



Brussels, 26 - 27 November 2018

Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights 2018 "Democracy in the EU"

Democracy is, with fundamental rights and the rule of law, one of the three pillars which shall forever anchor the European Union.

The 2018 Colloquium aims to reaffirm the centrality of Democracy as a core value common to the European Union and all its Member States, and to look at how to renew democratic engagement within the European Union and the European societies. This debate is timely also in the context of the upcoming European elections and on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

High-level national and European policymakers, international organisations, civil society organisations, media and social media representatives, the world of business and education, legal professionals, and many others, will work together to identify avenues to foster free, open and healthy democratic participation in an era of growing low turnout in elections, populism, digitalisation and threats to civil society.

Approached from the perspective of the value for citizens of democratic activity in general and the upcoming European elections, the wide range of topics for discussion will include the promotion of broad participation and representation as a condition for inclusive democratic societies. We will look at opportunities and challenges brought about by digitalisation for an informed, fair and pluralistic democratic debate and discuss the negative impact of propaganda.

Discussions will also highlight the role of political parties, civil society organisations, platforms and other stakeholders in mobilising citizens, raising awareness and fostering critical reflections about matters of public interest. Concerns at the "shrinking" space for civil society and the key role of rights defenders for vibrant democracies will also be addressed.

This Colloquium meets as roundtable event where all will discuss on an equal footing. Each session is introduced by short impulse statements or testimonies to trigger the discussion. The floor is then immediately opened.

Meeting venue: Palais d'Egmont, rue des Petits Carmes, 8bis – 1000 Brussels (Belgium) - <http://www.ccegmont.be/en>

Website: [Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights 2018](http://www.ccegmont.be/en)

Twitter: #EU4DEMOCRACY

Day 1 - 26 November 2018

PLENARY SESSIONS – MODERATOR: CLAIRE DOOLE

13:00 – 14:00 **Registration** (entrance 8bis) **and coffee** (Atrium)

14:00 – 14:30 **Welcome and introduction** (Europe room)
Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission
Josef Moser, Austrian Minister of Justice

14:30 - 15:30 **Resilient and inclusive democracy in Europe** (Europe room)

Plenary A

This session sets the scene for the colloquium. Participants will exchange on the essential building blocks of our democracies and discuss the democratic values that bind us together as Europeans, looking at what we share, where we differ, what makes democracy real for citizens and the challenges we face currently. From there the discussion will focus on what these challenges mean for democratic legitimacy nationally and at a European level, and how solutions could help address such challenges, including public disaffection with politics and decreasing voter turnout. It will explore the question of what motivates citizens to exercise their political rights as voters but also as candidates from a practical perspective and the opportunities to increase the inclusion and electoral participation of young people, women, mobile EU citizens, as well as other underrepresented groups.

Impulse statements by:

Anne Applebaum
Gianni Buquicchio

Institute of Global Affairs, Director Arena project
President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe

Followed by a roundtable discussion

15:30 – 16:00 **Coffee Break** (Atrium)

16:00 – 17:00 **A free and strong civil society for a vibrant democracy** (Europe room)

Plenary B

This session will look at the way civil society organisations relate to democratic governance as part of the system of checks and balances governing our European democracies and the value they add as representatives of citizens' interests. Participants will, in particular, exchange views on the current impact and role played by civil society organisations in terms of fostering the health of democracy across EU Member States. On that basis, they will discuss and explore challenges faced by civil society actors in fulfilling that role, and share experiences on public authorities' engagement with civil society. Building on a better understanding of responsibilities and challenges, participants will explore avenues to further support the development

and sustainability of the civil society space.

Impulse statements by:

Michael O'Flaherty	Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
Veronika Móra	Director of Okortars Foundation and founder of Civilizacio
Sanjay Pradhan	CEO of the Open Government Partnership
Andreja Metelko Zgombić	State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia
Luca Jahier	President of the European Economic and Social Committee

Followed by a roundtable discussion

17:00 – 18:00

Free and fair elections and an informed and pluralistic democratic debate
(Europe room)

Plenary C

This session will discuss the opportunities and threats behind the increasing use of social media in the democratic life of citizens and the election process. The participants will discuss the importance for our democratic societies of enabling a pluralistic and well informed public debate, and ensuring fair and secure elections. An open public sphere, free from fear and undue influence, goes hand in hand with a level playing field for political campaigning and electoral processes the public trusts. We will examine the positive examples of engagement and the use of social media, as well as the threats linked to the exploitation of our multinational European electoral process, and the abuse of algorithms and artificial intelligence to boost micro-targeted campaigns, echo-chambers and/or spread disinformation.

Impulse statements by:

Věra Jourová	European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality
Moez Chakchouk	Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO
Christopher Wylie	Cambridge Analytica whistleblower
Jo Leinen	Member of the European Parliament

Followed by a roundtable discussion

18:00 – 18:30

Closing

Closing remarks: Towards European elections 2019 – engaging European citizens and safeguarding the integrity of the election process

Claude Moraes, Member of the European Parliament

18:30 – 19:30 **Networking reception** (Marble Gallery)

19:30 **Dinner** (Hall of Mirrors)

Šimon Pánek, Executive Director, People in Need

Day 2 – 27 November 2018

MORNING PARALLEL SESSIONS I

7:45 – 8:45 **Registration** (entrance 8bis) **and coffee** (Atrium)

9:00 – 10:30 **Resilient and inclusive democracy in Europe** (Orange room)

Parallel Session I.a: Supporting broad participation and representation in democratic societies

Moderator: *Sergio Carrera, Director of Network of Academic Experts on Citizenship Rights*

European democracies face many challenges, including on the policies needed to ensure that all voices can be expressed and heard in the democratic debate and the political system, as well as to secure a resilient electoral process and high turnout. Following a period of disaffection with politics, particularly at the European level, we have seen a resurgence of interest in political activity, yet we continue to find challenging to engage with the public and secure public buy-in at the European level. This session will look at the responsibility that the institutions share with the Member States and other actors in the political scene to make sure our democracies remain trusted, legitimate and inclusive in terms of participation and representation. It will discuss ways to include and involve citizens, and make European politics relevant and accessible. It will also consider issues connected to exercising and retaining the right to vote when moving to another Member State.

Impulse statement by

John Morijn	Emile Noël Global Fellow, New York University Jean Monnet Center
Karl-Heinz Lambertz	President, European Committee of the Regions
Assya Kavrakova	Executive Director, European Citizen Action Service
Tena Šimonović Einwalter	Chair, Equinet Executive board
Niels Tubbing	Policy Advisor on Adult Education, Integration and Citizenship, City of Amsterdam
Laurien Coenen	Chair, Flemish Youth Parliament

Followed by a round-table discussion

9:00 – 10:30 **A free and strong civil society for a vibrant democracy** (Europe room)

Parallel Session I.b: Public authorities' engagement with civil society: obligations, challenges and promising practices

Moderator: *Heather Grabbe, Director of the Open Society European Policy Institute*

This session will look at challenges public authorities face in empowering, protecting and supporting civil

society organisations and their positive duty to foster a regular and transparent engagement with them. Participants will also discuss current responses, trends and practices and their impact on civil society actors and democracy (including funding cuts, stringent regulatory frameworks and limited participation in decision-making). Participants would then explore how public authorities can establish a fair, open and constructive dialogue with civil society, and preserve and promote a conducive environment for civil society organisations to perform their legitimate role and functions.

Impulse statement by

Anna Rurka	President, Council of Europe Conference of INGO's
Niels Engelschiøn	Chairman, EEA and Norway Grants Financial Mechanism Committee
Inita Paulovica	Deputy Director, Department of Public Administration Policy, Latvia State Chancellery

Followed by a round-table discussion

9:00 – 10:30 **Free and fair elections and an informed and pluralistic democratic debate** (Arenberg room)

Parallel Session I.c: **Ensuring fair elections and a pluralistic political debate as well as freedom of expression online and offline – a thematic overview**

Moderator: *Ann Mettler, Head of the European Political Strategy Centre*

This session will examine how stakeholders, including state actors, can ensure both a favourable environment for free and fair elections and respecting the primary obligation of state and other actors to refrain from interference and censorship in relation to freedom of expression and media freedom while at the same time addressing the spread of disinformation campaigns as well as extremist narratives. The panel will explore how the relevant policy areas interact and how any emerging policy and or regulatory gaps can best be addressed. It will consider the role of state actors – such as data protection, electoral, media, consumer and advertising authorities – and private entities including media platforms and campaign groups, in doing this.

