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AGORA FORUM 2018

The Future of Democracy

1-3 December 2018

Hotel Alion - Agia Napa, Famagusta

European University of Cyprus - Nicosia

*The Forum is organized by **Agora Dialogue** in cooperation with **Athens Development and Governance Institute (ADGI- INERPOST)***



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INTRODUCTION

[Agora Dialogue](#) in cooperation with the [Athens Development and Governance Institute](#) (ADGI- INERPOST) organizes the **Agora Forum 2018** on “**The Future of Democracy**”.

The Forum, which will take place in **Cyprus** on **1-3 December**, combines the approach and methodology of the non-for-profit organization **Agora Dialogue** with the expertise of the policy Institute **ADGI-INERPOST**.

The objective of the first **two days of the Forum** is to enable open and informed non-partisan debate and discussion of important contemporary issues. The format is one of moderated **round-table discussion** in which a small group of participants from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to consider challenging concepts and to both share their views and experiences and respectfully listen to those of others.

During the first two days of the Forum discussions will be held in English.

The third day will be **an open session** at the European University of Cyprus with the aim to present the results of the previous two days to a wider audience.

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PROGRAMME

Saturday 1 December

Colloquium

Hotel Alion- Agia Napa, Famagusta

14.00-20.00

*In a world that calls for swift decision-making and favors efficiency over quality and substance, the **Agora Dialogue** approach provides participants with the opportunity to take a step back and reflect anew on their decisions and actions on a number of crucial topics.*

The **Colloquium** on the first day will be devoted to a round-table discussion, under the guidance of a skilled moderator, of four carefully selected readings and two presentations which offer a foundational philosophical and ethical perspective relevant to the broader themes of the Forum. Focus on these readings will help to inform and stimulate discussion. They introduce key themes and challenge participants to consider alternative views as well as to practice the skills of practical reasoning and respectful debate. More specifically, the readings offer a starting point for reflection on complex social, political and economic issues.

In order to provide an atmosphere in which discussions can take place as freely as possible, Chatham House Rules are applied.

We hope that participants will leave the Colloquium with a deeper understanding of the values that inform their thinking and a greater appreciation of the importance of creative thinking, reasoned debate and shared dialogue.



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Sunday 2 December

Roundtable Discussions

Hotel Alion - Agia Napa

9.00-17.30

During the **second day of the Forum**, the same small group of participants will be invited to take part in a series of moderated **roundtable discussions**.

Discussions will deal with the most important challenges faced by modern democracies today due to globalization, rising inequalities, rapid technological change and new ways of communication, in their effort to secure social cohesion, jobs and decent living standards for their citizens.

Thematic sessions

8.30-9.30: Registration

9.30- 11:30: Globalization, Governance & Democracy

The rise of globalization and the liberalization of markets without effective regulatory control have led to the weakening of nation states and post-war international organizations in terms of their power and effectiveness to design and implement public policies that serve the public interest. A small number of multinational companies and banks, which are not submitted to democratic scrutiny, often set the rules of the game while tax heavens and offshore companies deprive countries from needed financial resources. The rise of inequality, continuous exploitation of the planet's natural resources, the eruption of financial crises, together with the deterioration of living standards and prospects for large segments of the population, have contributed to a growing lack of confidence towards democratic institutions and have fuelled the rise of xenophobia, extremism and populism.

- How can we strengthen democracy in today's Europe, rendering it "relevant" and important to all of its citizens?
- How can we empower society so that "No one stays behind"?
- What is the role of the various stakeholders such as the state, the civil society and the private sector/businesses in strengthening democratic values and institutions?
- What are the policy and institutional priorities at the national and European levels that should be promoted to safeguard and strengthen democracy?

11:30 – 11.45: Coffee break

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12.00 – 14.00: Inequalities & Democracy

Growing inequalities in Europe threaten the European project and undermine social cohesion and democracy. At the same time, ongoing peripheral conflicts as well as the search for a better future have created an unprecedented wave of immigration towards Europe that is expected to continue.

*The Report of the **Independent Commission for Sustainable Equality (ICSE)**, an Initiative undertaken by the S&D political group of the European Parliament, co-chaired by former Prime Minister of Denmark, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen and Prof. Louka T. Katseli, provides an alternative road-map for European policy making to promote sustainable well-being for all. The Report forms the basis of discussion.*

- What are the main causes and facets of rising inequalities and what are their main consequences?
- What short-term and longer-term policies at the national and European level could mitigate today's inequalities? What does it take for them to be implemented?
- To what extent can Europe manage effectively persistent immigration waves while securing social rights of refugees/and migrants on the one hand and EU citizens on the other?

14.00 – 15.00: Light buffet lunch

15.30 – 17.30: New Technologies & Democracy

The impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution and technological innovation (i.e. digitalization, new means of communication such as the social media, artificial intelligence, robotics etc) on jobs, incomes, income distribution, education and values will be vast.

- Can technological developments be used to enhance democratic participation and empowerment of society in decision making as well as to improve living standards?
- What policies can turn citizens from passive to active users of technology, mitigate risks and expand technology's social benefits, thus contributing to the strengthening of democracy?
- What is the role of the state, civil society and the private sector in safeguarding democracy and promoting social cohesion in the face of technological change?

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Monday 3 December

C. PRESENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE FORUM

European University of Cyprus, Nicosia

10.00-12.00

The outcomes of the discussions that took place during the two - days Agora Forum will be presented to a wider audience, in cooperation with the European University of Cyprus.

ABOUT AGORA DIALOGUE

Agora Dialogue is a non-partisan forum which empowers people to make better informed decisions in their daily lives. Acting as a hub for fresh ideas, it aims to expose people to new thinking and informed discussion on key contemporary issues of relevance to the world, in order to create a better educated, aware and engaged society.

<http://agora-dialogue.com/>

ABOUT ADGI- INERPOST

The **Athens Development and Governance Institute** ADGI- INERPOST has the goal to promote development and democratic governance at national, European and regional levels. The Institute contributes to the public dialogue through the development of policy proposals.

<http://www.inerpost.gr/>

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