

Wartburg/Eisenach, October 15-19, 2023

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy and capitalism are facing growing criticism today. The world financial crisis of 2008, the Corona pandemic, the Russian war of aggression on the Ukraine and climate change are all contributing to the criticism of democracies' ability to solve urgent problems. In addition, old and new alternative models to liberal democracy are presenting themselves with increasing self-confidence: the authoritarian "strongman" (Putin, Erdogan, Xi, Trump); illiberal democracy, which pretends to better represent the "real" will of the people; a new nationalism; often also hybrids of these three models.

What can we do?

There is a need to reform existing models of democracy. Party disaffection, declining voter turnout, and especially the growing attractiveness of alternative models are serious symptoms. However, we at the Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der Demokratie-Geschichte (Society for the Study of the History of Democracy) are convinced that democracy, with all its weaknesses, remains superior to the alternatives. And this is precisely because it is capable of reform. Democracy has grown historically. It has been fought for, established, shaped, reformed, defended, lost and won again. It will continue to be changeable in the future. We believe firmly that the participation of as many citizens as possible within the framework of orderly procedures is still the best way to guarantee human dignity for all over the long term, and to keep finding the appropriate forms in which the political process should take place.

Today, politics often takes place in transnational bodies. The future of democracy must therefore be conceived and shaped at least on a European, if not a global, scale. And it must be conceived and lived in democratic forums from the very beginning.

We are creating such a forum at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach. We are establishing an annual meeting of young people who are concerned about the future of democracy and human dignity – and how to create such a future. To kick things off, we invite a small group of students from across Europe to set the cornerstones for the project itself. These are, among others:

- How should the forum work?
- Who should participate in the forum?
- What topics should the forum deal with?
- How should the forum reach out to the public?

We are looking for committed students from all over Europe to help us get this project off the ground.

WHAT YOU BRING...

You are a registered student at a European university. You are thinking about how our societies will be organized and how we will be living together in the future. Human dignity, freedom, and equal participation of all people in politics are important to you. You enjoy meeting people from other cultures and sharing your experiences and ideas with them (conference language: English). You are willing to learn about the history and the present of democracy across Europe.

WHAT WE PROVIDE...

Travel expenses, accommodation, and meals free of charge. A forum where you can exchange ideas with other young people about the future of democracy. The opportunity to make a real difference.

AND NOW?

Send your letter of motivation and a brief CV to info@gedg.org. Deadline: August 31. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, so don't wait too long or all the slots will be filled. We will be in touch.