

# : Programme

## Dresden Forum for International Politics 2019

### Participation or Polarisation?

#### Social media and societal peace

**Haus der Kirche - Dreikönigskirche, Dresden**  
19-20 March 2019

**Conference languages**  
German/English (simultaneous interpretation)

#### Partner





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## THE TOPIC

For centuries, politics at both national and international level has been about communication. However, the digital revolution is steadily changing how politicians communicate – and which political messages are conveyed. Alongside the conventional media – traditionally the “fourth estate” – a new “fifth estate” has emerged in the form of social media. They create new opportunities for participation, but they also have a polarising effect. They raise awareness and add to the diversity of opinion, but they also lend themselves to abuse for propaganda purposes and manipulation, for example by facilitating the deliberate dissemination of misinformation. With these innovative tools, influence – internal and external – can be exerted on democratic processes, such as elections, in entirely new ways. Furthermore, inflammatory exchanges on social media can heat up and prolong conflicts, thus putting not only peace but also development at risk. In addition, digital media offer opportunities but also pose particular challenges for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

What does it mean for peace within and between societies if a single tweet can trigger a local, national or even an international crisis which then erupts into real-world violence? What might a constructive response to the deliberate dissemination of misinformation and the fomenting of hate against others via social networks look like? What action can the international community take to curb hidden political manipulation across borders in social networks? And which opportunities do social media offer to promote peace and democratic processes? These and other questions will be explored at the Dresden Forum for International Politics 2019.

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## THE DRESDEN FORUM SERIES

The annual Dresden Forum for International Politics, launched in 2018, offers a high-level platform for discussion of current challenges in international politics. The purpose of the series is to add to the body of knowledge of global processes and to raise awareness and understanding of the diversity of standpoints. The series encourages open-ended, solution-oriented debate about the options available to national and regional governments, Members of Parliament, civil society and the business sector in fostering peaceful and sustainable development worldwide.

The Dresden Forum consists of an international symposium and a public evening event with distinguished speakers, offering the opportunity for an interested public to gain insights into current international debates and learn more about how issues are viewed in other regions of the world.



13.10 hrs

Welcome

**Oliver Schenk**

State Minister for Federal and European Affairs and  
Chief of the State Chancellery of the Free State of Saxony, Dresden

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**SESSION II – INTERVIEW**

**HIDDEN MANIPULATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS – HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Some groups or governments are increasingly attempting to influence elections in their own or other countries or to fuel social conflicts. But precisely how do online manipulation and misinformation work?

13.15 hrs

Interview

**Olga Robinson**

Journalist and Disinformation Specialist  
BBC Monitoring, London

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**SESSION III – ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**REGULATING AGAINST HIDDEN MANIPULATION?  
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR**

Political systems are coming under growing pressure from hidden manipulation, as well as from open attacks and dissemination of fake news. Those responsible operate globally, so national solutions quickly reach their limits. At the same time, laws and private sector regulations risk opening the way for censorship. To what extent is there scope for regulation at the national and global level, and what kind of approach is needed? Or does the solution lie in voluntary self-regulation by the platforms themselves? If so, how would this work in practice?

13.45 hrs

Roundtable discussion

**Renate Nikolay**

Head of the Cabinet of Commissioner Vera Jourová  
European Commission, Brussels

**Dr Julia Pohle**

Research Fellow of the Research Group  
Politics of Digitalisation  
Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Berlin

**Raymond Serrato**

Social Media Analyst  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

14.45 hrs

Plenary discussion

15.15 hrs

Coffee break

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**SESSION IV – FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE****SOCIAL STRATEGIES AGAINST ONLINE HATE AND MISINFORMATION**

Social media offers every individual or group – in theory – the opportunity to share information and promote their message to the world, and do so freely, unchecked and at virtually no cost. The social and economic potential of these media is immense. However, they can also be used freely to spread misinformation, fake news and hate, to defame other groups, foster a climate of fear and even actively promote violence (social media warfare). What opportunities exist at the societal and individual level to counter the abuse of online freedoms? What is the role of the conventional media here? How can peace within and between societies be preserved? And how can we strengthen the Internet/social media as a space for peaceful and constructive dialogue?

