



ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE INSTITUTE OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRATS 2017

January – December 2017

Table of Contents

Events 2017	2
Publications 2017	12
Plan of Activities for 2018	14

EVENTS 2017

27th
04

Israel – Palestine: A New Chance for Peace? *Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain*

IED's seminar organised with **Sabino Arana Fundazioa** (Basque Country, Spain).

20
17

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is the ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians over mutual recognition, borders settlement, control of Jerusalem, water rights and Palestinian right of return. It is one of the most complex and chaotic problems in the Middle East region which started in the mid-20th century and lasts until nowadays. Although the latest round of peace negotiations were suspended in 2014, the conflict is now moving towards a new stage following the election of Donald Trump as the new president of the United States – the country which has a significant influence over the states in the Middle East. Based on the experience of past failed attempts to bring the creation of the two states, the international seminar tried to deliver balanced responses for this never-ending problem whose resolution would represent a significant contribution for achieving peace not only in the Middle East but also for improving security situation in Europe and rest of the world.

In the order of speeches:

Juan Maria Atutxa, President of Sabino Arana Fundazioa.

Flaminia Baffigo, Coordinator of IED.

Jorge Dezcallar de Mazarredo, Ambassador of Spain.

Bassem Eid, Palestinian human rights activist based in Jerusalem.

Yaniv Schacham, New media and campaigning manager of "Peace Now" in Israel.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ The current status-quo in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unsustainable;
- ★ The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would significantly contribute to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East and also to improve security situation in Europe and rest of the world;
- ★ The international community needs to be careful in negotiations because it cannot bring more destabilization to highly unstable Middle East region, mainly with regards to Israel – the only stable entity in the region;
- ★ Israel's government and the Palestine Authority should deliver greater initiative in searching for the settlement;
- ★ The EU and the international community should re-evaluate foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and reach for a renewed peace process between Israelis and Palestinians;
- ★ It seems that the only possible way how to resolve the dispute and bring peace and stability to the region is the two-state solution – one state living next to the other and respecting the right of self-determination.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and check the presentation of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

05th
05

EU at the Crossroads: How will 2017 National Elections change the Face of Europe? *Bratislava, Slovakia*

20
17

IED's international conference organised with **Mladí Európania** (Slovakia).

With regards to an unprecedented rise of populism, nationalism and Euroscepticism in the European Union, the conference welcome several distinguished speakers from academia, politics and NGO sectors who discussed four most important elections in Europe this year: the Dutch parliamentary elections that took place in March, the French presidential elections (that were just before its second round at the time of the event), June's parliamentary elections in Great Britain and the German federal elections scheduled for September.

In the order of speeches:

Flaminia Baffigo, Coordinator of IED.

Antonio Parziale, Honorary Consul of Moldova in Slovakia and Founder of Mladí Európania.

Beata Kostilníková, European Policies Department of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

Samuel Abrahám, Slovak political scientist and Rector of Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts in Slovakia.

Martin Leveneur, Executive manager of the European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP).

Karen Henderson, British political scientist and senior lecturer on EU politics at the Comenius University and BISLA in Slovakia.

Karl Ilgenfritz, Political advisor and one of the spokespersons on EU Affairs for Freie Wähler in Germany.

Roman Brecely, Member of Board of IED and former Slovak Minister of Transport.

Barbora Meššová, Lawyer from the League for the Human Rights in Slovakia.

Ján Orlovský, Director of Open Society Foundation in Slovakia.

Roman Vilkovič, Journalist and Editor in Chief of PlusCS London in the Great Britain.

Moderator:

Alena Bašistová, Member of the Slovak Parliament and university lecturer.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ We live in the longest peaceful and most prosperous time Europe has ever experienced but we never can take peace and prosperity for granted;
- ★ History teaches us that nationalism and populism always led to war in Europe;
- ★ The reason why populists have gained popularity lies in their abuse of fears and problems of citizens – populists use negative emotions, simple language, popular slogans and appealing promises to attract people;
- ★ EU needs to regain trust of citizens who turn to Euroscepticism and populism by demonstrating that Europeans live in the most prosperous and stable region in the world just thanks to the existence of the EU;
- ★ Democratic politicians, media and NGOs must promote that policy proposals of populist parties are empty phrases that are not feasible to be fulfilled and *not* the solutions to their problems;
- ★ Professional journalism must be based on objective information and true facts in all circumstances so people can access fact-based information vis-à-vis “alternative” and misleading information;
- ★ Brexit is one off event which is not relevant to populist politics in the EU and it will very likely have much greater negative impact on the UK than on the EU;
- ★ Only united approach of all EU Member States can save Europe from populism.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and check the presentations of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

13th
05

Women's Spring Event: How long do we still have to go? How we can stop violence on women?

