

18–19 September 2025

A WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN: **DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSION** **IN AN AGE OF INSECURITY**



The 2025 edition of the International Democracy Day Brussels Conference (IDD Brussels) will gather prominent organizations and thought leaders to explore the intersection between democratic values, security, inclusion and global influence as a pressing issue for Europe and its partnerships across the globe.

Organized by the [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\)](#), [European Network of Political Foundations \(ENoP\)](#), [European Endowment for Democracy \(EED\)](#), [European Partnership for Democracy \(EPD\)](#), and [Carnegie Europe](#), this landmark event will take place on Thursday, 18 September (afternoon), and Friday, 19 September (morning). This year's edition will take place at two venues in Brussels: On 18 September, it will be held at the Renaissance Hotel (Rue du Parnasse 19), and on 19 September, at the European Economic and Social Committee (Rue Belliard 99–101).

As the conference marks its eleventh edition, the event promises to provide a platform for high-level discussions about Europe's democracy mission, with a focus on how inclusive democracy is integral to ensuring the European Union's security, stability, prosperity, partnerships and global influence.

PROGRAMME

18 September

 [Renaissance Hotel](#)
([Rue du Parnasse 19](#))

13:30 – 14:00

Registration and Coffee

14:00 – 14:05

Welcome

Shada Islam

14:10 – 14:25

Keynote Address

To be announced

14:25 – 15:10

High-Level Opening Session: 'Democracy for All: Inclusive Democracy as a Pathway to Security and Development'

This session will examine how partnerships and alliances can revitalize global and regional cooperation in support of democracy. Drawing on diverse experiences from around the globe, it will highlight how inclusion strengthens democracy and contributes to peace and security. The discussion aims to foster cross-regional understanding and alliance building through shared learning and collective action. What are examples of inclusive democracy practices that have strengthened security? How can we create a multistakeholder platform to advance south-south and south-north democracy partnerships? Marking International IDEA's 30th anniversary, the session will explore how democratic values can be embedded in international partnerships to promote mutual benefit and cooperation between the Global North and South.

Shada Islam

Kevin Casas Zamora

Emma Theofelus

Tasnim Jara

15:10 – 15:40

Coffee Break

15:40 – 15:55

Lightning Talk: 'Measuring Democratic Inclusion: First Global Youth Participation Index'

Kristie Dobbs

Britany Anlar

15:55 – 16:40

Session II: 'WYDE Political Parties: Inclusion at the Heart of Political Life'

In a world where democracy is increasingly questioned, and legitimacy often challenged, political parties remain both the most distrusted and yet most essential institutions in democratic life. How they adapt — or fail to adapt — to shifting societal expectations will shape the future of governance.

This session explores what happens when inclusion becomes a political strategy — not just a checkbox or quota, but a transformative force. Through the lens of the WYDE Political Parties Project, this conversation brings to Brussels the stories of African women political leaders and changemakers who are reshaping politics from within. Their testimonies offer more than inspiration — they offer real-time lessons in innovation and power-building that speak directly to the wider global conversation on democracy and security.

Kathleen Addy

Dorothy NakanwagiMs

Sialo Tausur

Ms Harlette Badou
N'Guessan

Hon. Mihaela Neto Webba

16:40 – 16:50

Lightning Talk: 'Democracy on the Move – Global State of Democracy 2025 Report'

Seema Sha



16:50 – 17:20

Spotlight Session: 'The EU-CELAC Summit 2025 as an Opportunity for Strengthening Democracy'

This session will zoom in on how the upcoming EU-CELAC Summit can help reinvigorate democracy in both regions. What are the challenges that the Summit needs to take into account with regard to democracy, rule of law and human rights? What would member states from the bi-regional EU-CELAC association need to discuss and what can they expect from the EU-CELAC Summit? What recommendations can be produced to bring democracy on the agenda of the Summit?

Alberto Brunori

Pelayo Castro

More to be announced

17:20 – 17:25

Keynote Address

More to be announced

17:25 – 17:30

Wrap-Up



PROGRAMME

19 September

📍 [European Economic and Social Committee \(Rue Belliard 99–101\)](#)

8:30 – 9:00

Registration and Coffee

9:00 – 9:05

Welcome

To be announced

9:05 – 9:15

Keynote Address

To be announced

9:15 – 9:25

Lightning Talk: 'A New Phase of Civic Movements: Implications for International Democracy Support'

Richard Youngs

9:25 – 10:25

Session III: 'What Future for Democracy Support? Innovative Approaches to Put Democracy at the Centre of External Policies'

In 2025, democracy actors face unprecedented challenges. Funding is shrinking, anti-CSO narratives are gaining traction, and shifting geopolitical priorities are sidelining human rights and governance concerns. These trends threaten to deepen the global democratic decline at a time when support for democracy is more urgent than ever – yet also more scrutinized. This session will spotlight concrete responses from across the democracy support ecosystem – featuring donors, youth-led civil society organizations, and research and technical assistance providers. It will explore how their approaches are shaping dynamic solutions and influencing policy agendas, including the upcoming EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

Blair Glencorse

Thomas Carothers

Lourdes Argueta

Chiara Adamo

More to be announced

10:25 – 10:35

Keynote Address

Svitlana Tsikhanouskaya

10:35 – 11:05

Coffee Break

11:05 – 11:10

Lightning Talk: 'Are Financial Regulations Failing Democracy?: Europe's Growing Financial Exclusion and Banking Difficulties?'

Jorge Jraissati

11:10 – 11:45

Session IV: 'Investing in Values: How the Next EU Budget Can Strengthen Democracy'

Join us in shaping agendas and actionable recommendations to prioritize democracy in the next MFF, building on the Joint Statement on "Support for Democracy in the Next MFF is Key for the EU to Achieve its Ambitions" and the European Commission's forthcoming Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal, set to be published on 16 July. This session will explore strategies to embed democratic values in external action, strengthen the rule of law, and bolster civil society within the MFF. A must-attend for EU and member states' policymakers, civil society leaders and other stakeholders committed to the EU's action to safeguard a democratic world.

Ken Godfrey

Sam van der Staak

More to be announced

11:45 – 11:50

Video Message

To be announced

11:50 – 12:00

Keynote Address

To be announced

12:00 – 12:45

Session V: 'Democracy Matters: Values as Strategy, Security as Outcome'

Support for democracy stands as a cornerstone value of the European Union, essential to Europe's founding principles and to its long-term stability, prosperity and global influence. As Europe confronts escalating threats to democratic governance within its borders and internationally and is seeking to rearm, it is vital that it also deploys its soft power to build genuine grassroots support for democratic principles. Supporting independent media that provide citizens with reliable information and funding civil society organisations that advocate for transparency and accountability is cost effective and sustainable. At this critical time, the EU must continue to champion democratic rights worldwide and integrate them in all its policies. This session will explore how democracy support helps reduce long-term security risks to Europe.

Marcin Walecki

Jerzy Pomianowski

Federica D'è Alessandra

Sara Ajilyakin

More to be announced

12:45 – 12:55

Closing Remarks

12:55 – 13:00

Farewell

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch



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DEMOCRACY**
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