

VÁCLAV HAVEL EUROPEAN DIALOGUES 2020

# Do **FREE** Media Equal **FREE** Society?



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9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 18:30 - 19:45 ONLINE

The event will be live-streamed on Facebook of each organising partner and also via [www.havelchannel.cz](http://www.havelchannel.cz)



Permanent Representation  
of the Czech Republic  
to the European Union



CZECH CENTRE  
ČESKÉ CENTRUM



Embassy  
of the Czech Republic  
to the Kingdom of Belgium



Václav Havel European Dialogues is an annual international conference held in Brussels that aims to initiate and stimulate a discussion about issues determining the direction of contemporary Europe while referring to the spiritual legacy of Václav Havel. One of Havel's key principles was civic engagement based on a sense of responsibility for the future of one's society and country. As a convinced European, he stressed the need to maintain the connection between the state and its institutions, and its people. For him politics was an ongoing, deeply meaningful dialogue comparable to a theatre piece.

This year the conference would like to pose a question: "Do free media equal free society?". Independent media play an irreplaceable role in controlling the government and ensuring transparency of the state administration. At the same time, they oversee the fair conduct of elections. International comparisons confirm the direct link between the degree of freedom of speech, the state of democracy and the quality of life. Restrictions on free media and human rights are one of the features of undemocratic regimes and are clearly visible, for example, in Belarus and other countries in the EU's neighborhood. Thanks to the availability of social networks and digital media, people are quickly informed, but on the other hand, there is a risk of misinformation that can undermine democratic values.

The event is held under the auspices of Věra Jourová, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency.

### **18:30 Opening of the Conference:**

Edita Hrdá, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU

Pavel Klucký, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Kingdom of Belgium

### **Introduction by the Moderator of the Discussion:**

Michael Žantovský, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library



#### **Edita Hrdá, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU**

Edita Hrdá took up the post of the Czech Permanent Representative to the EU in October 2020. Prior to that, she served as Managing Director for the Americas of the European External Action Service (2015-2020) and as Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations in New York (2011-2015). She served as Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Argentina and Paraguay (1999-2003). At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic she worked as the director of the Department of Latin America, director for Central Europe as well as director general of the Section of the Minister, Chief of Staff.



#### **Pavel Klucký, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Kingdom of Belgium**

Professional career of Ambassador Pavel Klucký accumulates experience in the multilateral diplomacy dealing mostly with non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction and with the Middle East and North Africa issues. He served as the chairman of Zangger Committee and chairman of the EU Non Proliferation Working Group during the Czech Presidency of the EU Council (2009). He also worked as the Czech Ambassador to Algeria and Mali (2009-2013). Before being appointed to his current position in 2019, he served as the Director of Middle East and North Africa Department of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014-2018).



#### **Michael Žantovský, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library**

Michael Žantovský is executive director of the Václav Havel Library and a diplomat, politician, writer and translator. He is the Vice-President of the Aspen Institute Prague, member of the Forum 2000 Foundation Program Council, former Chairman of the Civic Democratic Alliance and senator of the Civic Democratic Alliance in the Parliament of the Czech Republic; former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United Kingdom, the United States and the State of Israel. He was also the spokesman of President Václav Havel and political director at the Office of the President of the Czech Republic. His biography of his long-time friend Václav Havel, *Havel: A Life*, was published in November 2014.



## 18:45 - 19:45 Online Panel:

Věra Jourová / Yevhen Hlibovytsky / Daniel Michaels / Václav Štětka

Are public media still the indispensable fourth pillar of democracy? How has the role of media in the process of democratization changed over time? Can they be replaced by social networks? Should national and transnational actors support free media? Is reliable information available to everyone and are citizens actually interested in it? How to defend democracy against the threat of misinformation? How can the EU help?



### **Věra Jourová, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency**

Věra Jourová is currently Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency and deals with democracy, rule of law, disinformation and media pluralism. From 2014 to 2019, she served as EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. In 2014, before arriving to the European Commission, Ms Jourová held the position of Minister for Regional Development in the Czech Republic. Previous to this, from 2006 to 2013, she worked in her own company as an international consultant on European Union funding, and was also involved in consultancy activities in the Western Balkans relating to the European Union Accession. She holds a Degree in Law (Mgr.) and a Master's degree (Mgr.) in the Theory of Culture from the Charles University, Prague.



### **Yevhen Hlibovytsky, Board Member of the Ukrainian Public Service Broadcast**

Yevhen Hlibovytsky has been a journalist that in 2000, after the murder his close friend and a colleague Georgiy Gongadze, has become one of the leaders of the journalist resistance against censorship in Ukraine. He subsequently became a co-founder of a few new media, which were the voices of the Orange revolution in 2004 and EuroMaidan in 2014. Since founding in 2007, he has been running pro.mova, a think-tank and a consultancy, which studies how culture impacts institution-building in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. Yevhen Hlibovytsky is a member of Nestor Group, an interdisciplinary group of Ukrainian thinkers discussing long-term transformation issues, and teaches at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.



### **Daniel Michaels, Brussels Bureau Chief for The Wall Street Journal**

Daniel Michaels, a reporter and editor with The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) since 1993, has avidly consumed news since he subscribed to Time magazine at age 10. He now oversees WSJ coverage from Brussels, covering European and international affairs, defence and security. A New York City native, he began his journalism career in Taipei and joined the WSJ in Warsaw, from where he covered Central Europe's transition in the 1990s. He has reported from more than 35 countries, covering politics, business, technology and culture. Before journalism, Mr. Michaels was a management consultant in the U.S., Canada, Poland and Russia.



### **Václav Štětka, Senior Lecturer in Communication and Media Studies at Loughborough University**

Over the course of his career, Václav Štětka has held academic and research positions at Masaryk University in Brno, University of Oxford and Charles University in Prague, and since 2016 he is member of the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture at Loughborough University in the UK. His research interests encompass political communication and the role of new media, populism and journalistic autonomy. He is currently Principal Investigator of the project "The Illiberal Turn: News Consumption, Polarization and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe".