

The project « ... » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 "*Networks of Towns*"

Measure 2.3 "*Civil Society Projects*"

Strand 1 – "*European Rememberance*"

7 larger events/activities have been carried out within this project + other activities

Event 1: Preparation meeting in Berlin

Participation: The event involved 6 citizens, from, 2 from Germany, 1 from France, 2 from Denmark and 1 from Poland

Location / Dates: The event took place in Berlin, Germany from 30/10/2019 to 01/11/2019

Short description: The aim of the event was to prepare the different events at the History of Optimism project. The aim of the event was to prepare the project partner in the project objective. In order to strengthen the overall purpose, all partners met to agree on the details of the project. We shared furthermore findings and experiences in order to learn from each other. Every partner prepared and shared a presentation on its field of expertise.

Event 2: Citizens-to-citizens talks in Denmark

Participation: The event involved 48 citizens, including participants from Denmark

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Copenhagen, Denmark**, from 31/10/2019 to 04/11/2019

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the democratic transition in Europe in 1989. We had two smaller citizen-to-citizens talks in Denmark in the autumn of 2019.

The event on the 31st of October we hosted the first youth-to-youth talk, for some of the young participants going to Berlin and participate in High Level events to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall. The aim was to get a deep insight in what happened in eastern Europe in 1989. Therefore, this event was a visit to the Polish Embassy in Copenhagen.

The first event where described like this: The stormy events of 1989 are often called the fall of the people. In Poland, the autumn began as early as February of 1989 with talk between the Communist Party and the Democratic Opposition. This was followed by Polish first democratic elections, held on June 4, 1989. The date was a turning point in Poland's history and a strong contributing factor to the fall of the Soviet Union. In September 1989, Tadeusz Mazowiecki was finally able to form the first elected non-communist government. 1989 was a year full of hope in Poland, but how do Poles see the events now 30 years later? And does the 1989 election still have an impact on Poland's national and EU policies in 2019? That and much more we need to become wiser about when we visit the Polish embassy and get a presentation on Polish politics - then and today, by the Polish ambassador Mrs. Henryka Moscicka-Dendys. Henryka Moscicka-Dendys is a former Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland and has previously worked on European and Northern European politics.

The second event was the 4th of November 2019, where the focus on the event was "What civil society, in all its former glory, looked like in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989!"

We zoomed in on the events in Leipzig in the autumn of '89, where brave GDR citizens kickstarted the Peaceful Revolution that led up to the fall of the Berlin Wall a few months later.

Among other things, we talked about:

- How could a civil society look and function in the GDR?
- How did civil society change after the fall of the Wall?
- Can we learn something from how citizens gathered, mobilized and organized at that time?
- And if so ... How can we use it in Denmark and Europe today?

The event ended in front a piece of the Berlin Wall that stands at Højbro Plads in Copenhagen, which was installed contemporary as a symbol of History.

Event 3: Citizen-to-citizens talks in Poland

Participation: The event involved 30 citizens from Poland

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Warsaw, Poland**, from 26/11/2019 to 27.01.2020

Short description: The aim of the event was to discuss the narratives of 1989 in Poland. There were held two events with the theme of History of Optimism in Poland. The following descriptions are based on longer summaries of these events:

1. Poland has failed to develop a common narrative about the events of 1989. We are still arguing about their interpretation. At the same time, we often resent "Europe" and the world for not sufficiently recognizing Poland's role in bringing down communism. Germany is in a different situation, where it has managed to construct the

anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall as an export product. It has also developed a dominant national consensus on how to understand the significance of these events. The German discourse emphasises, among other things, the freedom aspirations expressed in the fall of the Wall, the participation of civil society in Germany and other Central and Eastern European countries, and the link between this event and the subsequent enlargement of the EU. This was not immediately the case, however, and the German discourse has undergone significant evolution since the 1990s. The seminar "The German culture of remembrance and the Polish struggle with the past of 1989 in a polarised society" was held on November 26, 2019, at the Institute of Public Affairs (ISP) to discuss how the current situation came about and what lessons we can draw for Poland from it. It was held as part of the project "History of optimism", funded by the European Commission in the program "Europe for Citizens". See longer summary of this event (in PL) at <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/niemiecka-kultura-pamieci-a-polskie-zmagania-z-przeszloscia-1989-roku-w-spolaryzowanym-spoleczenstwie>.

