

REPORT – Art exhibition: “Democracy in Frames”

The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) recently celebrated the culmination of its art award themed ***“What does democracy mean to you?”*** with an exhibition titled **“Democracy in Frames”**. It took place in the framework of the Horizon Europe project RECLAIM - Reclaiming Liberal Democracy in the Post-Factual Age”.

The event took place at [TALK C.E.C](#) in the heart of Brussels, highlighting the vibrant intersection of art and democratic dialogue. Talk C.E.C is located in an architectural gem that has transitioned from Maison Demeuldre, a 200-year-old family business to this modern cultural space dedicated to fostering environmental awareness through art and culture. Their purpose is to involve a community of artists and scientific institutions in a collaborative project with a positive impact, which perfectly aligns with TEPSA’s objective of connecting all stakeholders to increase the project’s impact. The exhibition was scheduled between 13-14 April 2024 and was a real success.

The event showcased a diverse range of artworks from participants who were challenged to encapsulate their interpretation of democracy through their creative expressions. Artists and stakeholders from several countries around the world participated, bringing forth a tapestry of perspectives on democracy through photos, cartoons, paintings, and audio-visual presentations. The exhibition was inaugurated on 12 April 2024 at 17:00, with an interactive session attended by 47 participants - 65% of whom were women and 35% men. This diverse gathering included policy-makers, artists, researchers, students, and young professionals, all passionate about the topic of democracy.

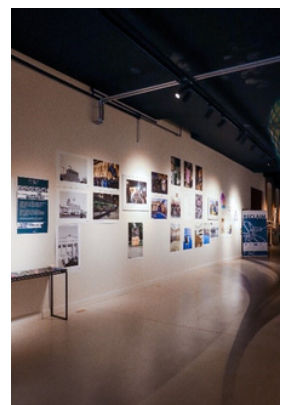
Mariam Khotenashvili, TEPSA’s Executive Director, delivered a keynote speech during the inauguration. She articulated the significance of the activity within the context of contemporary challenges to liberal democracy. She emphasised the urgency of reclaiming democratic values amidst the backdrop of post-truth politics and the rise of nationalist authoritarianism. She underscored the importance of individual choices and collective endeavour in upholding democratic principles, drawing attention to the personal risks undertaken by the artists and individuals in countries like Ukraine, Georgia, and Brazil in their pursuit of democracy.

During the inauguration, participants were grouped together to explore democracy from various angles. Through open dialogue and creative discussions, they delved into its essence, pillars, limitations, and personal significance. The activity took the form of small round table discussions where the group had to answer specific questions. The latter prompted reflection on important aspects of democracy, such as navigating the tension between diverse viewpoints while preventing the spread of harmful ideologies or misinformation; or considering whether the values upheld by democracy or the specific institutions and processes it implements are more crucial. In the end, the questions were answered on post-it notes, which were placed on the exhibition to create a collective piece of art.



"Democracy in Frames" was more than an exhibition; **it was an invitation to dialogue**. Visitors were encouraged to engage with the artworks and contribute their viewpoints, fostering a participatory atmosphere that echoed the democratic spirit. Three white boards were placed all over the exhibition with some post-it to leave some creativity to the visitors to write down their thoughts on the exhibition and the topic of democracy. The exhibition was a resounding success, not only in displaying artistic talent but also in igniting conversations about democracy's essence, its challenges, and its evolution.

As TEPSA continues to bridge the gap between sound academic research, policy-making and public involvement, "Democracy in Frames" stands as a testament to the power of collective creativity in understanding and celebrating democracy. We look forward to having other types of those events.



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