



08:30-09:00 REGISTRATION

09:00-10:30 PANEL DEBATES

Round 1

Setting the Course of a Post-Brexit EU

Collins Institute
(Ireland)

Transforming our Economy:

When SMEs Go Green
Anton Tunega Foundation
(Slovakia)

Boosting Participatory Democracy: Finding the Optimal Tools

Kós Károly Academy
Foundation
(Romania)

11:00-12:30 PANEL DEBATES

Round 2

A New *Zeitgeist* for People's Parties?

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
(Germany)
Political Academy of the
Austrian People's Party
(Austria)

Youth and Economy: Where is the Promised Land?

Toivo Think Tank
(Finland)

Time for a New European Pact on Migration?

Luigi Sturzo Institute
(Italy)

13:30-15:00 PANEL DEBATES

Round 3

Climate Change: Centre-Right Sustainable Solutions

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung
(Germany)

Middle Class at the Crossroads: Managing Change

TOPAZ
(Czech Republic)

NATO, the EU and the European Defence Community:

Where Are we at?
De Gasperi Foundation
(Italy)

15:30-17:00 PANEL DEBATES

Round 4

Re-modelling our European House of Democracy

Jože Pucnik Institute
(Slovenia)

Investing in our Future: Climate Policies for the Middle-class

CDA Research Institute
(The Netherlands)

Demographic Decline and Migration: Finding the European Golden Mean

Konstantinos Karamanlis
Institute for Democracy
(Greece)



10:30-11:00
15:00-15:30



12:30-13:30



17:00-18:00

Organized by:



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

In cooperation with:



09:00-10:30 PANEL DEBATES

Round 1

Setting the Course of a Post-Brexit EU

Collins Institute (Ireland)

Brexit will impose a set of serious challenges for the future of the European Union. As key advocates in the development of the single market, EU enlargement and global trade, the absence of Britain as a member of the EU will confront Brussels with strategic choices. Will Brexit negatively impact the subsequent evolution of the Single Market? Is Europe a weaker player in global trade negotiations without Britain? Will a non-British EU influence how Brussels projects its power in its surrounding neighbourhood? For member states within the EU, are new strategic alliances necessary to ensure there remains an impetus for further development? Based on the specific experience of Ireland, what lessons can smaller EU states, in particular, also obtain from the Brexit experience since 2016?

Moderator and kick-off speaker:

Eoin Drea

Senior Research Officer, Martens Centre

Panel Speakers:

Sieglinde Gstöhl

Professor, College of Europe, Bruges

Paddy Harte

Chair, International Fund for Ireland

Johan Bjerkem

Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre

Q&A session

**Transforming our Economy:
When SMEs Go Green**

Anton Tunega Foundation (Slovakia)

Small and medium enterprises represent the core of the healthy economy of many EU member states. They employ a wide share of the labour force and offer flexibility when facing future market challenges. This raises a number of questions when it comes to the role of SMEs in addressing new challenges, such as climate change. Are SMEs prepared and able to reinvent themselves? Can small, innovative, green companies represent a new model of entrepreneurship? How can EU legislation motivate companies to become more green in the most effective way? How do we mitigate the risks and costs that a green transformation could entail for the business sector?

Moderator:

Dimitar Lilkov

Research Officer, Martens Centre

Kick-off speaker:

Ivan Stefanec

MEP, EPP Group,
President of SME Europe

Panel Speakers:

Eva Palackova

Senior Political Adviser, EPP

Peter Badík

Co-Founder, Managing
Partner, Greenway Infrastructure

Ondrej Sočuvka

Senior Manager, EU Public Policy and
Government Affairs, Google

Q&A session

**Boosting Participatory Democracy:
Finding the Optimal Tools**

Kós Károly Academy Foundation (Romania)

The possibility to submit a petition to the European Parliament is of fundamental importance in defending and promoting the rights of EU citizens and residents. Each year, more than one thousand petitions are submitted. However, only a small number of citizens are aware of their right to petition, as some are intimidated by excessive bureaucracy while others are not aware of what matters fall under EU fields of activity. For these reasons, further efforts should be made in order to raise awareness about this instrument. The European Citizens Initiative is a revolutionary tool of transnational participatory democracy through which citizens can call upon the European Commission to propose new or change existing European legislation. How can we make this and other instruments more effective in bringing the EU closer to citizens?

Moderator:

Elisa Lironi

Senior Manager European Democracy,
European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)

Kick-off speaker:

Vincze Loránt

MEP, EPP Group, President of the Federal
Union of European Nationalities

Panel Speakers:

Carsten Berg

Campaign General Coordinator,
European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

Rainer Wieland

MEP, EPP Group,
Vice-President of the EP, Substitute
Member of the Committee on petitions

Szász Attila

Deputy editor in chief, Radio Targu-Mures
public radio station

Q&A session

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11:00-12:30 PANEL DEBATES

Round 2

A New *Zeitgeist* for People's Parties?

