

FORUM 2000 BULLETIN

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IN THE SPIRIT OF VÁCLAV HAVEL

As a close collaborator sagely remarked, only now have people begun to realize who they have lost with the departure of Václav Havel. Somewhat surprisingly, this also applies to those of us who had the honor of working with President Havel, speaking to him, and listening to his opinions. We have indeed lost the founder of the Forum, a visionary and an inspirational being, but above all, we have lost a friend who delighted in quietly and modestly listening to others.

A week before Václav Havel's death, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited him. According to some, he came to say goodbye, while others believe that he came to prepare his friend to step into another realm of spirituality. The silent smiles of the two great men, however, assured us all that the spirit of friendship is more powerful than death and that it is consciousness of this that gives the strength to act.

Immediately following the funeral we met at the foundation's headquarters and discussed a topic that everyone had immediately thought about on that sad Sunday: What will happen to Forum 2000? And despite the tragedy of the moment, what filled us with joy was that virtually everyone had the same idea: that we must indeed continue, because of him, our precious friend. Over the following days we were contacted in the same spirit by people around us, not only supporters and participants in the conferences of previous years, but also sponsors, who are of vital importance to the future of Forum 2000. In particular, our thanks go to The Nippon Foundation, the general partner of Forum 2000, whose representative was the first to assure us of their continued support in 2012.

Preparations for the 16th conference are already well under way. A number of eminent individuals have already confirmed their participation and we expect that others will sign on soon. The theme of this year's conference will be "Media and Democracy", which Václav Havel suggested last autumn. He was alarmed by the direction in which the media is heading, even in democratic nations, and he was deeply interested in what the colossal technological changes in information communication would mean for the media and the entire world.

So will be this year's Forum 2000: the first without the physical presence of Václav Havel but, without a doubt, entirely in his spirit, raising curious and critical questions about our present and our future.

Tomáš Vrba

Chairman of the Board of Directors



COMMEMORATING VÁCLAV HAVEL, FOUNDER OF FORUM 2000

"Perhaps this is the key legacy that Havel has left our world: an active global conscience. Each of us is responsible for our civilization; we cannot turn our backs and avert our eyes when freedom is stifled. ... Havel taught us, we must all also strive to make this world a freer, safer, more just, more environmentally sustainable, and more democratic place for everyone." (Excerpt from a statement "Havel Lives")

Shared Concern Initiative

"Former President Havel was a dissident playwright who led his countrymen in overcoming their country's totalitarian regime, in spite of repeated imprisonment; an intellectual who brought unswerving conscientiousness and idealism into both his words and actions; and an indomitable leader who changed society."

Yohei Sasakawa

"President Havel honored me with an invitation to visit Czechoslovakia in February 1990, apparently his first foreign guest, soon after he became president of the country. ... President

Havel himself impressed me as being utterly free of pretence and on the many occasions that we met over the years, he remained a true champion of human rights and freedom everywhere."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

"Václav Havel was the moral voice of his country and his era. He lived in truth – his credo – as few in his place and times dared to do. His humanity, humility and decency were an example for us all. In the face of the great challenges today that shall test a newer generation, let his profile in courage be our inspiration."

Ban Ki-moon

"It is a little strange to speak of a man I had never met... It was his vigorous and warm personality and his total commitment to the support of movements for democracy and human rights the world over that made his friendship so real and vibrant and made me feel we were linked to one another by close ties of understanding."

Aung San Suu Kyi

OLDŘICH ČERNÝ, IN MEMORIAM

In March 2012, the Forum 2000 Foundation lost another key member as Oldřich Černý, its longtime Executive Director, passed away. Olda made many significant contributions and enhanced Forum 2000's reputation as a prestigious and widely respected organization. His experience, foresight and wisdom, his ability to assess problems and understand their nature, were unique. Olda Černý was a man of indisputable moral principle and he always clearly knew on which side he stood. In Olda, we have lost a leader, a colleague and a good friend and he will be sorely missed.

Jakub Klepal and the Forum 2000 Team



DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

15th Forum 2000 Conference, October 9–11, 2011

The 15th Forum 2000 Conference once again provided global leaders with a place where they could address the crucial issues of today's world from diverse points of views. The focus in 2011 was on the different aspects of the relationship between democracy and the rule of law.

The program consisted of more than 50 panel discussions, roundtables and other events, including concerts and photography exhibitions, and took place at Žofín Palace and numerous other venues around Prague. For the first time, an event was also held in Pilsen. The conference was open to the public and attended by more than 3,000 observers.

Issues Discussed

Discussions were devoted to the perspectives of democracy and the rule of law in the 21st century, as well as the relationship between the rule of law and individual freedom. Participants also addressed the globalizing world and discussed the issue of state sovereignty and its limits, particularly with respect to the international community's responsibility to protect. The conference also dealt with the rule of law in the context of the current economic crisis, in the area of environmental protection and looked at the influence of organized crime and corruption on democratic society.

One of the traditional topics addressed at the forum every year is the place and role of religion in the contemporary world. The 2011 conference examined questions concerning the relationship between faith, ethics, human rights and law. Debates were also dedicated to regional issues, including recent developments in the region of North Africa and the Middle East, the state of the rule of law in Russia and Ukraine, as well as the perception of the rule of law in Asia. A specific panel was devoted to the issue of the scarcity of water resources in the Middle East, which ranks among Forum 2000's long-term topics, and discussed innovative projects with the potential to unite the region.

Participants

The current global challenges were addressed by more than 160 participants, including Václav Havel, Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics Joseph Stiglitz, Prince of Jordan El Hassan bin Talal, current President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga and President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, former President of Nigeria Oluse-

gun Obasanjo, Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, former Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gareth Evans and German politician Cem Özdemir. Political activists and dissidents Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma and Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas from Cuba were unable to come to Prague but both sent contributions to the conference via video messages.