2. Can Poland easily unilaterally withdraw from the EU? Yes. Can the decision to expel a state that violates the principles of the EU Treaty (including its Article 2) be made under international law by the other member states? Also yes. And are both scenarios currently viable and would the Polish public agree to them? No, but... These observations were a basis for the seminar organized on January 27, 2020, entitled "Polexit through the back door?", held in the project "History of optimism - civil society shaping the positive future". These negative scenarios were the starting point for the participants to reflect on what to do and how to talk about European integration in the context of the dispute over the rule of law in order to maintain the strongly pro-EU emotions of the Polish society.

Such discussion took place in connection with political events in Poland shortly beforehand. The adoption of the Act amending the Common Courts System Act and the Act on the Supreme Court led to an intensification of the dispute with European Union institutions on the state of the rule of law in Poland. The vast majority of legal and European affairs authorities have pointed out that the solutions provided for in this legislation will lead Poland outside the standards of the European legal order. All this has come about in a situation where Poles were demonstrating the greatest satisfaction with European integration of any society in the EU. Nevertheless, the comments about Poland's possible withdrawal from the community have also intensified. The aim of our discussion was to deepen the analysis of the potential impact of the events of that time and to involve a variety of people, including young experts.

See full summary of the seminar (in PL) at <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/polexit-tylnymi-drzwiami-jak-rozmawiac-o-integracji-europejskiej-w-kontekscie-sporu-o-praworzadnosc-relacja-z-seminarium>.

Event 4: Large events in Berlin

Participation: The event involved 124 citizens, including 40 participants from Germany, 30 participants from Denmark, 10 from Poland, 5 from France, 16 from UK, 6 from the Netherlands, 1 Slovakia, 2 Italy, 2 Austria, 1 Colombia, 2 from Luxemburg, 1 from Hungary, 1 from Portugal, 1 from Scotland, 1 From Greece, 1 from Spain, 2 from Albania, 1 from Spain and 1 from Romania.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Berlin, Germany from 07/11/2019 to 10/11/2019

Short description: The aim of the event was to celebrate the 30th years of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, with several events in Berlin, in a weekend long program.

Upon arrival in Berlin, on day 1, our entire group of youth participants and partners - Nyt Europa, European Civic Forum, Institute of Public Affairs and MitOst - met and introduced ourselves to one another. The focus of the day was narratives, storytelling and the history of Berlin around 1989.

Starting off at Clärchens Ballhaus - an old building in Berlin Mitte, which has been preserved and now functions as restaurant, ballroom and cultural spot – the participants shared their personal motivations and aspirations for participating in History of Optimism.

Next, we walked to the nearby Lawrence – an Arabic socioeconomic café - for a workshop on historical narratives and storytelling. Leading the workshop was Katharina Krüger, a German woman who grew up on the East side in the tumultuous years before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. She started the session with a presentation of her personal experience of growing up in the GDR in the 80's and how this shaped her sense of self and of the world she lived in. During the workshop, participants discussed the impact of living in and experiencing historical periods and settings – for individuals' and groups' identity, sense of belonging, outlooks, worldviews and expectations in life.

The programme of the day was wrapped up with a tour of the East Side Gallery where the group viewed the remnants of, perhaps, the most tangible physical manifestation of the GDR and divided Germany of 1989. Here, we were joined by the ZDF, the German news media, who were curious to ask the participants about today's

European youth's interests in 1989; a story, which is truly relevant for today's news in times of democratic unrest and youth mobilization.

Day 2 – Citizens and Civil Society at the 30 Year Anniversary

The second day of the trip turned the focus towards the present, at the 30 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the bottom-up developments leading up to this. First we had one conference in the day hours:

The conference “**30 years after the fall of the wall – Europe from the bottom-up**”, co-organized by the Stiftung Zukunft Berlin initiatives Cities for Europe, Wir Sind Europa, and A Soul for Europe as well as our History of Optimism.

The daylong conference, started and ended with plenary session, while in the middle had different workshops. The conference was held in the Allianz Forum, and the Europe House.