Nicosia, Cyprus

20
17

IED's international conference organised with **Citizens' Alliance** (Cyprus).

The aim of the conference was to discuss one of the most serious and alarming violation of human rights in global society – violence against women and girls. Violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of gender-based discrimination. Global estimates published by the World Health Organization show alarming results – about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime; however, this number can be much higher considering the fact that many women and girls are afraid to report these crimes and the society still lacks effective mechanisms to combat this type of violence. The conference welcomed several significant public figures who dedicated their lives to the fight against violence on women, including Hauwa Ibrahim, a Nigerian human rights lawyer and the winner of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize in 2005. She is well-known for being appointed by President Good-luck Jonathan of Nigeria to be a member of the fact-finding commission regarding the 219 girls kidnapped by Boko Haram from Chibok.



In the order of speeches:

Marina Demetriou, President of Women's Alliance.

Flaminia Baffigo, Coordinator of IED.

Yiorgos Lillikas, President of Citizens' Alliance.

Maria Epaminonda, President of Cyprus Women Lobby and Executive Director of the Cyprus Family Planning Association.

Georgia Bouri, Social worker, Counsellor on Mental Health and Head of the Department of Equality and Discrimination in the Municipality of Athens.

Androula Christofidou Henriques, Psychologist and Honorary President of the anti-human trafficking network 'Cyprus STOP trafficking'

Luca Attanasio, Italian Journalist and Writer

Hauwa Ibrahim, Nigerian Human Rights Lawyer and Winner of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2005.

Moderator: **Katerina Christofides**, Cypriot journalist.

Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Violence against women occurs in all parts of the world, in all cultural and economic environments and concerns women and girls of all educational and social levels;
- ★ Violence against women is not a 'female issue' but social and political problem that has an impact on the whole society;
- ★ Three main problems in tackling violence against women that must be addressed by governments:
 1. most of crimes are not reported by victims or by their neighbours/family,
 2. governments lack proper mechanisms to help victims and there are no specialized services for victims that would respond to their individual needs,
 3. penalties for aggressors are inadequate and non-dissuasive in terms of sexual violence;
- ★ Tolerance of violence means complicity – all individuals need to take responsibility and put an end to tolerance of violence and perpetuation of stereotyped gender-based perceptions, sexism and inequality between men and women;
- ★ There are no effective policies targeted against the night clubs who sexually exploit women;
- ★ Implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which is the first international binding legal framework to combat violence against women, should be binding for all states without exception because the ratification of this document ensures that states are accountable for their actions in relation to violence against women;
- ★ There is the greatest urgency to increase awareness of the causes and consequences of violence on women through media, politics and civic and non-governmental sector.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event on the [webpage of this event](#).

08th
06

V4 EUROPE – Pieces of Populism in Europe and how to overcome the Challenge.

Budapest, Hungary

20
17

IED's international workshop organised with **Hungarian Europe Society** (Hungary).

In the current political era, populist forces seriously threaten dominant liberal and democratic values, undermine human rights and constitutional checks and balances, and build illiberal states inside four Central European countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – that are also known under the common name of Visegrad Group or V4. The workshop welcomed a number of speakers coming from national parliaments, academia and well-known European think-tanks and NGOs who discussed the rise of populism in, and not only, Central European region. They elaborated comprehensive political-ideological visions, institutional and structural renewal and fresh policy proposals in order to overcome the populist threat at national, regional and European levels.

In the order of speeches:

François Pauli, Member of the Board of IED, Deputy Secretary-General of the ALDE Group, European Parliament, Brussels.

Zsuzsanna Szelényi, Member of the Hungarian Parliament, Member of the Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest, Member of the Board of IED, Brussels.

Milada Anna Vachudova, Jean Monnet Chair in EU Studies, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ivan Vejvoda, Permanent Fellow, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna.

Anna Visvizi, Head of Research, Institute of East-Central Europe, IESW, Lublin.

