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***Democracy in dialogue, dialogue in democracy***

Warsaw, 7-8 December 2017

Lech Kaczyński National School of Public Administration (56 Wawelska Street)

**CONCEPT NOTE**

Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy 2017

The Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy has been organized since 2012. Its concept is built on the premise that democracy cannot be established once and for all, by decree or law, and needs to be constantly reviewed, improved and strengthened. Providing a platform for dialogue and reflection is one tangible way of supporting these processes. Thus, each year WDD gives voice to human rights defenders and civil society representatives from more than   
30 countries and facilitates an exchange of local experiences and know-how.

This year’s edition, organized on the eve of 2018 that marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is dedicated to the question of dialogue and the role it plays in ensuring the respect for human rights and advancing democracy.

Indeed, recent global developments have been neither favorable to democratic institutions nor to their advocates. Fake news have undermined freedom of speech and threatened the livelihood of independent pluralistic media. Armed conflicts and the continued rise of extremisms have called for a continued search for transitional justice tools and are making interfaith dialogue more crucial than ever.   
A vast portion of world’s youth has been left vulnerable and disenchanted. Holding an engaged dialogue based on mutual respect becomes an urgent need.

Objectives

The Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy 2017 focuses on two key interlocutors of dialogue in democracy – youth and media as well as conditions that must be met for their unhindered participation. Furthermore it serves to explore the ever more important role of dialogue in transition and between faiths. An interactive workshop on the second day will provide an opportunity to explore technological platforms used as means of dialogue and civic engagement.

Outcomes

The conference will catalogue experiences from different regions in relation to youth, independent media, transitional justice and interfaith dialogue. It will identify actions that can be taken forward by governments, civil society and international organizations. Based on these discussions, a set of concrete recommendations will be elaborated and transmitted to international fora devoted to the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Methodology

The program of the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy 2017 will consist of a high-level opening session and four panel debates that focus on analysis and outcomes. Each panel will host a Q&A interaction with the audience. An interactive workshop on civic technology for civil society participants will complement the panel debates.