9.00-11.00 am: Public plenary discussion: Europe from the bottom up: The joint responsibility of the basis for the success of Europe

- Antonia Siemer (Wir sind Europa) & Yves Mettler (A Soul for Europe) Rafał Dutkiewicz (welcome)
- Rafał Dutkiewicz, former President of the city of Wrocław
- Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow, Robert Bosch Academy
- Hildegard Bentele, Member of the European Parliament
- Barbara Gessler, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission
- Moderation: Doris Pack, former MEP and Secretary General of the German-French Cultural Council & Volker Hassemer, Chairman of the Stiftung Zukunft Berlin

11.00-12.30 am: Workshop: Understanding local History in a European context

- Andrea Despot (European Academy Berlin)
- Hella Dunger-Löper (State Secretary ret., President of State Music Council Berlin)
- Sabrina Bobowski (Internationale Bildungs- und Begegnungsstätte "Johannes Rau" Minsk)
- Patrick Siegele (Anne-Frank-Zentrum Berlin)
- Charlotte Gloerfelt-Tarp History of Optimism
- Jürgen Karwelat (Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt e.V.)

12.30 Lunch Break

2.00-4.30: Public Plenary Discussion: Spaceship Brussels?

- Gabriel Bishoff: MEP
- Barbara Gessler, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission
- Luca Jahier: President of the European Economic and Social Committee
- Karl-Heinz Lambertz: President of the Committee of the Regions
- Moderator: Hugo De Greef: Board member of A Soul for Europe

At lunch, we were joined by Thomas Lauritzen from altinget.dk, who interviewed the youth participants' about their thoughts on 1989 and how it has shaped our current Europe for his 30 year anniversary podcast. As one youth participant, 24 year old Emilie, said: *"It is important to think of the walls there have been in Europe, but also those that are still there today."* 19 year old Anne Katrine Windt Courbin stated that these days *"remind us to think great - great change is possible!"*.

In the Evening 19.00-20.00: Europa Rede

Later, the participants viewed the annual “State of the European Union”, ‘Europa Rede’, speech at the Allianz Forum, organized by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator and Stiftung Zukunft Berlin.

- President-elect of the European Commission, **Ursula von der Leyen**, who emphasized the need for Europe to show courage to shape our shared future and protect the values at the core of the European project – at home and abroad.
- German Chancellor, **Angela Merkel** who gave her remarks on the state of the EU in relation to the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall

Following the speech, one of our youth participants, Anna Katrine Windt Courbin, as one of just four panelists, provided her comments and thoughts on the speech in a panel debate moderated by journalist Anke Plättner. During the debate, she stressed the value and importance of breaking down barriers between the EU and its civil society and citizens – particularly the youth. She likewise personally handed von der Leyen the Ungdomsøen Manifesto, containing the demands and priorities of the European Youth for the future of Europe; the History of Optimism flyer; and a policy paper, containing Nytt Europa's suggestions for civic involvement in the work of von der Leyen's Commission, commencing with a Conference on the Future of Europe. After the public event, our youth participant Anna Katrine Windt Courbin also meet with Angela Merkel for a talk on the future of Europe, with a private gathering.

Day 3 - Reflection and Hope

On the last day of the trip, the group reflected on the outcomes of Friday's conference and Europa Rede speech with an outlook to concrete opportunities for action and involvement as citizens and civil society actors. We met with the Wir Sind Europa strategy group at the historical Walter Hallstein-Institute Library. Through plenary discussions and exchanges, the participants gained insight into the experiences and best practices of a diverse range of historically founded/informed civil society initiatives from all over Europe.

11:00	Kick-off & welcome note
11:05	Round of introduction
11:15	Brief introduction – Local goes Europe Dr. Andrea Despot (Europäische Akademie Berlin)
11:20	Best practices: Local perspectives & narratives of remembrance <i>Shared by:</i> Sabrina Bobowski (Internationale Bildungs- und Begegnungsstätte "Johannes Rau" Minsk) Patrick Siegele (Anne-Frank-Zentrum Berlin) Jürgen Karwelat (Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt e.V.) Charlotte Gloerfelt-Tarp (History of Optimism)
11:50	Europeanizing remembrance
12:20	Outlook

Later, we visited the Nineties Berlin exhibition - a colourful and interactive display, inviting the audience into an immersive experience of chaotic, dynamic and exciting Berlin in the 90's. Having discussed 1989, seeing the concrete impacts of change on a city and the people living in it, underlined the centrality of citizens and civil society in producing and shaping societal transition.

