



Presidency of Latvia
Council of Europe
MAY – NOVEMBER 2023

Présidence de la Lettonie
Conseil de l'Europe
MAI – NOVEMBRE 2023

International Conference

PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

(Building on Reykjavík Principles for Democracy)

SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2023, RIGA, LATVIA

Reykjavík Declaration commits to securing and strengthening democracy and good governance at all levels throughout Europe. In the recent years the citizens and civil society organisations have become visible and active actors for the transformational change at local, national and European level. They have proved the ability to respond with the high responsibility and solidarity to the democratic backsliding, external threats and new challenges created by the aggressive invasion of Russia in Ukraine. The European agenda of democracy has been reshaped by putting in the center of the development the urge for the peace and democratic security.

Building on the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy this conference puts forward the substantial questions of the changing nature of the partnerships among governments, multilateral institutions and CSOs, and also the within the sector itself - examining the role of the local level civic activism and its regional and global level impact.

Participants of the event will shape the agenda for a democratic future and civil society as a prerequisite for a functioning democracy by their own stories of the best and challenging examples, discuss the different perspectives and proposals for improvement.

Politicians, civil servants, academics, CSOs and civic activists are invited to participate, learn and share. Registration is open until July 20th, 2023.

Conference is organized by the Civic Alliance-Latvia in cooperation with the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) and the State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia as part of the Latvian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Register here:



PRELIMINARY AGENDA

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

16:00- 19:00 Warm-up discussion “New and emerging digital technologies: risks and opportunities for the civil society and democratic future”

In the light of the Reykjavík Declaration the discussion will look in the positive impact and opportunities, an also the risks and negative impacts created by the new and emerging digital technologies to the democracy, human rights and rule of law. Special attention will be paid to the vulnerable groups and violence against women. Also the development of the digital platforms as tools for citizen engagement will be explored.

19:00 Welcome cocktail

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

9:30 - 10:00 Opening

10:00 - 11:30 Panel discussion I “Impact of the regional security challenges on the sustainability of democracy”

Unprecedented levels of civic activism bring together stakeholders from all sectors - politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs, academia and CSOs. At the same time security challenges are used as a veil for the nontransparent decision making, discussions on regulations on “foreign agents” threatening the sustainability of the CSO sector, limiting freedom of association and freedom of voice by smear campaigns on journalists and activists.

The panel discussion will look at the challenging examples reshaping the sustainability of the democracy in the region and produce the proposals for the minimum standards of the enabling environment for the rule of law and civic space.

12:00 - 13:30 Panel discussion II “From local to global: raising role of the local and national level CSOs in the multilateral institutions”

Changing nature of civic activism where individuals play a more important role, birth of new forms of citizen engagement and association bring forward the question how multilateral institutions can reshape their ways of working and become more open to the local and national level CSOs. Decisions on the sustainability of the democracies are made at the national level and strengthening the capacities of the citizens to safeguard democracies are of high importance.

The panel discussion will look at the good examples of the representation of the national and local level organisations at the regional and global level, produce proposals to improve the transformational change of the partnerships in the Council of Europe.

14:00 - 15:30 Panel discussion III “Social resilience: tool for inclusive, safe and sustainable local communities”

Recent years have proven that grassroots initiatives can grow in the nation wide movements of solidarity and civic activism. Bottom up and decentralised development is a key for the social resilience in democracies but also in the times of high security uncertainties. Inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups, reducing of the inequalities pave the road to the cohesive societies.

The panel discussion will look at the outstanding examples of local initiatives, especially from Ukraine, that have reshaped the concept of the development recently and produce the proposals for the more resilient region.

16:30 Departure to inspirational local site visits - social enterprises, CSOs and civic initiatives