**Thursday, 7 December 2017**

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| 9.00 – 9.30 | **Registration of Participants** |
| 9.30 - 10.00 | **Welcome**  Mr. Jerzy Baurski, Director of the Department of the United Nations and Human Rights, Ministry  of Foreign Affairs of Poland  Mr. Wojciech Federczyk, Director of the Lech Kaczyński National School of Public Administration |
| 10.00-11.00 | **Opening High-Level Addresses**  Mr. Marek Magierowski, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland  Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights  Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission  Mr. Thomas Garrett, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies  Ms. Lilian Tintori, Venezuelan human rights activist *via video message* |
| 11.00 - 11.15 | **Awarding Ceremony of *Pro Dignitate Humana* Prize** |
| 11.15 - 11.30 | ***Family Photo*** |
| 12.00 - 13.30 | **Lunch** |
| 13.30 - 15.00 **Session 1: Youth Contributions to Democracy**  This provocative and interactive discussion will explore themes related to youth contributions to democracy, particularly in light of today’s political climate and considering the changing nature of state/citizen relations.  The invited young change makers will provide examples of successful engagement tools in light of various barriers to youth political engagement. The panel will conclude by offering a set of recommendations for governments and civil society on how to modernize the political market into one that guarantees inclusion of young people and their contributions.  The current narrative in many places in Europe is that young people are disengaged from civic and political life, expressed through a kind of “political apathy.” Low voter turnout rates, extremely low rates of political party membership, and/or lack of knowledge to make informed electoral decisions are often cited as evidence of such apathy. However, conventional metrics used to measure political engagement do not typically include non-electoral/formal political engagement, such as volunteering, information-sharing, and other issue-based activism and advocacy. These “non-formal” engagement methods are typically favored by young people, many of whom are seeking creative engagement tools in order to share their perspectives and influence policy- and decision-making. New information and communication technologies (ICT), including social media and online platforms, offer a range of civic engagement opportunities for young people, from the ability to identify and research issues of importance, to information-sharing and connecting with like-minded peers on any given subject. These tools represent an avenue for public participation, ensuring multiplicity of voices in the public sphere.  Regrettably, despite the success achieved through collective issue-based advocacy, young people have trouble translating that success to sustained political gains. Often as a result of unresponsive institutions that are increasingly seen as a barrier to youth political engagement for several reasons including: not providing relevant/timely information to constituents via their preferred media; bureaucratic inefficiency, lack of transparency and public accountability, among others. Fortunately, there is a body of evidence regarding good practices in reconnecting young people with democratic institutions. Other markets have seen seismic shifts during the last century, and political market is ripe for revitalization, driven by younger citizens who will not adhere to arcane and confusing regulations about when and how to contribute to their democracies. | |
| *Moderator:*  *Panelists:* | Ms. Augusta Featherston, Youth Focal Point and Democratic Governance Officer, OSCE/ODIHR  Ms. Eliko Bendeliani, Chair of the Center for Peace and Civic Development (Georgia)  Mr. Victor Ochen, Executive Director of the African Youth Initiative Network (Uganda)  Ms. Joanna Pankowska, Civic Education Coordinator, AEGEE / European Students' Forum  Ms. Sofia Rusova, Member of the Board Ecological Watch for Northern Caucasus (Russia) |
| 15.00 - 15.15 | ***Coffee Break*** |
| 15.15 - 16.45 **Session 2: Tackling Challenges for Independent Media**  Free media have always been perceived as a fundamental pillar of functioning democracies and a platform for democratic discourse. However, playing this crucial role requires having the trust of your audiences, whilst the newest research shows that the confidence in the mass media has sunk to a new low globally. The center of gravity is shifting from offline to online, with a concurrent increase of confidence in online outlets. Distrust in the media intertwines with anger and disillusionment towards politicians, both perceived as belonging to the elites. The current state of affairs creates a fertile ground for tabloid content with limited credibility to spread on the media landscape, unfiltered by the lens of professional, balanced journalism. Emotionally engaging and entertaining (dis)information resonates with people, surrounding them with fabricated stories, often created with the aim of influencing them for political of financial purposes, or a combination of both.  With increasing control by governments and business interests, financial difficulties, shady ownership, a surge of tabloid online media portals, as well as foreign interference, there is a growing need to support credible and balanced journalism committed to engage audiences through quality content. While there are numerous independent media initiatives globally, a large number of them struggles to continue operations, with their journalists facing daily threats, intimidation and risk of imprisonment. The problem of external pressure also hijacks the access to funding; given the dependency media companies can have on advertising, with advertisers often withdrawing if the content is too politically sensitive, resulting in the media company losing its much needed revenue. On the other hand, the creation of a new monopoly of online media giants over programmatic advertising constitutes yet another challenge.  The new increasingly difficult challenges are rooted in deteriorating media landscapes, non-conductive for freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity. In many countries, supporting institutions, professional capacity building and infrastructure are far from sufficient for the proper functioning of independent and pluralistic media. To this end, the panel debate addresses the following questions:  • What are the challenges faced by independent media outlets in different parts of the world and how do they attempt to overcome the obstacles? Is there a common denominator for all the geographical areas? Which tools are used by independent outlets to address a new set of challenges?  • How can media reflect plurality, diversity and freedom of speech while continuing their operation in increasingly challenging political and economic environment worldwide?  • What external and institutional support is needed? How to maintain access to funding and keep the advertisers’ close, without compromising the content?  • What would be the ideal framework for media to operate in?  • How can we help audiences distinguish between fact and fiction and face the challenge of distrust? How can media become a better cater for their readers? | |
| *Moderator:*  *Panelists:* | Ms. Diana Moukalled, Founder of Daraj (Lebanon)  Mr. Dumitru Alaiba, Programmes Director, CPR (Moldova)  Ms. Natalia Antelava, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of the Disinformation Crisis, Coda Story (Georgia)  Ms. Tamara Chergoleishvili, Director General of Tabula Media (Georgia)  Mr. Sami Elmoudni, President of the Moroccan Forum for Young Journalists (Morocco) |

17.30 - 18.30 **Visit to the Royal Castle Museum in Warsaw** *(by invitation only)*