Rounding off the Berlin trip, a number of the participants celebrated the historical 30 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall at Brandenburger Tor.

Day 4 Back Home - Going Forward

Day 4, the Danish and polish youth participant return back home, and we evaluated the first project activities. These first events in the History of Optimism-project were a rich and productive experience, which has only increased our expectations for the project. More than ever, we are convinced that using a historical lens, looking to the future, holds an exciting potential for European citizens and civil society to fully understand and appreciate our shared European experience and to review our present fully and critically.

Event 5: Conference in Copenhagen

Participation: The event involved 66 citizens, including 57 participants from Denmark, 1 from Hungary, 1 from France, 2 from Germany, 1 from Poland, 1 from Italy, 1 from the Netherlands and 2 from Norway.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Copenhagen, Denmark 27/02/2020

Short description:

The aim of the event was to focus on the 2004 EU-enlargement of the European union. After being in Berlin focusing on 1989 which paved the way for the 2004 EU-enlargement we turned our focus to the role of civil society in a historical context to understand our modern problems but also to pose the question: what tools do we have for securing democracy now and in future in the European cooperation? Hereby we provided a new and powerful approach to understanding EU values and how we assess our collective historical past to tackle some of the present issues of fundamental rights under pressure.

Key note speakers from EU countries addressed the process since 1989, and how the transition to democracy and the EU-enlargement have impacted the EU. Through academic presentations and workshops with the participation of European civil society organizations, researchers, and citizens, we explored how organized civil society can work together at European level to play a pivotal role in strengthening European democracy.

The conference offered professional presentations on the relationship between the rule of law, democracy, and civil society since 1989, workshops with presentations from several European civil society actors as well as discussion with politicians from Europa-udvalget (The committee of European affairs). Finally, the insights from the workshops were collected and the framework of the continued corporation debated.

The program:

Part 1: 12.30-13.45: Academic presentations

- Welcome by Nyt Europa (Steen Gade, Chairman)
- Marlene Wind (Professor, University of Copenhagen): The Rule of Law and Democracy 1989 to the present.
- Søren Riishøj (Professor emeritus, University of Southern Denmark): The role of civil society in the democratic transition in Eastern Europe in the 1990s
- Maj Grasten (Assistant Professor, Copenhagen Business School): The intersection of institutions, civil society and popular movements

Part 2: 14.00-15.45: Workshops

- Shrinking civic space: what counter strategies can civil society actors mobilize? (Vladimir Sestovic, European Civic Forum, FR).
 - *An open and accessible civic space is part and parcel of the democratic values. Sestovic shared insights about the state of civic space in Europe and together the workshop worked on counter strategies.*
- Attitudes towards democracy among European citizens: How can a long-lasting trust in democratic values be ensured? (Philip Pazderski, Polish Institute of Public Affairs, PL & Amnesty International Denmark).
 - *Based on research among Polish citizens, Pazderski gave an overview of current attitudes towards democratic values. Together, the workshops worked on how to ensure a long-lasting trust in democratic values.*
- Solidarity between civil society actors across borders in Europe (Christina Nuhr, Mit Ost, DE).
 - *This workshop opened by sharing the experiences of Mit Ost and their promotion of solidarity between German and East European civil society organizations. In this workshop, we discussed how the grounds for cooperation and solidarity has changed, and whether some close ties and room for bilateral dialogue has been lost.*
- Is participatory democracy the way forward? New pathways for our European democracy (Jacob Erle, Nyt Europa & Danish youth council).
 - *This workshop happened in the light of the EU commissions initiative to engage European citizens in the discussion about the future of European democracy within the scope of 'The Conference on the Future of Europe', and was focused on developing new methods for ensuring a democracy for the many rather than for the few.*

Part 3: 15.45-16.30: Collection & Comments

- Collection of workshop insights.
- Comments by members of The committee of European affairs..

- Rounding off and the framework for continued cooperation (Nyt Europa).

Event 6: Conference in Poland (online)

Participation: The event involved 95 citizens from a variety of countries, including, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, Hungary, Romania.