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS-Germany)
Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party (Austria)

For decades, people's parties were able to attract a large share of consensus. They were a common ground for voters with different backgrounds, age and views. People's parties were providing stability in many parliamentary systems. Recent developments in election results across Europe have shown however that it is becoming more and more difficult for people's parties to fulfil this role. Many party systems have become highly fragmented and political landscapes are quickly changing. Voting behaviour is transitioning towards more volatility. What has changed and why is the approach of people's parties facing growing pressure? What can people's parties do in order to counter the increasing fragmentation of the political landscape and the growing success of populist parties? On which priorities should they build their political platforms?

Moderator:
Ioana Lung
Head of Communications
and Marketing, Martens Centre

Kick-off speaker:
Dennis Radke
MEP, EPP Group,
Coordinator of the Committee on
Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

Panel Speakers:
Karoline Edstadler
MEP, EPP Group

Paul Unterhuber
Opinion Pollster

Q&A session

**Youth and Economy:
Where is the Promised Land?**

Toivo Think Tank (Finland)

The generation currently entering working life is living in a prosperous Europe, but facing a long list of difficulties. The average wages for this generation are falling behind; they advance slower in their careers, and have more of a negative image of their future than previous generations. Working life is changing, as many entry-level positions are vanishing and the trust in the pension system is shaking. At the same time, in many countries, the EPP is losing young voters to greens, populists, and liberals. How do we address these challenges and redeem our credibility as the voice of the future? What should be the centre-right approach to not only address youth unemployment, but the broader challenges facing this generation? What kind of concrete policies do we need to implement at the European level and, even more importantly, what kind of policies do we need to avoid?

Moderator:
Juho Mäki-Lohiluoma
Vice Chairman,
International Young Democrat Union

Kick-off speaker:
Henna Virkkunen
MEP, EPP Group,
Former Education Minister of Finland

Panel Speakers:
Eoin Drea
Senior Research Officer, Martens Centre

Juha-Pekka Nurvala
Senior Political Adviser, EPP

Mikael Lehtonen
Coordinator, Youth of The National
coalition Party, Board member of The
Finnish Youth Council

Q&A session

Time for a New European Pact on Migration?

Luigi Sturzo Institute (Italy)

Despite a general decrease in the number of irregular migrants entering Europe, migration still remains a pressing issue for the EU and has become highly politicised and divisive. Tensions between member states have increased in the last months, after Italy's decision to partially close its ports. While crises over disembarkation of rescued passengers have been solved on a case-by-case basis and an overall reform of the Dublin system is stalled, the inability of the EU to provide an answer might lead to an incapacity to cope with future challenges and, in the end, cause a return to nationalistic approaches, thereby further destabilising the unity within the EU. Ursula von der Leyen already promised a 'fresh start on migration' and a group of willing member states are making attempts to find an agreement. Will the new European legislature be able to give a new course to a truly European migration policy? How do we overcome the divisions between member states? Is it possible to find a common response at the European level?

Moderator:
Loredana Teodorescu
Head of EU and International Affairs,
Luigi Sturzo Institute

Kick-off speaker:
Andrea Biagini
Coordinator Justice and Home Affairs,
Italian Permanent Representation to the EU

Panel Speakers:

Michael Shotter
Director for Migration, Protection and
Visa, European Commission

Geertrui Landau
Senior Regional Labour Mobility and
Human Development Specialist

Q&A session

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13:30-15:00 PANEL DEBATES

Round 3

**Climate Change:
Centre-Right Sustainable Solutions**

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung (Germany)

Environmental issues and climate change seem to dominate the political landscape in several northern and western European countries. The dissatisfaction of a particular electorate with the current climate policy was also reflected in the positive election results of green parties in these parts of Europe. As a result, governments see themselves confronted with critical claims and highly emotional debates. However, sustainable climate-neutral policy approaches have to take into account many other factors such as the interplay of ecology, economy and technical innovations together with regional and social cohesion. Sustainability is by no means an exclusively ecological matter. Bavaria has been at the forefront of this field, with its ministry for the protection of the environment being founded in 1970. How is Bavaria tackling current challenges and how can the Bavarian experience and its expertise contribute to future-orientated integrative, constructive and sustainable climate policies?

Moderator:
Dimitar Lilkov
Research Officer, Martens Centre

Kick-off speaker:
Markus Ferber
MEP, Coordinator of the EPP group in the ECON committee, Deputy Chair of the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich

Panel speakers:
Alexandra Kletzsch
Founder and Managing Director, Kompakt61

Martin Huber
Member of the Bavarian State Parliament, Chair of the CSU Working Group on Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Matthias Wucherer
Head of the network "Blühende Landschaften"

Q&A session

**Middle Class at the Crossroads:
Managing Change**

TOPAZ (Czech Republic)

The concept of the middle class has deeply changed and it is important to analyse what defines it today, including its impact on the changing political map of Czechia in comparison with other EU member states. There are several economic, political, social, and cultural challenges which the middle class faces today, such as changing interest in politics, consumption of the media, reform of the education system, and a new business environment that includes digitalisation and robotization, which significantly impacts small and medium size enterprises and the labour market. A strong feeling of discontent is thus spreading among the middle class. What are the reasons behind this phenomenon? What are the expected outcomes? What is the impact of these developments on the future of the centre and centre-right parties, their programmes and campaigning?