Outputs

Outputs from the conference, which can be found on our website at www.forum2000.cz, include video recordings, photographs, interviews with delegates from the media, and summaries, which briefly present the key ideas expressed during the discussions and speeches. Soon, we will post transcripts of the proceedings which will also be published in the Conference Report, due to be released in spring 2012. If you are interested in receiving the report, please contact us at secretariat@forum2000.cz.



YOHEI SASAKAWA AND AUNG SAN SUU KYI MEETING

In December 2011, Yohei Sasakawa, co-founder of the Forum 2000 Foundation and Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, visited Burma to meet democratic opposition representative, Aung San Suu Kyi. During the meeting, Yohei Sasakawa gave Aung San Suu Kyi photos from the last Forum 2000 Conference, along with a personal letter from Václav Havel, expressing support for her efforts and gratitude for her contributions, which were sent to the conference via video message. The meeting was held in Rangoon, one day after the death of Václav Havel.

I already now have the feeling that nobody overturned my ritual belief that a legal code must be preceded by a moral code. And where the moral code is absent, it is possible to invent the most perfect kind of laws and yet this is to little avail, because those who manage to avoid the law always manage to be one step ahead. And that is why it is important to link the theme of the legal code with the moral code with the theme of decency, and respect for human rights.

Václav Havel at the Closing of the Forum 2000 Conference in 2011





DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA

One Year After an Empty Chair in Oslo

Leading personalities in the global human rights arena, led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, assembled in Prague on December 11, 2011 at a roundtable discussion on the current state of human rights and democracy in Asia. The discussion was held to commemorate the first anniversary of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to leading Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo and it was loosely linked to the “Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Asia” conference that was organized by the Forum 2000 Foundation in 2009.

Participants in the roundtable included Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Iranian lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, co-drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and author of the bestseller “Indignez-vous” Stéphane Hessel, Chinese dissident and President of the Initiatives for China Jianli Yang and former French Minister of Foreign Affairs and co-founder of Doctors Without Borders Bernard Kouchner. The discussion was opened by a contribution sent by Václav Havel who was unable to participate personally.

These expressions of concern, support and solidarity are of immense importance in sustaining and strengthening the spirit and hope of the people who are engaged in the struggle for human rights and democracy even at the risk of imprisonment and endangering their own lives. It is these people who represent the forces that ultimately will achieve freedom, democracy and human rights.

Prague Declaration Signed on December 11, 2011

All speakers signed the Prague Declaration in which they called on the international community to support human rights and democracy activists in Asian countries. Later, former Polish President Lech Wałęsa and Italian politician Gianni Vernetti also joined the signatories.

The event took place at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University and was aimed primarily at students and members of the professional public. The complete text of the Prague Declaration, as well as a summary, transcript and video recording from the discussion, is available at www.forum2000.cz.

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA'S VISIT TO PRAGUE

At the invitation of Václav Havel and the Forum 2000 Foundation, Tibetan spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, visited Prague from December 10–13, 2011 and participated in several events and meetings.

On Sunday, December 11, His Holiness, together with other distinguished guests, took part in a roundtable focused on democracy and human rights in Asia. Afterwards, His Holiness gave a public talk in the Prague Congress Centre which was devoted to the topic of “Searching for Happiness in a Troubled World”. Tickets to the lecture sold out in a few days and proceeds from the event were used to support the Gyalten School in Tibet through the M.O.S.T. Civic Association.

A press conference with His Holiness was held and he also participated in several personal meetings. He met with Václav Havel, participants of the roundtable and privately with the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg.

All events were attended by over 3,000 people and hundreds of others watched the live broadcast on our website. Photographs and video recordings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's program in Prague can be found at www.forum2000.cz.



NGO MARKET 2012

The NGO Market has become an annual event which allows almost 200 non-profit organizations the unique opportunity to present their activities to the public. Again this year, visitors will learn more about Czech civil society issues presented by organizations ranging from the smallest local NGOs to international ones and enjoy a day full of entertainment and new experiences.

Ageing populations is becoming one of today's most pressing issues. The topics of active ageing and the importance of dialogue between generations will be the major focus of this year's NGO fair. Together with other issues, they will be presented by exhibiting NGOs in our NGO Market Magazine, at workshops, movie screenings and other associated events.

We also aim to improve cooperation between NGOs and corporate partners. We have therefore developed a variety of activities for NGOs and businesses in which they can learn more about strategic partnerships and find appropriate partners. Special assistance will be also provided to companies seeking to start a corporate social responsibility program.

The 13th NGO Market will take place on Friday, May 11, 2012 at the National Technical Library in Prague. For more information please visit www.ngomarket.cz.

FORUM 2000 WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS AND DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2011

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Our sincere thanks to all volunteers involved in our projects for their hard work and dedication. We could never do the things we do without their help.

ABOUT THE FORUM 2000 FOUNDATION

The Forum 2000 Foundation was established in 1996 as a joint initiative of the late Czech President Václav Havel, Japanese philanthropist Yohei Sasakawa, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel. Apart from the main event, which is the annual Forum 2000 Conference, we have a number of other long-term projects, including the Interfaith Dialogue meetings, the Shared Concern Initiative, Water in the Middle East project, the NGO Market and educational activities.

More about Forum 2000, upcoming events and outputs of past meetings can be found at www.forum2000.cz.

Forum 2000 Foundation

Pohořelec 6, 118 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic
tel. +420 224 310 991, fax +420 224 310 989
secretariat@forum2000.cz

The Forum 2000 Foundation activities are made possible by the support of our donors. More information on how to contribute can be found [here](#).