Alena Holka Chudžíková, Senior Research Fellow, CVEK, Bratislava.

Márta Pardavi, Co-President, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Budapest.

Bulcsú Hunyadi, Senior Analyst, Political Capital, Budapest.

Bartłomiej E. Nowak, Foreign Affairs Secretary, Nowoczesna, Warsaw.

Balázs Váradi, Senior Researcher, Budapest Institute.

Miroslav Beblavý, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Center for European Policy Studies, Member of the Slovak Parliament, Bratislava.

Andrzej Potocki, Vice-President, European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP) and Vice-President, Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, Warsaw.

Jacek Kucharczyk, President of the Executive Board, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw.

Dániel Hegedüs, Research Consultant, Freedom House, Berlin and Member of the Hungarian Europe Society.

Edit Inotai, Senior Fellow, Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy, Budapest.

Milan Nič, Senior Fellow, German Council on Foreign Affairs, DGAP, Berlin.

Olga Wysocka, Deputy Director, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warsaw.

Moderators:

Zsuzsanna Végh, Vice-chair, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest.

Zsuzsanna Szelényi, Member of the Hungarian Parliament and Member of the Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest, Member of the Board of IED, Brussels.

István Hegedüs, Chairman, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Migration has become a source of political competition – increasing number of migrants coming to Europe gives a perfect momentum to populists to spread xenophobic rhetoric;
- ★ Elections in Netherlands and France have stopped the rise of populism but there is still significant support for populist politicians across the continent;
- ★ Visegrad states face similar challenges in respect to their historical, cultural and geopolitical development;
- ★ Populists use nationalism to justify illiberal policies and diverting attention from real problems and their bad governance; they also use lack of information about certain issues, e.g. migration, to spread “alternative facts” and misinformation;
- ★ Visegrad countries experience a significant polarization in their political spectrum with more and more parties turning to authoritarianism and nationalism;
- ★ People vote populists out of uncertainty and fear;
- ★ Historical and cultural reasons influence actual strength of popular support for populists in particular country;

- ★ One of the ways how to tackle populism is education – teaching people to think critically and to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong;
- ★ We need to analyse all “pieces of populism” in order to reverse negative trends in the voting behaviour and counter illiberal and anti-European forces in the V4 and the EU;
- ★ Democratic politicians with the help of civic organizations, NGOs and media must provide the strong alternative to populist policies.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and check the presentations of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

23th
06

Russian Disinformation War against Poland and Europe. Warsaw, Poland

—

IED’s international conference.

20
17

The main purpose of the event was to analyse one of the most controversial phenomenon of today’s world – the spreading of disinformation in society. The investigations of EU and US intelligence agencies and cybersecurity companies have many clues to suggest that the extensive international disinformation and hacking campaign is coordinated directly from Kremlin in order to disintegrate the EU and weaken liberal democratic order in general. As a result, the EU Members States have to address this issue with great attention and formulate effective tools how to counter it. The event gathered former intelligence officials and experts on disinformation who discussed the proposals how to combat this serious security challenge.

In the order of speeches:

Adriana Čiefová, Project Manager of IED.

Andrzej Potocki, Vice-President of European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP) and Vice-President of Stronnictwo Demokratyczne.

Kazimierz Wóycicki, Publicist, philosopher and historian.

Marta Kowalska, Vice-President of the Foundation Centre for Analysis of Propaganda and Disinformation.

Piotr Niemczyk, Security Specialist and former chief of Polish intelligence.

Vincent V. Severski, Lawyer, former intelligence and disinformation officer and writer.

Tomasz Smura, Head of the research office of the Foundation K. Pulaski.

Piotr Fedusio, Lawyer.

Adam Lelonek, President of the Foundation Centre for Analysis of Propaganda and Disinformation.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Disinformation War is real war led by the current Russian government against the European integration and liberal democracy; it is one of the most serious security challenges for the EU;
- ★ European intelligence agencies need to provide the mechanisms so foreign hackers and agents of influence will not be able to break to our systems;
- ★ European governments need to allocate more financial resources to counter-policies and create professional governmental institutions for combating disinformation;
- ★ All people should have bigger responsibility for what they say or write;
- ★ One of the long-term solution is education – people need to learn how to verify information;

- ★ European countries need to act against the disinformation practices on the governmental level much more intensively because NGOs are hopeless to fight it on their own;
- ★ Online and print media should have more responsibility over information they publish;
- ★ All actors on both, governmental and nongovernmental level, need to be much more united because internal divisions only support Russian propaganda.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event on the [webpage of this event](#).

