

PROGRAMME

RESTORING COMMON GROUND

| Thursday, 29 August |

| Arrivals to Ljubljana

- **17:45 | Meet-up of participants and departure from Ljubljana**

Moja rolada

19:30–21:30 | Dinner

Gostilna Zatrnik PrJagru

22:00 | Arrival to the hotel

Hotel Pokljuka

| Friday, 30 August |

09:45–10:00 | Registration

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10:00–10:30 | Opening and icebreaker activity

Hotel Pokljuka

Young Bled Strategic Forum team

10:30–10:30 | Coffee break

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10:30–12:30 | Setting the stage discussion

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Grégoire Roos, Head of Political Dialogue & Policy Innovation, BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt

12:30–13:30 | Lunch

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13:30–17:00 | Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Workshop: Voicing Youth Perspective and Political Attitudes

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In a rapidly changing political landscape, it is essential to understand the perspectives and political attitudes of young people – the proverbial Gen Z born between 1996 and 2013. This cohort of youth is now redefining and challenging dominant norms and values. Their perspectives often contrast sharply with previous generations, not only differing in approach but sometimes directly opposing the established views or combining values and norms that were once thought incompatible. This highlights the complexity and uniqueness of Gen Z's political attitudes, as they continue to challenge and reshape the boundaries of societal and political reality.

Building on the findings from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's (FES) comprehensive Youth Study in Southeast Europe in 2024, this workshop will present its key insights interactively, engaging participants with the study's findings while tackling the most interesting and frequently raised topics.

Facilitated by

Jasmin Hasanović, Assistant Professor at the Department for Political Science at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Sarajevo

Emma Dž. Smolo-Zukan regional communications coordinator for Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Dialogue Southeast Europe project

17:00–19:00 | Free time

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19:00–20:00 | Dinner

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20:00–21:00 | Social activity

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| Saturday, 31 August |

09:00–11:00 | Gajst Institute Workshop: Living with the Other: Coining the foundations of sustainable cohabitation

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This generation lives in a world shaped by Otherness, where globalization and interconnectedness have intensified clashes between local norms and international values. As our realities and identities become more exposed to one another, this does not always lead to peaceful coexistence; instead, diversity is often regarded as chaotic and disruptive, while uniformity is viewed as an ideal. That is why through our workshop we wish to explore ways to sustainably live with the Other. With discussions on political, legal-normative, media, education, pop-culture, and socio-economic discourses, participants will first try to identify barriers to cohabitation and then search for solutions to address the issue. The workshop's outcome will be a document titled "Foundations of Ordering Diversity: Bled Perspective 2024."

Facilitated by Gajst members **Anej Bevk Peternelj**, **Urban Culetto**, **Luka Pahor** and **Matic Žibrik**

11:00–11:30 | Coffee break

Hotel Pokljuka

11:30–12:30 | Conversation with Holger Haibach: Parallel Worlds - Alternative Facts

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Creating one's own personal reality is by far not an invention of the present. Also "alternative facts" i.e. fake news are as old as human communication. However, with the rise of social media, it has become sort of a trend to create bubbles, where like-minded people reinforce themselves in their beliefs, correct or not. The latest example is the ongoing electoral campaign for the US presidency, where believers and non-believers create their own reality and spread their own facts. What is true and what is not, has become difficult to determine.

Holger Haibach, Head of the KAS office in Croatia and Slovenia

12:30–13:30 | Lunch

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12:30–16:00 | Zinc Network Workshop: Bridging the Disinformation Divide: Identifying Vulnerable Audiences and Restoring Common Ground

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In an era where disinformation threatens to erode societal trust and undermine democracy, this workshop explores strategies to counter its effects and rebuild common ground. Participants will delve into the impact of disinformation, including the emerging threat of gender- and identity-based disinformation, and how hostile actors exploit societal divisions.

The session emphasises insight-led approaches in designing effective countermeasures, focusing on identifying vulnerable audiences beyond simple demographics. Through hands-on simulation exercises, attendees will apply Zinc's audience vulnerability insights to develop targeted interventions, gaining practical skills to restore shared understanding in our increasingly fragmented information landscape.