15.45 hrs	Online experiences - your opinion needed!
16.00 hrs	Practical solutions <b>Dr Michael Kreutzer</b> Project Manager DORIAN Fraunhofer-Institute for secure information technology, Darmstadt <b>David Scheuing</b> Coordinator LOVE-Storm: United against Hate Speech Online, Wendland <b>Kate Wilkinson</b> Acting chief deputy editor Africa Check, Johannesburg
16.45 hrs	Plenary discussion
17.15 hrs	Dinner
18.15 hrs	Group transfer (by coach) to the Frauenkirche Dresden

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**PUBLIC EVENING EVENT IN THE FRAUENKIRCHE**  
**ELECTIONS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGE**  
**FREE AND FAIR – OR A MANIPULATION FREE FOR ALL?**

Free and fair elections are a constitutive element of any modern democracy and are essential for sustainable development. But what does “free and fair” mean in the social media age? Social networks are changing the way we communicate, facilitating new forms of dialogue and political participation. However, they also offer a largely unprotected platform via which to exert influence, internally and externally, on elections. As a result, the boundaries between freedom of expression and unacceptable influencing of elections are becoming more fluid. It takes just a few seconds to spread deliberate misinformation and half-truths – and this often happens anonymously, making fair and open discussion and analysis impossible.

What risks might this pose to democracies and peace within and between societies? How should state and society respond? What can we do to protect ourselves from manipulation while continuing to utilise the positive benefits of social media for political communication and information-sharing? And what might an ethically responsible social media strategy look like?

Chair

**Alexandra Gerlach**

Freelance Journalist, Meissen

19.00 hrs

Musical prelude

19.10 hrs

Welcome

**Reverend Sebastian Feydt**

Chair of the Managing Board, Frauenkirche Foundation, Dresden

**Dr Maria Flachsbarth**

Parliamentary State Secretary

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Bonn

Member of the Board of Trustees, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

19.20 hrs

Opening speech

**Michael Kretschmer**

Prime Minister of the Free State of Saxony, Dresden

Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

19.30 hrs

Keynote

**Laura Chinchilla**

Chair of the Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age

Vice-President of the Club of Madrid and former President of Costa Rica

19.50 hrs

Panel discussion

**Laura Chinchilla**

**Renate Nikolay**

Head of the Cabinet of Commissioner Vera Jourová

European Commission, Brussels

**Nanjala Nyabola**

Writer and political analyst, Nairobi

20.45 hrs

Musical farewell – **Reception** hosted by the Prime Minister of Saxony

# : Wednesday, 20 March 2019

09.00 hrs                      Registration

Chair

**Ute Lange**  
Moderator, trainer, communication coach  
i3kommunikation, Bonn

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## SESSION V: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

### SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY AGAINST MANIPULATION – EDUCATION AS THE KEY

It is becoming apparent that in the interests of open and peaceful societies and sustainable development, the ability to evaluate information must take much higher priority. In light of the above, differentiating between entertainment, information or deliberate misinformation and manipulation is becoming increasingly important. Social media literacy should therefore feature prominently on the curriculum in school and non-school education worldwide. This session will look at practical examples of projects which support critical analysis of information. Which approaches currently exist at local, national and international level – and what can be done to create synergies between them?

9.15 hrs                      Interview

**Uwe Schmidt**  
Director  
Gerda-Taro-School, Leipzig

**Jan Hünicke**  
Head of the Parents' Council  
Gerda-Taro-School, Leipzig

9.30 hrs                      Roundtable discussion

**Dr Lutz Kinkel**  
Managing Director  
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, Leipzig

**Tamar Kintsurashvili**  
Executive Director  
Media Development Foundation, Tbilisi

**Uwe Schmidt**

**XU Jing**  
Consultant  
Section for Media Development and Society  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paris

10:30 hrs                      Plenary discussion

11:00 hrs                      Coffee break with light refreshment

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## SESSION VI: INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSION

### SOCIAL MEDIA – A PEACEBUILDING TOOL?

Social media are being misused to an ever-increasing extent by radical groups in conflict and post-conflict settings. One aspect which is easily overlooked, however, is that they also offer great potential for peacebuilding. They are particularly suitable for reaching out to children and young people: here, social media can offer a fresh perspective and enable youth and marginalised groups to become actively engaged and draw attention to their concerns. This session will look at examples of how digital media can be used not only as a means of fuelling conflicts but also as a peacebuilding tool. How can social networks be used strategically to build peace?

11.45 hrs	Interviews and discussion
	<b>Ronny Edry</b> Co-Founder PeaceFactory, Tel Aviv
	<b>Stephen Kovats</b> Co-Founder and Project Manager rog_agency, Berlin
	<b>Eva Yayi Mawa Upele</b> Co-Founder and Executive Director GoGirlsICT, Juba
12.30 hrs	Plenary discussion
13.15 hrs	Final trends - your opinion needed!
	Farewell
	<b>Dr Michèle Roth</b> Director Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn