



Wilton Park

Programme

Re-energising the narrative: human rights in the digital age

Monday 14 – Wednesday 16 January 2019 | WP1655

The theme of the conference will be the over-arching concern of **human rights under threat** with a specific emphasis on narratives, language and discourse, including opportunities and threats presented on and off line.

In recent years the international community has witnessed increasingly polarised views, a rise in populist leaders and the emergence of extremist movements, including a retreat from human rights responsibilities by some key powers. There is an urgent need to address the diminishing commitment to human rights, characterised by the reduction of civic space and increased attacks on activists. At this critical juncture, the Wilton Park meeting will provide an opportunity for human rights advocates to identify ways in which to develop and promote positive human rights narratives and generate creative proposals to engage and motivate key networks and institutions in order to reverse the trend.

The conference will consider specific threats via social media, the ‘echo chamber’ effect on critical thinking and policy making, and the deliberate exploitation of divisions in societies.

It will bring together human rights experts, including policy makers, academics, thinkers/philosophers, private sector and NGO representatives from selected countries plus international and regional bodies alongside ‘unusual suspects’- experts in strategic communications, social commentators/influencers and analysts/technical experts from social media.

Through a mix of plenary and break-out sessions, the conference will provide an opportunity to:

- Re-think existing approaches and current messaging in order to re-energise human rights discourse
- Explore creative proposals and develop recommendations to refresh the debate
- Consider ways in which the digital environment can be used to strengthen respect for human rights
- Identify opportunities to promote a safe and inclusive digital future for all, taking into account relevant human rights norms

In association with:



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Monday 14 January

1300	Participants arrive and buffet lunch available
1500-1515	Welcome to Wilton Park Julia Purcell Programme Director, Wilton Park Introduction Barbara Schedler Fischer Deputy Head of Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Berne
1515-1630	1. Promoting positive human rights narratives: challenges, channels and champions This opening session will provide an introduction to the current 'landscape' of challenges, challengers, risks and opportunities. What, where and who are the current threats to discourse on human rights? How to communicate about human rights, values and fundamental freedoms in a more effective way and what needs to change? Who are the messengers and via what platforms? Michael O'Flaherty Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Vienna Peggy Hicks Director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division, OHCHR, Geneva Ahmed Shaheed Impact Director, Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project; Deputy Director, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, Colchester
1630-1715	Photograph followed by tea/coffee
1715-1830	2. Persuading the persuadables: hearts <u>and</u> minds? Engagement and motivation- what repels, compels, and propels? How to identify, develop and promote effective narratives, taking into account local and regional perspectives and priorities? Tom Stafford Senior Lecturer, Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Sheffield Ann Christiano Director, Center for Public Interest Communications, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida, Gainesville
1845	Briefing for World Café (session 4) table hosts in the library
1900	Reception followed by dinner

Tuesday 15 January

0700-0800	Yoga session (optional)
0800-0900	Breakfast

0915-1045

3. Making the case and maintaining the impact

Adapting and tailoring communications. Innovative approaches. Beyond 'the Brand'- building campaigns and sustaining engagement. Who to target and via what medium? How to measure impact?

Florian Irminger

Executive Director, Penal Reform International, London

Salieu Taal

Coordinator, #Gambia Has Decided, Serrekunda

1045-1100

Tea/coffee

1100-1230

4. Building alliances: what works and where?

World Café- in Great Hall

Adapting the message to the environment, deploying existing lens and translating international commitments to economic, social and cultural rights into the language of local contexts (rights to health, food, water, sanitation), flexible framing: what works best and where? How sustainable are targeted interventions, building alliances across diverse groups, developing trust and common ground.

1230-1315

5. Reflections from World Café

Conference Room

1315-1415

Lunch

1415

Briefing for session 7 break out group for facilitators in the library

1415-1500

Free time

1500-1630

6. Misinformation? Disinformation?

What are the opportunities and challenges presented by the online environment? Where and how are misinformation and disinformation generated? What are the attendant risks for human rights defenders? How does mis/disinformation impact on critical thinking and policy making. How to mitigate the worst and maximise the best?

Eileen Donahoe

Executive Director, Global Digital Policy Incubator, Stanford University

Lorena Jaume-Palasi

Founder, Algorithm Watch, Berlin

Brittan Heller

Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC

1630-1700

Tea/coffee

1700-1830

7. Reversing the trend: exploring creative proposals

Parallel break out groups

1830

Debrief for facilitators

1900

Reception followed by dinner

Wednesday 16 January

0800-0900	Breakfast and checkout
0915-1000	8. Recommendations and proposals Report back from break out groups
1000-1045	9. Roundtable responses to recommendations
1045-1115	Tea/coffee
1115-1130	10. Evaluation survey Completion of online survey
1130-1245	11. Wrap up and final comments
1300	Lunch
1400	Participants depart