Location / Dates: The event took place online in Poland, from 24.11.2020

Short description:

The aim of the event was to explore and to contribute to the understanding of our shared EU history and diversity with a specific focus on Poland's 2004 EU-membership and the current challenges we face with Rule of law and civic space and how to support civil society.

We invited scholars, CSO's, decision-makers and representatives of the EU institutions to partake in a dialog in three segments: Lessons learnt on the democratic transformation and civic engagement in Central-Eastern Europe (CEE); A current assessment of the state of rule of law and democracy in Europe; and finally, a debate on how to support civil society as democracy champions going forward with Rule of Law initiatives.

Covid-19.

The conference was supposed to take place physically in Warsaw, Poland. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-pandemic and the imposed restrictions the event was hosted as an online conference instead – streamed on zoom as well as Facebook. The Covid-19 crisis has however only enhanced said crisis with reports of suppressions and harassment of civil society agents and activists in several countries in the EU. Moreover, countries like Poland or Hungary are further being criticized by the EU institutions for trying to control and intimidate the judicial system, but continuously ignore this critic from the international community. Therefore, the themes of the event seemed ever relevant and played into the themes.

The Program:

Civil society in turbulent times

- New solutions in the EU inspired by the lessons from the past

	<i>Program</i>	<i>Speakers</i>
14:15	Introduction to the day and format	<i>The Institute of Public Affairs Foundation (ISP)</i>
14:20	Key Note (s) The divided history of our European democracy <i>The legacy of the 1989 democratic transformation.</i> <i>How to support civil society in Europe now and lessons learnt from how democracy was supported before EU 2004 and 2007 enlargement.</i>	<i>Dr Heather Grabbe, Director of Open Society Foundation, European Policy Institute</i>
14:35	Conversation between Dr Heather Grabbe and Dr Jacek Kucharczyk, President of the Institute of Public Affairs Panel 1: The current challenges for rule of law and civil society in Poland and Europe	<i>Moderator: Karolina Zbytniewska, Editor in-Chief, Euractive.PL Dr hab. Adam Bodnar, Polish Ombudsman</i>
15:00	What is the state of rule of law and the civic space in Poland and Europe? Civil society – How do they adjust and struggle to the current situation? What do the findings from the latest Global State of Democracy Report tell us? Is fundamental rights under pressure in Europe?	<i>Dr Klementyna Suchanow, Polish Women Strike Sam van der Staak, Head of Programme, Regional Europe, IDEA Louise Holck, Danish institute for human rights</i>
	Panel 2: How to support civil society as champions of democracy now	<i>Moderator Judy Dempsey, Carnegie Europe, Editor In-Chief Strategic Europe</i>

<p>16:00 - 17:00</p>	<p>What can be done on a bilateral level to support civil societies and strengthen civic space in the EU? What solution can be offered on an European and civil society-to-civil society level? What kind of support to civil society as democracy champions can be recommended from the CSO and institutional perspective? The EU Rule of law report and other rule of law evaluation mechanisms - how will it be used and how will the civil society be involved? Reflections on funding of the civil society</p>	<p><i>Dr Arndt Freytag von Loringhoven, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Poland</i> <i>Stina Soewarta, head of representation of the EU-Commission to DK</i> <i>Louisa Slavkova, Director of Sofia Platform Foundation, Co-head of Civic Europe</i> <i>Roy Virah-Sawmy, Network of European Foundations, Programme Officer – Civitates</i></p>
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Event 7: Conference in Hillerød (Denmark) + online

Participation: The event involved 81 citizens, Physically, including 75 participants from Denmark, 2 from France, 1 from Belgium 2 from Norway and 1 from Iceland + . moreover around 111 participated online, where 4 where from Belgium, 1 from Czech Republic, 70 from Denmark, 1 from France, 4 from Germany, 1 from Ireland, 4 from Italy, 1 from Latvia, 1 from Montenegro, 3 from Norway, 5 from Poland, 1 from Portugal, 2 from Romania, 1 from Slovakia, 1 from Slovenia, 2 from Spain, 1 from Turkey and 1 from Ukraine.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Hillerød, Denmark, from 10.06.2021

Short description:

The final transnational talk took place in Greater Copenhagen at the Folk high school Grundtvigs in Hillerød. Chief negotiators of the EU enlargement were invited to discuss and talk with the European citizens about this radical change in European history and how this has affected civil society across Europe contributing to an understanding of EU values.

