

Democracy and Europe

Our common future?

Day 1 - 30th October

10:00 - 14:00

Registration

14:00 - 14:30

Welcome Session

Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education

14:30 - 16:00

Session 1 - Democracy at a crossroads: citizens, demos and democratic legitimacy

Political events over the course of the past year have drawn attention to how the foundations of democracy are currently being affected by distrust in political institutions and political actors. The rise of populism has made significant electoral inroads and has heavily influenced political debates. At the same time, more reflection is needed on the factors – cultural, political, economic, social etc. – which may undermine the ability of democratic institutions to deliver on promises and, by extension, their legitimacy among citizens, and on the lessons we need to take from past crises of democratic systems. In this context, it is crucial to discuss citizens' perceptions on democracy, and how they exercise their citizenship.

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee Break

16:30 - 18:00

Session 2: Challenges to democracy and emerging alternatives

The perception of a 'democratic crisis' has brought the need to reshape the idea of democracy – with a focus on new forms of political participation, digital democracy, citizen engagement, media and new media – to the forefront. Additionally, changes might be needed to address these challenges in terms of responsiveness, responsibility and accountability in the relation between democratic institutions and citizens. In this session, the debate will focus on possible innovations/modifications needed, as well as on experiences and initiatives that can support this reflection.

18:00

End of 1st day

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Day 2 - 31th October

09:30 - 11:00

Session 3 - Democracy in Europe and beyond: what role for the EU?

Democracy is a core principle of the EU: it has shaped its unique history and it guides the EU in its relations with the rest of the world. As a consequence, there are expectations towards the EU's support of democracy and democratic institutions, in Europe and beyond. It is, then, no surprise that current challenges to the EU's understanding of democracy will affect the future of the EU and how it relates to the world. In this sense, it is crucial to discuss what these challenges entail for EU's understanding and support of democracy, and how this understanding and the EU's role in the world will be affected by such events.

11:00 - 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:45

Session 4 - Research and Innovation: building a stronger democratic Europe

Research and innovation play a key role in building a stronger, more democratic Europe. The knowledge and reflection R&I generates are crucial to inform and shape decision-making processes that will influence the future of democracies in Europe. Hence, it is crucial to discuss what we know so far about democracy and what knowledge will be needed in the future. This session will bring these questions to the forefront, while discussing how to build stronger bridges between research and policy-making and how to bring society to this process.

12:45 - 13:15

Closing Session