Impulse statement by:

Urška Umek	Council of Europe: Steering Committee on Media and Information Society
Tarlach McGonagle	Senior Researcher and Lecturer, Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam
Thomas Myrup Kristensen	Managing Director for EU Affairs and Head of Facebook's Brussels Office
Marietje Schaake	Member of the European Parliament
Maria Donde	Head of International Content Policy at United Kingdom Communication Regulator (Ofcom)

Followed by a round-table discussion

10:30 – 11:15 **Coffee break** (Atrium and Hall Arenberg)

MORNING PARALLEL SESSIONS II

11:15 – 12:45 **Resilient and inclusive democracy in Europe** (Orange room)

Parallel Session II.a: Supporting a secure electoral process

Moderator: *Damian Tambini, Director of the Media Policy Project, London School of Economics*

This session complements the discussion on participation and the democratic debate by exploring concrete practices to ensure secure elections. Along with a resurgence in public interest in politics, we have witnessed efforts to exploit advances in technology and changes in public behaviour to manipulate elections and undermine public confidence in democratic institutions. From well-resourced cyber-attacks on party candidate selection processes to threats beyond our borders, the new challenges confronting the guardians of fair elections have multiplied. The legitimacy of our democracies depends on the public's faith in the integrity of elections, and the foundation of increased participation must be a robust electoral system.

Impulse statement by

Julian King	European Commissioner for Security
Kajsa Ollongren	Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Minister of Interior and Kingdom Relations
Carmen Romero	NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy
Liisa Past	Next Generation Leader at the McCain Institute for International Leadership
Andrea Jelinek	Chair, European Data Protection Board

Followed by a round-table discussion

11:15 – 12:45 **A free and strong civil society for a vibrant democracy** (Europe room)

Parallel Session II.b: Towards a strengthened civil society space: avenues for self-empowerment, coalition and capacity building

Moderator: *Birgit van Hout, Regional Representative for Europe, UN Human Rights Office*

Building on discussions in the previous session, this session will look at ways for civil society organisations to strengthen their resilience and empower themselves, including by better demonstrating their contribution to healthy democracies, by increasing their visibility and by building alliances for change. Discussions should enable participants to: (i) identify existing challenges affecting civil society's capacity and ability to effectively advocate on matters of public interest, raise awareness and positively engage with the public; (ii) engage in a critical reflection on their causes, including within their own constituencies; and (iii) explore avenues to

overcome those challenges, including through monitoring the civil society space, developing coalitions and building capacity.

Impulse statement by:

Jean-Marc Roirant	President, European Civic Forum and Chair, Civil Society Europe
Balázs Dénes	Executive Director, Civil Liberties Union for Europe
Lora Vidović	Chair of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions

Followed by a round-table discussion

11:15 – 12:45 **Free and fair elections and an informed and pluralistic democratic debate** (Arenberg room)

Parallel Session II.c: **Practical steps to ensure that the online world supports an informed and pluralistic democratic debate**

Moderator: *Nataša Pirc Musar, lawyer and journalist, former Chair of the Slovenian Data Protection Authority*

Free and fair elections depend on an open and pluralistic public debate supported by an independent media. This session will examine how online technologies can exacerbate old challenges, such as bullying and intimidation, and create new ones, such as using data about voters and new technologies, including micro-targeting techniques, algorithms and artificial intelligence, to affect the outcome of elections and public confidence in them. The discussants will look at the opportunities and threats posed by these new technologies, including the issues of pluralism, cross-border access to political news, disinformation and manipulation, and consider what new solutions may be needed, and what different actors can do.

Impulse statement by

Frederik J. Zuiderveen-Borgesius	Researcher, Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam
Emily O'Reilly	European Ombudsman
Tanit Koch	Member of the Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity
Wojciech Wiewiórowski	Assistant Supervisor, European Data Protection Supervisor

Followed by a round-table discussion

13:00 – 13:30 **Closing** (Hall of Mirrors)

Concluding remarks

Kate Gilmore

Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights,
United Nations

Tiina Astola

Director-General, DG Justice and Consumers,
European Commission

13:30 - 14:30

Networking lunch and End of the Colloquium (Hall of Mirrors)