Read the research paper [“Economy of the Contemporary Information War”](#).

06th
07

Climate and Energy Agenda in the Evolving Global Scenario. Milan, Italy

—

IED’s international conference in cooperation with **Center for a Sustainable Future** (Italy).

20
17

The aim of the conference was to deal with such issues as the US energy independence; the Paris Agreement positive momentum triggered by the ambitions of China and the US; the possible turning point in the US climate policy; and the new position of EU on climate and energy issues after Brexit. The conference therefore investigated on the perspectives of the future global climate and energy scenario, the geopolitical consequences of the quickly evolving energy market, the impact of the Brexit and the new climate sceptical US Presidency on energy prices, and the role of the Europe and its capacity to maintain leadership and competitiveness. The conference has enjoyed the participation of outstanding speakers who are all experts on climate and energy.

In the order of speeches:

Chiara Tonelli, pro-Rector for Research, University of Milan.

Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan.

Francesco Rutelli, President Centre for a Sustainable Future.

Alessandro Lanza, LUISS University Rome; Scientific Committee CFS.

Fatih Birol, Executive Director International Energy Agency (IEA).

Marzio Galeotti, University of Milan; Scientific Committee CFS.

Giampiero Massolo, President ISPI, Italian Institute For International Political Studies.

Alberto Martinelli, Professor Emeritus University of Milan; President International Social Science Council.

Antonio Navarra, President Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC); Scientific Committee CFS.

Simona Bonafè, Member of the European Parliament (Committee on Environment, Health and Food Safety and Economic Affairs; Delegation for relations with the United States and with the People’s Republic of China)

Li Ruiyu, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Italy.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Despite the successful reduction of its greenhouse gases emissions (decreased from 19% of the global share in 1990, to 11% in 2013, down to 4-5% in 2030), Europe has not been able to plan a medium/long term climate and energy policy able to effectively adapt and be competitive in the varying global scenario;
- ★ European dependency on energy imports (almost 70% of its natural gas, 90% of its oil and 40% of its coal and nuclear fuel) together with the persisting economic stagnation and the recent rise of populism and nationalism are taught challenges that Europe is struggling to win;
- ★ EU needs to maintain the leadership role that led to the Paris Agreement and become a global climate leader.

Read the presentations of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

22nd
09

Smart Mobility Forum 2017. *Lesignano, Republic of San Marino*

IED's international forum organised with **Repubblica Futura** (Republic of San Marino).

20
17

Following the successful Smart Mobility forums organized by the IED in 2014, 2015 and 2016 within the SMART CITY development model context, also this year's Smart Mobility event took place in the Republic of San Marino. Due to its unique territorial and demographic characteristics, this country aims to become a sample of excellence in the highly growing field of the smart mobility, proposing itself as a possible site for innovative pilot projects. Several distinguished professionals from urban planning, automobile, cycling and governmental sectors were welcomed, sharing their extensive experience with sustainable mobility projects. The conference was the part of the **European Mobility Week**, European Commission's campaign which was this year celebrated under the slogan "Clean, shared and intelligent mobility".

In the order of speeches:

Antonella Mularoni, Member of the Scientific Committee of Institute of European Democrats, former Minister of Territory and Environment, Agriculture, Telecommunications and International Economic Cooperation of the Republic of San Marino.

Nicola Selva, Coordinator of Repubblica Futura.

Adriana Čiefová, Project Manager of Institute of European Democrats.

Marco Podeschi, Minister of Education, Culture, University, Research and Technological Innovation of the Republic of San Marino.

Niccolò Panozzo, Smarter Cycling Coordinator at the European Cyclists' Federation in Brussels.

Federico Cassani, Expert on Urban and Transport Planning, Urban Design and Traffic Calming Systems, and Co-Founder and Senior Partner of MIC Mobility in Chain.

Antonio Melidoni, Marketing and Public Affairs Manager at Mercedes-Benz Italia.

