, security challenges and the circumstances of decision-making processes in crisis can impact the transparency of decision-making. Discussions about regulations on "foreign agents" threaten the sustainability of the CSO sector, limiting freedom of association and freedom of speech by smear campaigns against journalists and activists.

The panel discussion will address challenging examples reshaping the sustainability of democracy in the region. Furthermore, the panel will discuss the minimum standards of an enabling environment for the rule of law and civic space.

Moderator:
Inese Vaivare, Director of the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation

Panellists:

- *Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)*
- *Katju Holkeri, Head of the Governance Policy Unit, Public Governance Department, Ministry of Finance of Finland*
- *Ana Aptsiauri, Legal Advocacy Officer and Project Coordinator at Equality Movement*
- *Ivo Rollis, Board Member of the Centre for Public Policy Providus*

11:15 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30 - 13:45 Panel discussion II.
From local to global: boosting the role of local and national level CSOs in multilateral institutions

Within the changing environment of civic activism, individuals are playing an increasingly important role and new forms of citizen engagement and association are emerging. This raises the question of how multilateral institutions can reshape their ways of working and become more open to local and national CSOs. While decisions on the sustainability of democracies are made at the national level, strengthening the citizens' capacity to safeguard democracy remains of high importance.

The panel discussion will examine successful examples of national and local organisation representation on a regional and global level, as well as suggest proposals to improve the transformative change of the partnerships in the Council of Europe.

Moderator:
Andris Gobiņš, President of the European Movement – Latvia, member of the European Economic and Social Committee

Panellists:
- *Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Deputy Speaker of the Saeima and Head of the Latvian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*
- *Anastasia Crickley, founder of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre in Ireland*
- *Małgorzata Szuleka, Board Member and Head of Advocacy at Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights*
- *Oleksandr Galkin, Director of Right to Protection*

14:15 - 15:30 Panel discussion III. Social resilience: a tool for inclusive, safe and sustainable local communities

The concept of resilience has proven instrumental in tackling adversity and security risks, from individual to state levels, especially in times of geopolitical turbulence and uncertainty. Any ongoing or future crisis is likely to evolve within an increasingly contested information space. As a result, states and societies are compelled to formulate comprehensive cross-sectoral responses. To successfully manage the ongoing 'permacrisis' and respond to the needs, concerns, and expectations of their citizens, while preparing for the crisis, governments have no choice but to craft and implement smarter and more inclusive strategies than ever before, based on a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

Meanwhile, recent years have demonstrated that grassroots initiatives can grow into nation-wide movements of solidarity and civic activism. Non-governmental actors are increasingly serving as trusted messengers to reach vulnerable groups and audiences that distrust government politics. Simultaneously, they contribute to building more inclusive and cohesive societies while reducing inequalities.

The panel discussion will present and analyse several outstanding examples of resilience-building initiatives from civil society to governments, to inter-governmental institutions, including examples from Ukraine, and generate discussion on the future of social contract by working together and preparing for something the world is probably yet to experience.

Moderator:
Linda Jākobsone-Gavala, Board Member of "I Want to Help Refugees"

Panellists:

- *Kateryna Rashevska, human rights activist, Legal Expert and Lawyer at the Regional Centre for Human Rights*
- *Dr. Rihards Bambals, Head of the Strategic Communication Department at the State Chancellery of Latvia*
- *Justina Kaluinaitė, Policy and advocacy officer of the National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisation Platform of Lithuania*
- *Elmārs Pļaviņš, Senior expert on international military civil cooperation, National Armed Forces*

15:45 - 16:00 Conclusion

Jānis Citskovskis, Director of the State Chancellery of Latvia
Inese Vaivare, Director of the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation

16:30 Departure for inspirational local sites visits - social enterprises, CSOs and civic initiatives