

Strengthening Democracy in the EU Neighbourhood: Integration as an Effective Leverage?



Photo by: Jiří Jirů

27th November 2018

Prague House, Avenue Palmerston 16, 1000 Brussels

18:00 - 20:30

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.

The conference entitled "Strengthening Democracy in the EU Neighbourhood: Integration as an Effective Leverage?" aims to contribute to EU endeavours to promote democracy and fundamental rights with special focus on EU neighbours.

Opening of the Conference:

Pavel Svoboda, Member of European Parliament, EPP

Jakub Dürr, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU

Jaroslav Kurfürst, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Kingdom of Belgium

Moderator of the Discussion: Michael Žantovský, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library

First Panel:

The EU's Transformative Power: Is the Dream Fading Away?

Věra Jourová / Eric Maurice / Petras Auštrevičius / David Kramer

Promoting freedom, democracy, pluralism and the rule of law are the guiding principles for EU's external action. The attractiveness of the EU's political culture played a crucial role in the integration processes of the last decades. However, 70 years after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fundamental values and policies of the EU are increasingly called into question, even within the Union. The appeal of populists grows with mounting public discontent in many countries. Does the EU still inspire its neighbours? Does the US share the same vision for the Western Balkans and the EU's Eastern neighbourhood? Can Europeans and Americans convince others about their agenda?

Second Panel:

The Western Balkans on the Road: Will the EU Succeed with its Neighbours?

Jerzy Pomianowski / Šimon Pánek / Nenad Pejić

In spite of some setbacks in the face of liberal democracy that did not sidestep the EU, the fundamental values of the EU remain unchanged. But are they still seen as an inspiration by EU candidates and potential candidates in the Western Balkans, or is it rather EU's standard of living and financial support that attracts them? Are the EU's instruments effectively contributing to strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law in its neighbourhood? Is the EU engagement efficient in the face of disinformation campaigns and the involvement of third actors? How could the EU best help promoting civil society and media freedom in neighbouring countries?

Registration required before 20th November 2018, 12:00 at praguehouse@praha.eu