Tina Giannopoulou, Project Manager and Designer of Sustainable Mobility for the city of Malmö in Sweden, the winner of the European Mobility Week Award 2016.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Smart City is a city that provides various transport options to make the city safer, healthier, eco-friendly as well as attractive for its citizens;
- ★ We cannot think about mobility in traditional ways – general mobility of humanity has increased significantly, the systematic trips (home-work) of the past have multiplied;
- ★ National and regional governments need to be much more involved in mobility projects and they need to cooperate with the car industries and other actors to make the implementation of sustainable technologies into practice easier;
- ★ The concept of 'new urbanism' combines recent technological developments with the understanding of the needs of the people and with the requirements of the public bodies;
- ★ We are entering the era of Shared Mobility, the concept of property of a vehicle will soon be significantly challenged;
- ★ Bike-sharing system is the most efficient smart mobility system thanks to its cheap cost, improving innovations, faster speed with regards to traffic jams in the cities and positive impact on people's health;
- ★ Sustainable mobility projects lack necessary and effective promotion for public;
- ★ A crucial problem is that all technological innovations we have for disposal now are not interconnected well, they miss the chain – a better interaction of technological innovations will radically change the way we move;
- ★ Price is the greatest obstacle towards more mobility projects because sustainable modes of transport are very expensive;
- ★ Local authorities and companies cannot be afraid of testing and directly engaging with the citizens in order to shape the landscape and urbanism of the cities together.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and see the presentation of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

06th
10

European Union between Democracy and Political Extremism. *Košice, Slovakia*

IED's international conference organised with **Mladí Európania** (Slovakia).

20
17

In recent years, we have witnessed the rise of popular support for the extremist political parties across entire European Union. Many of the radical movements have entered European, national and regional parliaments; however, the appeal of these political entities and the profile of their supporters remain very poorly understood. Reflecting this dangerous trend, the aim of the event was to analyse the reasons for the current successes of radical politicians, explain who is responsible for this trend, and how the rise of political extremism can be viewed in the European context. Last but not least, the distinguished speakers of the event offered the possible suggestions how to effectively warn about the dangers of extremist politicians and eliminate the rise of political extremism across the EU Member States.

In the order of speeches:

Adriana Čiefová, Project Manager of the Institute of European Democrats.

Anna Lujza Fureková, President of Mladí Európania/Young Europeans (ME).

Grigorij Mesežnikov, President and Program Director of the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in Bratislava and political analyst.

Michal Vašečka, Sociologist and Assistant Professor at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic.

Jakub Drábik, Historian at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV) in Bratislava and expert on fascism.

Andrzej Potocki, Vice-President of Stronnictwo Demokratyczne of Poland and Vice-President of European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP).

Jose Felix Merladet, Deputy Secretary-General of European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP) and Professor at University of Deusto and University of Navarra in Spain.

Gabriel Eštok, Lecturer at the Faculty of Politics of University of P.J.Šafárika in Košice and expert on the EU.

Moderator:

Alena Bašistová, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and university lecturer.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ Political extremism is an ideological wave aimed at weakening the existing democratic system and the European Union that guards its existence in the Member States;
- ★ Populists vs. extremists – populists want to modify the system while protecting democratic society, extremists want to destroy democratic system by radical means and replace it with totalitarian regime or dictatorship;
- ★ The real goal of extremist-orientated parties is not to resolve the problems of citizens but to destroy democratic system with all its rights and benefits which would, in final, worsen the lives and living conditions of people;
- ★ Although populism is not connected only to extremist parties but it is certainly the main tool of extremists;
- ★ Extremist parties are generally highly nationalistic, anti-Islam, anti-immigration, anti-globalisation and Eurosceptic, defending conservative and Christian values and economic protectionism;
- ★ Old hypothesis that people vote for the extremists out of economic despair is not applicable to today's world because nowadays people living in economically strong regions with low unemployment vote for far-right parties;
- ★ Today's factors that make people voting for extremists include: feeling of uncertainty, social pessimism, ontological insecurity, low level of confidence in 'standard' politics and in the state institutions, offer of 'simplistic' explanations by extremists, failure of liberal-democratic elites to tackle problems that people consider as most important, spreading of 'alternative' media, and lack of interest in politics and public affairs;
- ★ Typical voters of extremist-oriented political parties are mainly young males and/or pensioners, who are unemployed or receive minimum average income, they have lower level of education, they are daily users of internet, and they do not have experience in living in multicultural environment; nevertheless, extremists are finding their supporters also among youth, highly educated people and intellectuals;