19.00 - 21.00 **Dinner** *(by invitation only)*

**Friday, 8 December 2017**

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| 9.00 - 10.30 **ODIHR Civic-Tech Workshop** *(for civil society only)*  A highly interactive and hands-on session designed to offer participants the opportunity to use and explore existing platforms for new civic technologies in Poland, as well as how those technologies might be adapted to local/regional context. Additionally, participants will discuss the iterative design process to be considered by anyone seeking to build civic engagement tools with UX/UI design professionals. Participants will leave the discussion with concrete ideas for incorporating civic technology in their institutions and organizations. | |
| 10.30 - 10.45  10.45 - 11.00 | ***Coffee Break***  **Welcome**  **Report from the 2017 World Forum for Democracy**  Ms. Claudia Luciani, Director of Democratic Governance, Council of Europe |
| 11.00 - 12.30 **Session 3: Building Bridges through Transitional Justice**  Transitional justice, which emerged in Europe and Latin America during the political transformations of the late 1980s  and early 1990s, is closely associated with the methods through which countries affected by repression, conflict and human rights violations come to terms with the past, placing the victims at the heart of the process.  Transitional justice allows asking the most difficult questions and drawing even the most grim conclusions in order to restore confidence in the rule of law, to rebuild trust, to give dignity back to the aggrieved and to prevent similar victimizations from occurring in the future.  Although the phenomenon of transitional justice is relatively new, we do have certain legal and judicial tools to deliver justice, ensure accountability and support reconciliation. The crucial challenge facing today’s society, however, is to safeguard the appropriate use of those tools.  There is clearly no one universal model of coming to terms with a totalitarian past, but exchange of experiences is undoubtedly one of the ways in which we can support global democratisation processes. The Polish Institute of National Remembrance regards it as one of its priorities to share expertise in this field with young democracies.  The panel will explore a wide spectrum of cases, looking at lessons learned from the Angolan peace process, the Arab Spring, the fall of communism in Poland, the Kenyan democratic development, as well as examining transitional justice scenarios for a potential restoration of justice in North Korea today. No matter how difficult it is to take the perpetrators to court, it is our moral obligation to seek justice and compensation for the victims. The panel will focus on how a wide-ranging dialogue that involves vulnerable and minority groups can build bridges between conflict parties, thus contributing to social cohesion and long-lasting peace. | |
| *Moderator:*  *Panelists:* | Dr. Rafał Leśkiewicz, Director of the IT Office, Institute of National Remembrance (Poland)  Prof. Paulo de Carvalho, Lecturer at University Agostinho Neto (Angola)  Ms. Farah Hached, President of Labo' Démocratique (Tunisia)  Mr. Robert Kopydłowski, Prosecutor at the Institute of National Remembrance (Poland)  Prof. Jae-Chun Won, Lecturer at the Handong Global University (Republic of Korea) |
| 12.30 – 13.30 | **Lunch** |
| 13.30 - 15.00 **Session 4: Interreligious Engagement, Reconciliation, and Democracy**  While religion is seen as a factor that contributes to both internal and international instability and conflict, it can also play a vital role in reconciliation efforts, development of democracy and promotion of peaceful societies. The effects of globalization, migration, tensions amongst diverse ethnic and religious groups, threats of terrorism and violent extremism have all emphasized the urgent need to deepen cooperation and understanding between cultures, religions and civilizations. Multi-stakeholder partnerships, including engagement of church leaders and faith-based organizations, have become essential for effective response to these global crises.  The acknowledgment of the importance of freedom of religion and belief and the need for respect for diversity of religions and cultures lie at the forefront of the interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace. While violence and discrimination occurring around the world as a result of misuse of religious sentiments cannot be totally diminished, our panelists today will demonstrate how interfaith dialogue can play a meaningful role in building peace and promoting stability, from reconciliation in war-torn regions, to the enhancement of dialogue amongst followers of different religions.  The panel will feature interventions from representatives of Muslim, Jewish, Yazidi and Orthodox communities who will try to identify the main challenges and opportunities of interreligious dialogue in the 21stcentury. The main questions will be: what are the greatest barriers to successful interreligious cooperation? Who are the main actors in interreligious cooperation? How can religion contribute to fostering democracy? | |
| *Moderator:*  *Panelists:* | Mr. James Chen, Executive Director of the Institute of Global Engagement (USA)  Ms. Farida Abbas Khalaf, Yazidi activist and survivor of ISIS enslavement (Iraq)  Mr. Paata Gachechiladze, Executive Director of the Union 21st Century (Georgia)  Ms. Wai Wai Nu, Founder and Director of the Women Peace Network (Myanmar)  Ms. Tanya Segal, Rabbi at the Beit Kraków Progressive Community (Poland) |
| 15.00 - 15.15 | ***Coffee Break*** |
| 15.15 - 16.00 | **Conference Summary**  Dr. Rafał Leśkiewicz, Director of the Department, Polish Institute of National Remembrance  Mr. Jerzy Pomianowski, Executive Director of the European Endowment for Democracy  Dr. Marcin Walecki, Head of the Democratization Department, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights  Mr. Jerzy Baurski, Director of the Department of the United Nations and Human Rights, Ministry  of Foreign Affairs of Poland |