



GIVE CITIZEN A CHANCE
CENTRAL EUROPEAN)(FORUM
BRATISLAVA 15 - 17 NOVEMBER 2013
PISZTORY PALACE

STREDOEURÓPSKE (FÓRUM

STREDO

CENTRAL EUROPEAN FORUM 2013 PROGRAMME) (GIVE CITIZEN A CHANCE

PISZTORY PALACE) (BRATISLAVA) (15. 17. 11. 2013

Central European Forum, an international discussion event open to the public, has been held in Bratislava every year since 2009 on the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, an event that itself was triggered by public discussions. „Who needs yet another reminiscence-fest, no matter how intelligent and well narrated?“ Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić wrote five years ago. „And even though I knew the invited speakers, remarkable intellectuals all, given the round date – 20 years – there was a real danger of succumbing to euphoria, of trumpets in the background and TV crews in the front row, of fireworks and simplifications, of forgetting. But none of the above happened in Bratislava. I am glad I came because it was exactly the opposite of the kind of anniversary celebration I was used to and dreaded. By failing to attend, I would have missed what I longed for and wanted very much in the New Europe: a serious discussion of important issues.“ Central European Forum is a risky project – success is never guaranteed. Nor is there any guarantee of how big it is going to be or indeed, whether it will happen at all. The only thing that is guaranteed is the striving for real discussion and for serious conversation that will never descend into mere conference ritual.

This year's Central European Forum will be held at the Piszatory Palace, one of the most fascinating buildings in Bratislava. Its story epitomizes Central Europe's 20th century, complete with its totalitarian ideologies, in a pure, distilled form: the pharmacist Piszatory built it as his residence in late 19th century; in the 1940s the building ended up housing Hitler's Embassy to Slovakia; it was then home to the Lenin Museum; and later, in the tumultuous 1990s, it became the House of the Slovak Diaspora. It was the site of an exhibition in honour of the wartime puppet Slovak republic president Tiso, opened by the then nationalist government's Minister of Education. While invited guests in the palace wallowed in nostalgia, a group of citizens wearing Gestapo uniforms and concentration camp garb protested outside. They were arrested within minutes – for promoting Nazism. The happening was shortlived and never even made it into the TV news but that doesn't change the fact that this was the first citizen attempt to storm the palace. This was when the spell started to be broken.

The English title of this year's Central European Forum – Give Citizen a Chance – reflects the process of breaking the spell by citizens. The Slovak title – “A Place for the Citizen” – is inspired by the venue and also echoes the title of Karel Čapek's 1920s and 1930s series of essays “A Place for Jonathan”. Čapek's Jonathan stood for everyman, the citizen who is sober and patient, yet also inquisitive and eager to understand how the world around him works and to have his say in that process. This, however, has become increasingly difficult in our day and age as democracy, having prevailed over totalitarianism, seems to have exhausted its potential.

At this year's Central European Forum we will seek answers to questions such as: Why is it that the existing democratic institutions in Central Europe in particular, and across the world in general, seem to be atrophying from within? Is there an alternative to these institutions and what will this mean for the concept of “citizen”? While in Karel Čapek's day it was difficult to comprehend the world, it has become a near-impossible task in the complexity of the present-day. All we can do is keep trying, again and again.

**FRIDAY) (15 NOVEMBER
17:30) (CONFERENCE OPENING**

Magdaléna Vášáryová, chairwoman, Via Cultura
Karel Schwarzenberg, politician
Filip Radunović, project manager Europe, ERSTE Foundation

18:00) (PANEL 1: CITIZEN AMNESIA

Could the absence of a legacy of citizen-inspired change be hampering the creation of genuine civic space in Central and Eastern Europe?
Péter Esterházy (Hungary), Marci Shore (USA), Rudolf Chmel (Slovakia), Viktor Erofejev (Russia), Slavenka Drakulić (Croatia).
Moderator: Lída Rakušanová (Czech Republic)

SATURDAY) (16 NOVEMBER

11:00) (FILM SCREENING : THE PERVERT'S GUIDE TO IDEOLOGY

Kino Film Europe, Piszatory Palace. Entry €4.00 – students €2.00

In cooperation with our partner Film Europe we will premiere Slavoj Žižek's film The Pervert's Guide to Ideology in an authentic 1950's cinema.

14:00) (PANEL 2: DON'T ACT, THINK!

Discussion not only about the film but also about the ideological temptations all around us.

Egon Gál (Slovakia), Miroslav Petříček (Czech Republic).

Moderator: Michal Havran (Slovakia)

16:00) (PANEL 3: BLOODLANDS

Europe between Hitler and Stalin. Debate based on Timothy Snyder's book.

Timothy Snyder (USA), Martin M. Šimečka (Slovakia).

Moderator: Thierry Chervel (Germany)

18:30) (PANEL 4: SAVE THE CITIZEN!

Is there a sound alternative to the existing institutions of representative democracy? If so, is this alternative more democratic than the existing one? If not, how to overhaul representative democracy to make it more democratic?

Ivan Krastev (Bulgaria), Ilija Trojanow (Germany), Lucinda Creighton (Ireland), Justin Wedes (USA), Aleš Debeljak (Slovenia). Moderator: Jacek Żakowski (Poland)

**SUNDAY) (17 NOVEMBER
14:30) (PANEL 5: WHY IS EUROPE STILL ALIVE?**

Has Europe survived thanks to its individual civic cultures or despite the absence of a common European civic culture?

Pascal Bruckner (France), Leonidas Donskis (Lithuania), Timothy Snyder (USA), Karel Schwarzenberg (Czech Republic), Olga Tokarczuk (Poland).

Moderator: Chris Keulemans (Netherlands)

FRINGE EVENTS

**FRIDAY) (15 NOVEMBER – SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER
FACES**

Piszatory Palace, Bratislava

Peter Župník's photo exhibition capturing the five years of Central European Forum through a series of photo portraits. Peter Župník (Slovakia)

FRIDAY) (15 NOVEMBER

MISTRUSTFUL

Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Mlynské luhy 4, Bratislava
Gymnasium Metodova 2, Bratislava

A sense of mistrust of democratic institutions prevails among young people. As long as there is no real political choice, young people are reluctant to exercise their political rights. How to restore their trust?

Justin Wedes (USA), Egon Gál (Slovakia), Karel Schwarzenberg (Czech Republic)

**SUNDAY) (17 NOVEMBER
11:00) (ASPEKT AT CENTRAL EUROPEAN FORUM**

Piszatory Palace, Bratislava

On literature, borders, feminism, taking things for granted and travelling. Discussion with one of the most popular Polish writers combined with a reading.

Olga Tokarczuk (Poland)

Moderators: Jana Juráňová and Jana Cviková (Slovakia)

Refreshment will be offered by Café Štúr during the whole Central European Forum at the Piszatory Palace.

OBČIANSKE ZDRUŽENIE
PROJEKT) (FÓRUM

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