- ★ Fascism is based on an irrational idea that the nation is falling and ‘bad’ democracy is responsible for it;
- ★ The targets of extremists are in general minority groups of any kind – everybody who does not fit into homogeneous, ‘pure’, highly ethicized picture (in past Jews, nowadays mainly migrants and Muslims) – far-right extremists utilize these groups to prove to people that the nation’s prosperity and viability are threatened, and want to destroy democracy in order to clean the nation from those ‘enemies’;
- ★ We can identify certain similarities between the Europe of the 1930s and the current situation and learn from the bitter lessons of history;
- ★ People are afraid of accelerating globalization and multiculturalism – we need to work on better strategies how to eliminate the fear of the changes in people because the fear makes people vote for radical solutions;
- ★ Education, discussion and sharing of knowledge are the most important means how to eliminate political extremism;
- ★ Democracy is clearly and unprecedentedly the best regime humanity has so far experienced across the centuries and the EU is the only possible guarantee of a peaceful and prosperous future for the continent.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and check the presentations of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

07th
11

Post-Truth: Politics and Communication. *Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain*

IED’s international seminar organised with **Sabino Arana Fundazioa** (Basque Country, Spain).

20
17

Reflecting the emergence of the phenomenon of post-truth politics with the advent of the internet and related social and communication changes, the seminar managed to address – with the assistance of several outstanding experts on communication, political campaigning and social media – what we can understand under the term ‘post-truth era’, what communication strategies are used nowadays in political campaigns, why information literacy is so important, what impact digital revolution have on journalism, and how we can effectively address the issue of ‘fake news’ in the online platforms.

In the order of speeches:

Juan Maria Atutxa, President of Sabino Arana Fundazioa.

Flaminia Baffigo, Coordinator of the Institute of European Democrats.

Rafael Suso, Company Branding, Communication and Strategy Consultant.

Juan Antonio Giner, Journalist and CEO and Founder of Innovation Media Consulting.

Miquel Urmeneta, Journalist and Lecturer in Communications at the University of Catalonia in Spain.

Marco Ricorda, Digital Identity Manager for the ALDE Group of the European Parliament.

Carmen Beatriz Fernández, CEO of DataStrategia Consultores.



Main outcomes and proposals:

- ★ The term ‘post-truth’ reflects the situation in which objective facts are less influential and important in shaping public opinion than intentionally misleading, exaggerated, sensationalist and deceptive information which veracity and accuracy are of secondary importance;
- ★ New technologies and social media platforms have contributed to the rise of the phenomenon of post-truth information and became dangerous weapon in political discourse;
- ★ Two lie-based political campaigns – the Leave.EU campaign for the UK’s withdrawal from the EU and Donald Trump’s presidential campaign – had a far-reaching impact on the face and means of spreading the news;

- ★ The most famous networking sites worldwide Facebook and Twitter directly influence democratic system and its strength because they are increasingly abused for manipulation of public opinion;
- ★ The networking sites are also abused as the means for the governments of some states to influence internal affairs inside the other states (e.g. the Kremlin's interventions into the US and European elections);
- ★ We all can very easily become the editors of fake news if we broadcast unverified information online;
- ★ It is cheaper, easier, faster and financially more advantageous to create and publish a lie than to search for the fact which requires money, time and effort and in final, the fact does not sell so well than the sensational lie;
- ★ In order to improve the quality of newspapers and adjust them to the digital revolution, the newspapers should invest into innovation, hire more experts on technology, increase interaction, be more pro-active, visionary and courageous, and hire more talented journalists and provide them enough freedom in their work;
- ★ An increasing number of people use the social media sites and not traditional newspapers for reading the news;
- ★ Social media shares the great deal of responsibility why Britons voted for Brexit and Americans for Trump;
- ★ The populist campaigns work with emotions of people, esp. fear because the sentiments and not the facts move votes;
- ★ Two main variables of political communication and campaigning are message and audience – when speaking about the audience, neutral voters are those who matter in the campaign;
- ★ People usually consider some information as true when they believe in that information even though that information may be fake one;
- ★ Only critical thinking and information literacy may effectively fight against the spread of disinformation;
- ★ We need to be much more careful when using social media platforms, they lack transparency and information broadcasted and spread via them are not regulated and controlled properly.

