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How to Support Democracy against
Autocracy

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE 2023**

14 September 2023

Information about Speakers and Panelists

Keynote speeches: 9h40 – 10h30

Democracy vs Autocracy – The Global Battle for Democratic Rights and Freedom

Roberto Cardiel Heycher is the former Executive Director at Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE), where he also led the Department of Electoral Training and Civic Education. He completed doctoral studies in Strategic Planning and Technology Management and Complex Systems Engineering through MIT programs, and postgraduate studies in Citizenship and Local Government. He participated in electoral observation and technical missions across 42 nations.



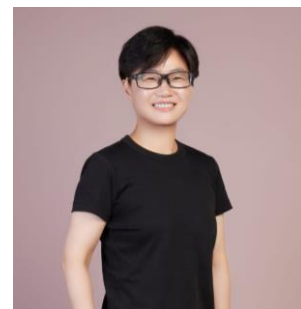
Tana Foarfa is the Director of Europuls - Centre of European Expertise, the 2022 national winner of the European Charlemagne Youth Prize for organizing the largest forum on EU affairs in Romania, the EUROSFAT Forum. She works as an economic and monetary affairs advisor in the European Parliament. She obtained her master's degree in European Studies from KU Leuven and has authored more than 30 articles on EU affairs published in national and European publications.



Iryna Venediktova is the Ukrainian Ambassador to Switzerland and was between 2020 and 2022 prosecutor general of Ukraine. She obtained her PhD from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv on the subject «Protection of interests guaranteed by law in civil law». She has authored more than 100 scientific and scientific-methodical works published in national and foreign publications. In 2019 she was elected as an MP of the National parliament where she led the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Legal Policy.



Andrea Yi Shan Yang is the deputy Secretary-General of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). She obtained her master's degree of Politics and International Affairs from Royal Holloway College, University of London. She previously worked in the Ministry of Culture, Taichung's Bureau of Cultural Affairs, the Parliament, and the Office of the President in 2007.



Panel discussion with academic experts: 11h00 – 12h30

Democratic Resilience in Different Threatened Environments. How can these threats against Democracy be countered?

Clara Egger is assistant professor of Global Governance at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. She also serves as a board member of Democracy International and as the Chair of the International Organization section of the International Studies Association. Her research concerns the impacts of crises on democratic resilience and the analysis of (de-) democratization processes in a global comparative perspective.



Simona A. Grano is Senior Lecturer at the University of Zurich and Director of the Taiwan Studies Project at UZH. She completed her Ph.D. in Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy. She regularly contributes to Swiss and global media through articles, commentaries, and interviews.



Magdalena Maria Solska is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Fribourg. She currently directs the research project «Political opposition in post-communist democracies and authoritarianisms», funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (PRIMA Grant) in the period of 2023-2027. Her research focuses on political systems after communism and specifically on forms, strategies, and institutionalization of opposition in selected countries in Central and Eastern Europe.



Lightning Talks: 13h30 – 14h30

How Democracy Can Be Supported on a Local Level through Grassroot Initiatives

Workshops: 14h45 – 15h30

Collecting Learnings on How Democracy can be Supported against Autocracy

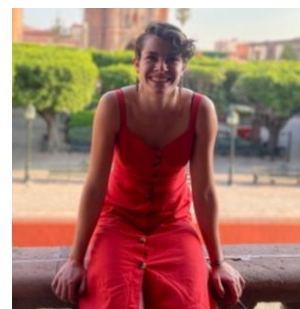
Joe Mathews is a journalist who writes about global democracy. He is Democracy editor and syndicated California columnist at Zócalo Public Square, professor of practice at Arizona State University's School of Politics and Global Studies, and author of two books. He is the founder of DemocracyLocal.org, a forthcoming publication on local democracy. He becomes an honorary fellow of the Berggruen Institute later this fall. From 2008 to 2023, he served as co-president of the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy.



Yaroslav Minkin is a cultural activist and human rights defender from Ukraine and founder of the youth organization STAN. Since 2014, he has been working as a trainer and facilitator on human rights and intercultural dialogue. Nowadays, he is coordinating the post-war recovery educational program Young Diversity Ambassadors that aims to empower a new generation of activists in Ukraine who support integration of IDPs, pluralism and diversity on the grassroots level and strengthen social cohesion in war-affected society.



Itzel Riba works with the electoral training, citizen participation and civic culture at the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE). She studied psychology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and was host coordinator for the 2023 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy in Mexico City.



Anda-Ilona Serban has been working in the NGO sector for over 14 years and has recently taken on the role of Executive Director of CeRe, Resource Centre for Public Participation. She has so far coordinated advocacy projects and campaigns for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017) in Romania, Ban All Nukes Generation Europe, United Way Romania, and UN Youth Romania. She is an alumna of the Professional Fellowship Program of U.S. Department of State and for several years served as a jury for the Innovation in Politics Awards.



Concluding Panel: 16h00 – 17h00

Cooperating Across Borders to Make Democracies Stronger

Rita Biconne is the Head of the Implementation Unit of ALDA, the European Association of Local Democracy. She is an experienced manager, strongly committed to promoting an integrated and participatory approach to local sustainable development. She holds a PhD in Urban and Territorial Planning and a master's degree in architecture of the University of Florence.



Corinna Borer, Dr. rer. nat. has been working as a research assistant and project manager in the Department International Projects in Education at PH Zurich since 2012. She implements project initiatives and evaluation projects in Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine, among others, and is responsible for designing the information structure and management in cooperation with internal and external interfaces.



David W. F. Huang is the Representative of Taiwan to Switzerland. He obtained his PhD from the University of Oxford and was associate professor at the National Taiwan University. He served as Deputy Representative in Washington and currently leads the «Délégation culturelle et économique de Taipei» in Bern.



Caroline Vernailen is a political scientist from Belgium and lives in Germany. She is the Global Manager for Community Building at Democracy International. Her work focuses on networking organizations and people working for direct democracy around the world. Her goal is to collect best practices from around the world and organize networking and learning opportunities for people working on direct democracy and citizen participation issues.



Moderators

Stefanie Bosshard is the director of the Swiss Democracy Foundation. Her focal points are the connections between education, participation and democracy, the engagement of young people in direct democracy and the promotion of a culture of democratic discussion. In previous positions, the educational scientist (MSc in Education, University of Bern) was director of the Federation of Swiss Youth Parliaments and worked in education policy, among others for the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER.



Bruno Kaufmann is a broadcast journalist based in Sweden. He obtained his master's degree from the University of Gothenburg on the issue of transnational democracy and has authored many articles and books including local, national, and international «Democracy Passports». He is a member of the board at the Swiss Democracy Foundation and Democracy International. Between 2008 and 2023 he was co-president of the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy.



Stefanie Schuepbach is the deputy director of the Polit-Forum Bern and the curator of the Democracy Tower with changing exhibitions and discussions on current political topics. She has a strong interest in connecting arts and democratic dialogues in order to foster participation and social cohesion. Previously the business economist and art historian worked as the managing director of the Solothurn Film Festival, cultural coordinator/project manager at the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington D.C. and in art galleries.





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