Facilitated by

Giulia Magnani, Research Manager at Zinc Network

Kate Llewellyn, Senior Project Manager at Zinc Network

Emir Hasanović, Senior Project Manager at Zinc Network

16:00–17:00 | Free time

Hotel Pokljuka

20:00–21:00 | Picnic dinner

Hotel Pokljuka

| Sunday, 1 September |

09:00–11:30 | Global Diplomacy Lab workshop: Restoring Common Grounds through heritage

Hotel Pokljuka

In a world where national identities are closely connected to national heritage, we suggest to harness the power of local learnings in the heritage field on a global scale. While in conflict situation “the other” is often ascribed the role of a threat to national identity and heritage, there is an alternative. What if we use the common experience of cultural heritage as a connective tissue to foster understanding, innovation, and collaboration across borders? In this session we want to raise understanding of the complexities and the potential of heritage and present ideas to use cultural heritage as a tool for common ground, nationally and internationally. We hope the participants will be inspired to practice a new-found heritage dialogue and find ways in their respective work to include the potential of local heritage to serve as a catalyst for global progress.

Facilitated by

Shota Bukoshi, Adviser, German Society for International Cooperation; Member, Global Diplomacy Lab, Germany/Kosovo

Dagmer Hovestadt, Independent Researcher and Author; Member, Global Diplomacy Lab, Germany

Annegret Warth-Shahlaei, Network Management Specialist, City Of Stuttgart; Member, Global Diplomacy Lab, Germany

12:00–12:30 | Departure to Bled

12:30–14:00 | Lunch and check-in

Hotel Kompas, Bled

14:00– 15:15 | Conversation with Dejan Verčič & Matthew Jacobs: Press F to Pay Respects

Hotel Kompas, Bled

Communication is a powerful tool in bringing different realities closer. How we perceive the world around us is shaped not only by what but also how we communicate. The advent of the Internet and with it online communication promised an unprecedented level of freedom and openness in the exchange of information and ideas. While communication has in fact been radically democratised the effects it had veered away heavily from those foretold by early Internet evangelists. Instead of bringing us closer together, online platforms (especially in their Web 2.0 form) created a multitude of realities sealed off from one another, each containing its own tenets and truths. So strong was this effect that it challenged and undermined even the most deeply entrenched arbiters of objective truth, including government agencies, mainstream media and science. Is this newly emerged world of parallel and often mutually exclusive truths our new reality - or is there still a way to use communication tools that brought us here in the first place to undo some of the damage?

Dr Dejan Verčič, professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Ljubljana in Slovenia; partner at Herman & Partners

Matthew Jacobs, Senior Digital Coordinator for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

15:15–15:45 | Coffee break

15:45– 16:45 | Conversation with Michael O'Flaherty

Hotel Kompas, Bled

Not so long ago human rights have been, together with free market economy, regarded as a universally preordained point of convergence for states big and small. Three decades later, this liberal illusion has been unequivocally dispelled. Today, the questions of human rights have at best been sidelined by power-driven geopolitical considerations that preoccupy decision-makers, mainstream media and the public alike. At worst, human rights have come to be seen as a hindrance for the forces of capitalist production, a threat to the ideological postulates of reactionary movements and a convenient tool misrepresented and misused by populist actors to serve their particular political interests.

Michael O'Flaherty, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe

17:00– 18:00 | Conversation with Stephanie Sutton

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Chip Dean, Chargé d'affaires, U.S. Embassy Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jeremy Jewett, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy, Ljubljana, Slovenia

John D. Stubbs Jr., Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy, Ljubljana, Slovenia

18:00–19:00 | Free time

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19:00–20:00 | Dinner

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20:00–21:00 | Evening Conversation with Tanja Fajon

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Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia

21:15–21:30 | Closing

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Peter Grk, Secretary General, Bled Strategic Forum

Magdalena Rakovec, Young Bled Strategic Forum Programme Director

21:30–22:30 | Reception

Hotel Kompas, Bled

| Monday, 2 September |

–12:00 | Free time

Bled

12:00–13:00 | Lunch

Hotel Kompas, Bled

13:00 | Bled Strategic Forum

For the Bled Strategic Forum programme please advise the official programme [here](#).

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