Read the [FULL REPORT](#) of the event and check the presentations of speakers on the [webpage of this event](#).

24-5th
11

IED-YDE Winter Academy 2017 Youth Engagement in Building a More Efficient Europe. *Brussels, Belgium*

20
17

IED's youth academy organised with **Young Democrats for Europe (YDE)**.

The 2nd edition of the IED-YDE Winter Academy dealt with the subject 'Youth Engagement in Building a more Efficient Europe'.

The event was attended by [32 young delegates](#) from different political youth organisations from 19 European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain (Basque Country and Canaries), Ukraine.



Friday's speakers in the order of speeches:

Flaminia Baffigo, Coordinator of the Institute of European Democrats (IED).

Mathieu Baudier, Member of Scientific Committee of IED.

Antoine Carette, President of Young Democrats for Europe (YDE).

Marios Georgiadis, Vice-Chair of the Greek Parliament and Vice-President of the European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP).

On Friday, the Academy welcomed a distinguished keynote speaker, Vice-Chair of the Greek Parliament and Vice-President of the European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP) Marios Georgiadis, who talked about the voice of youth in democratic life of Europe.

On Saturday, young delegates discussed the most important current issues that resonate across Europe in the [workshop “For a Europe of United Diversity”](#) which was composed of five groups:

- *Iron Curtain Group*
- *Crystal Curtain Group*
- *Solidarity Group*
- *Equality Group*
- *Opportunities Group*



The presentation of the conclusions from this interesting workshop was followed by the roundtable “Where will we be in 2027?” in which young delegates discussed how Europe and the world will look like in ten years’ time.

Find out more on the [webpage of this event](#).

PUBLICATIONS OF 2017

All publications are available online on: www.iedonline.eu

60 Year of the Treaty of Rome and its Eternal Legacy for the European Project.

IED Special Publication by Adriana Čiefová.

The Treaty of Rome was signed in the so-called Eternal City of Rome exactly sixty years ago, on 25 March 1957. Together with the Treaty of Paris of 1951, the Rome Treaty is the most important legal basis for the modern-day European Union. This epoch-making document laid down the key foundations of the greatest integration of peoples and nations in European history that made Europe one of the most peaceful, prosperous, stable and advanced regions of the world. The 60th Anniversary of the Rome Treaty is an important opportunity to remind ourselves of the original goals of European integration and the achievements the idea of united Europe has brought to our continent over the past six decades. The fundamental legacy of the Rome Treaty needs to serve the EU Member States as a recipe how to resolve the serious crises the EU is facing nowadays and re-unite all Europeans for a common path towards an “ever closer union”.

Read our [special publication dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome](#).

Read [the contributions and the interviews delivered at the EDP Conference “Europe's Future Hangs in the Balance. Proposals for a EU Refunding”](#).

The EU and the European Elites in the Face of Rising Populisms in the Continent.

IED Working Paper by José Felix Merladet.

The working paper discusses the rise of populism and political extremism in the European Union from political, historical, philosophical and sociological point of view. In author's opinion, Europeans are not anymore in an Era of Changes but they are rather witnessing a *Change of Era*. Although the EU citizens are living in the best of possible times – Europe is the most peaceful, most democratic, wealthiest and socially secure than ever in its long history – more and more voters have started to turn to populist and extremist political forces that are openly against the current establishment, against the EU and in some cases against democratic regime itself. Populist parties and movements, mostly on the right, are becoming a powerful force in both Europe and the USA. The author questions why this is happening and why it is happening now and he offers the set of causes for the rise of populism and political extremism with elaborated explanations that cover European history, philosophy, sociological trends in the society and current political landscape in the EU Member States.

Reflecting all these sets of causes, the author concludes that the only possible guarantee of a better future for the continent is the European Union. There should be an enormous effort to persuade the people that they cannot get rid of Europe but they need to get *more Europe*. But for that it should be a Europe in which they feel comfortable in and with which they can identify themselves, a Europe of democracy, human rights, rule of law, welfare state, culture and traditions strongly rooted on three pillars: the Greek philosophical rationality, the Roman approach to law, order and justice, and the Christian religion and its ethics.

[Link to the publication.](#)

No to Populist Ideas – Yes to Democratic Responses.

IED Publication by Adriana Čiefová.

