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SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

Facing the Facts About Political Participation

Washington, DC

Thursday 14 July through Saturday 16 July 2011

Join alumni of programs from the most significant trans-Atlantic organizations for a two-day gathering to discuss the changing nature of political participation in the United States, Europe and beyond. As the financial crisis, persistent unemployment, immigration, fiscal policy and health care become increasingly contentious issues on both sides of the Atlantic, the nature of political participation is changing. Citizens are being unified or separated by new forces, they are speaking out in new platforms, and they are influencing the political process through new channels.

This event will provide influential young actors in the public, private and “third” sectors an opportunity to gather as a trans-Atlantic community for frank discussions with an inspiring group of opinion leaders on the most challenging issues facing our democratic societies.

AGENDA

Thursday, July 14 2011

- 16:00 hr **Introduction and coffee hour**
Sofitel
The first meeting of the alumni and a brief introductory statement on the topic of changing political participation in America and Europe.
- 19:00 hr **Welcome Networking Reception**
Residence of the German Ambassador to the United States
A chance to network during an opening reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

Friday, July 15 2011

- 08:30 hr **Congressional event**
Capitol Hill
An opportunity for alumni to hear from members of Congress about the changing landscape of American political participation. Can we draw conclusions about the likely future of political participation by looking at similarities and differences between American and German models?
- 10:30 hr **Panel discussion: The transformation of political parties**
Conference Center
Does the meteoric rise of the Tea Party in America herald a new era of political parties led from below, rather than above? Is the "organic" construction of the Tea Party a model that will impact politics in Europe, and influence the structure of established parties in America as well?
- 12:00 hr **Lunch**
Conference Center
- 13:30 hr **Master class: Agenda-setting in a new era**
Conference Center
Political organizations – parties or otherwise – must now use a multi-pronged attack to place their issues at the forefront of the political agenda. What new strategies are effective? What is the future of traditional methods of agenda-setting?

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15:30 hr **Breakout session 1: Direct democracy**

Breakout room 1

Is direct democracy the way of the future, or a dying system? How can the process of direct democracy affect political outcomes?

Breakout session 2: Participation by demographic minorities

Breakout room 2

As the demographic makeup of both America and Europe changes rapidly, political parties need to look to the rising influence of demographic minorities. What is the likely future of minorities' participation in the political process?

Breakout session 3: Media influence

Breakout room 3

Now more than ever, political parties must formulate media strategies that will succeed on many different platforms. How has the influence of traditional media changed, and what are the challenges and opportunities of political recruitment through new media?

Breakout session 4: Site visit

Off-site

An opportunity to watch the political process in action.

19:00 hr **Buffet dinner & cocktails & jazz**

Rooftop of the Hay Adams Hotel

Join us for dinner, cocktails and music at a venue overlooking the White House.

Saturday, July 16 2011

09:00 hr **Breakfast**

Conference Center

09:30 hr **Panel discussion: The perspective of civil society**

Conference Center

Civil-society organizations play a growing role in building and deploying political influence. What do leaders of the "third sector" see as their future political role, and what do their colleagues from the public and private sectors see as the opportunities and challenges that civil society presents as an influential political actor?

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11:00 hr **Final wrap-up: The “Fishbowl”**

Conference Center

Participants are called upon to offer provocative questions or opinions regarding the future of political action in the US, Europe and elsewhere. Help us to summarize the best ideas, the most innovative thoughts, and the most challenging questions that we can use to negotiate this changing landscape.

13:00 hr **Potomac cruise & lunch**

Old Town Alexandria, Virginia

Join your colleagues for a boat ride on the river that defines Washington, passing many of America’s most recognizable edifices.

15:00 hr **End of program**