Moderator:
Lucie Tungul
Head of Research, TOPAZ and Assistant Professor of Politics at Palacký University of Olomouc

Kick-off speaker:
Ludek Niedermayer
MEP, EPP Group

Panel Speakers:
Arjen Siegmans
Associate Professor of Finance, Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam and Economist, CDA Research Institute

Miriam Lexmann
MEP Elect, Former Diplomat and Director of European Programmes of the International Republican Institute

Q&A session

**NATO, the EU and the European
Defence Community: Where Are we at?**

De Gasperi Foundation (Italy)

After seventy years of peace, people in Europe tend to take stability, prosperity, and freedom for granted. However, peace and freedom have not been challenged and threatened to the degree they currently are since the end of the Second World War. In this scenario, the issues concerning security and defence have become crucial in current European policies. This is why it is important to re-examine the project of the European Defence Community (EDC) and a common Defence for the European Union. It is also crucial to assess the role of NATO, its ability to adapt to evolving scenarios for security and defence as well as new challenges. What is the future of EU security and defence policy? How has the relationship between the EU and NATO evolved over the years? What kind of ambitions can the EU have in the medium and long term?

Moderator:
Paolo Alli
former President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Kick-off speaker:
Francesco M. Taló
Permanent Representative of Italy to NATO

Panel Speakers:
Angelino Alfano
President, De Gasperi Foundation

Steven Blockmans
Head of EU Foreign Policy, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Kristine Berzina
Senior Fellow, Alliance for Securing Democracy, German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

Q&A session

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15:30-17:00 PANEL DEBATES

Round 4

Re-modelling our European House of Democracy

Jože Pucnik Institute (Slovenia)

The sustainable development of democracy in Europe cannot be taken for granted. We witness tendencies in the form of external threats (Russian expansionism, Islamic terrorism, etc.) as well as internal forces (the rise of populism, anti-European sentiments and political extremism) that are detrimental for democratic political life. There is widespread perception of inefficiency of democratic institutions and of detachment of political elites from the needs and interests of ordinary citizens, resulting in decreasing political trust in a number of the EU states. How can we strengthen democratic legitimacy as well as enhance problem-solving capacity in the EU? How do we strike a balance between national sovereignty and implementation of common EU policy solutions? How to improve the efficiency of both the consensual democracy (the European Council) and the parliamentary democracy (the European Parliament) at the EU level?

Moderator:
Peter Šuhel
Political adviser, European Parliament

Kick-off speaker:
Esteban Gonzáles Pons
MEP, Vice Chair, EPP Group

Panel Speakers:
Matevž Tomšič
Lecturer, School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica

Milan Zver
MEP, EPP Group

Andreja Valič Zver
IJP President

Q&A session

**Investing in our Future:
Climate Policies for the Middle-class**

CDA Research Institute (The Netherlands)

The concerns of scientists about climate “tipping points” are becoming more prominent, but the willingness of people to shoulder the costs remains low. For others, the natural world is becoming a source of neurosis instead of a source of stability and inspiration for everyday life. The increasing polarisation could be a sign that the natural connection between politicians, the people and the environment is deteriorating. The aim of this discussion is to explore how these lost connections can be restored. What could bridge antagonistic world views? Are catastrophic risks at all possible to communicate to the general public? Which type of policies better coincide with the everyday lives of people? Does the European Green Deal need a Business Climate Deal, where the focus is put on entrepreneurship instead of burdening households with taxes?

Moderator and kick-off speaker:
Arjen Siegmans
CDA Research Institute
and Associate Professor of Finance,
Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam.

Panel Speakers:
Esther de Lange
MEP, Vice Chair, EPP Group

Harmen Verbruggen
Emeritus Professor of International
Environmental Economics,
Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam

Q&A session

**Demographic Decline and Migration:
Finding the European Golden Mean**

Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy (Greece)

Europe is shrinking at an alarming speed. It is projected that the EU will lose 30 million people of working age by 2050, while the number of people in their 80s and 90s will rise dramatically. Eurostat predicts a negative population change for the period 2019 to 2080. The impact of this trend is multidimensional, becoming a shaping factor for the future of Europe and the welfare of its citizens. The goal of this panel is to analyse and discuss the social and economic implications, the geopolitical dimension and the challenges connected to immigration. What political measures can be taken at the EU level to cope with issues such as demographic transition? How can we reverse the brain drain phenomenon?

Moderator:
Panagiotis Kakolyris
Journalist, Senior researcher,
Centre of International & European
Political Economy & Governance,
University of Peloponnese

Kick-off speaker:
Domna Michailidou
Deputy Minister of Greece
for Welfare and Social Solidarity

Panel Speakers:
Eliza Vozemberg
MEP, EPP Group, Vice Chair, Committee on
Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

George Prevelakis
Permanent Representative of
Greece to the OECD,
Member of the KKID Academic Council

Popi Kalaitzi
Founding Member, BrainGain initiative

Q&A session

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