Editing and Publication Design by EU-turn European Communication.

Faced with major crises involving economy, social affairs, trade, industry, migration as well as terrorism, the very existence of the European Union is now under threat. Taking advantage of a breeding ground and stirring fears, populists are advocating the end of the European project, its collapse and ultimately nationalism, sending Europe back to the darkest times in its history. The main goal of this ambitious publication is, therefore, to refute the misleading claims and false assumptions presented by the populist and/or extremist-orientated political parties on the most sensitive European issues that resonate across the European Union. The publication refutes the populist arguments by offering verified facts, objective explanations and accurate information on the issues, supported by variety of reliable examples, comparisons and surveys. Through this, the publication aspires to make people reassess their attitudes towards migration or social affairs, influence them to verify the claims they hear from populists and, in final, to eliminate the reach of populist solutions and deliver a positive change to the European society.



Topics of the publication:

1. Immigration and Schengen Area
2. Posted Workers and Social Dumping
3. European Social Model
4. Defence of Trade and Industry

[Link to the English version of the publication.](#)

[Link to the French version of the publication.](#)

IED Newsletters:

- ❖ [January 2017](#)
- ❖ [April 2017](#)
- ❖ [September 2017](#)



PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2018

January 2018 – December 2018

The Institute of European Democrats (IED), European political foundation formally affiliated to the European Democratic Party (EDP), was founded with the aim to promote a better understanding of the core aspects of the European integration process, to bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions and to play an active role in strengthening the confidence of European citizens in the European project.

To carry out its mission, the IED focuses on two key pillars: organization of the events and management of the research activities. In particular, the IED organizes international conferences and seminars where politicians, experts, EU and national officials, academics and civil society representatives discuss and share ideas and discuss real problems affecting citizens. Such events are mainly organised in the EU Member States, in order to discuss concrete issues closer to EU citizens and member organisations and to contribute to the national discussion with a European perspective ensured by the international dimension of the events. At the same time, the Institute carries out research activities and publishes political documents and studies produced by associated researchers and external projects. The IED works in close collaboration with both European and national institutions, universities, research centres and international foundations. Through a broad range of activities, the IED aims to play an active role in restoring and strengthening citizens' confidence in the European Union, and beyond this, in promoting a united and sovereign Europe.

The main areas of interest on which the Institute will be working on 2018 will be the following priorities which will be tackled partly through conferences and roundtable discussions organised in the EU Member States and partly through research activities:

1. A NEW SECURITY ERA:

- Management of the migration flows to the EU and the role of the EU in the conflict-resolution and peacekeeping in the Middle East region.
- European security system, safeguard of EU external borders and modification of internal security legislation.
- Fight against cyber war, the threats of information warfare.

2. POPULISM, POLITICAL EXTREMISM AND POLITICS OF UNCERTAINTIES – NEW CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES:

- Rise of the support for populist and extremist parties across the EU and the ways how to address this trend.
- Unpredictable new US policy directions in the Trump era and their implications for Europe.
- Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the future of the EU integration and Eurozone in the post-Brexit Europe.

3. **RISING INEQUALITIES IN EUROPE:**

- Economic inequality, disparities in living standards, inequality of opportunities and social conditions and the ways how to tackle them.
- Youth unemployment.
- Equal opportunities for women and gender issues.

4. **CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE EVOLVING GLOBAL SCENARIO:**

- Promotion of cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, European history and values and all that make up our common European identity within the context of the 2018 Year of Cultural Heritage.
- Environment and climate agenda after the US withdrawal from Paris Climate Accord and future of an Energy Union.
- EU strategy on intelligent transport system and low-emission and smart mobility.

These priorities will be tackled partly through **conferences, seminars and roundtable discussions** organised in the EU Member states and/or other European countries and partly through **research activities**.

For more information, please visit **the official website of the IED:** www.iedonline.eu



Stay connected and follow **the Facebook page of the IED:**
www.facebook.com/InstituteofEuropeanDemocrats



Institute of European Democrats

Rue de l'Industrie, 4
1000 Brussels – Belgium
Office: 0032.2.2130010
Mobile phone: 0032.485.936514
info@iedonline.eu
www.iedonline.eu

Prepared by Adriana Čiefová (IED, 2017)

The sole liability of this publication rests with the author and the European Parliament is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.