The conversation centred on the current trends of democratic back-sliding in Europe. We took stock of the historical moments, that have helped to shape our European Democracy from 1989 until today. We discussed the EU enlargement process in 2002, in relation to the agreements made on democracy and the rule of law, and what this means for new EU-member countries. We also discuss what can be done to protect champions of democracy going forward.

The event took place with a hybrid format, with both panel and participants being able to participate only and physically.

The students at Grundtvig Højskole was present to see the panel and to participate in youth-to-youth driven workshops focussing on 5 themes, that feeds into the discussions of the day:

- Youth influence in EU-institutions
 What is European politics and why are we debating democracy
- The fight for gender equality and Rule of law
- End of History? Taking stock of our liberal democracy
- Civil society and activism in Europe

The panels of the day consisted of:

- 1)** Lykke Friis, director of Think Tank Europa, Lone Loklindt, chairman at Nyt Europa and Marek Azoulay, EU-youth delegate. Moderated by Jakob Mejlhede, principal at Grundtvigs Folk High School.
 The panel discussed historic perspective on democracy, rule of law and civil society in Europe.
- 2)** Henrik Møller (S), Politician, Johanne Korsholm Youth activist, Fabio Wolkenstein, lector at Aarhus university. Also with us online was Ms. Renate Nikolay, Head of Cabinet at the office of *Vice-president at the EU Commission on Values and Transparency* and Ms. Marta Lambert: *Activist Polish Women Strike*. The panel was moderated by Lykke Friis, Tænketanken Europa (Think Tank Europe).
 The panel debated democratic challenges in Europe today.
- 3)** The final panel consisted of Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Former Prime Minister of Denmark and NATO secretary general. President of the Danish EU presidency in 2002 on enlargement. Chairman and Founder of

Alliance of Democracies Foundation in conversation with Professor Francis Fukuyama, Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) Mosbacher Director of FSI's Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law and Director of Standfords Masters's in International Policy Program. The panel was moderated by Lykke Friis, Tænketanken Europa (Think Tank Europe). The panel discussed historic perspectives on European democracy today and the lessons of history.

Event 8: Other online activities

Social media and online activities, was vital for this project. Through Youtube channels, Facebook and Instagram young people connect through borders. It is vital that we at the offline meeting create online activities. The goal, which is to contribute to understanding EU history and diversity broad across the continent. It will be communicated through Youth to other Youth across Europe. These online activities are the lasting legacy for future projects and citizen engagement. This will make it possible to extend the project's ideas to take future action and make new possibilities for online interaction between engaged European citizens in order to reinforce further transnational dialogue and the recognition of the importance of historical remembrance. It is possible to find the videos produced in the report online or on our webpage.

Event 9: Civil Society Report

As an added activity inspired by the panel discussions and with the aim of increasing the dissemination efforts of the project a report was produced with the title: "Civic society and the fight against democratic backsliding in Europe - Lessons from the past, struggles of today, solutions for tomorrow". The report entails reflections and perspectives on the historic period from the fall of the wall and the EU enlargement process from 2004, analyzes the current state of civic society and civil space in EU as well as testimonies from democracy champions. From the chapters is produced recommendations to strengthen civil society in Europe. The report was produced through contribution of chapters from our partners, CSO's, activists and researchers from all over Europe. The report has been handed to several members of Parliament in Denmark and the EU and will be distributed to relevant stakeholders.

Event 10: Podcast produced in relation to the project History of Optimism

"The leap to consent. Podcasts of the Institute of Public Affairs" ["Przeskok do zgody. Podkasty Instytutu Spraw Publicznych"]

In 1989, an unimaginable thing happened in Poland. As the first country in the so-called communist bloc, the country began to break free from the control of the Soviet Union. An agreement was peacefully reached between the opposition and the ruling party at the Round Table, (partly) free parliamentary elections were held, and an opposition government was formed as a result. All this did not happen by itself. In favourable geopolitical circumstances it was brought about by the activity of thousands of Poles, who drew their energy for action from the "Solidarity carnival" of 1980-81.

In a series of conversations we returned to the emotions of those days and looked at the history of Polish optimism with invited guests. Participants included people involved in the activities of the democratic opposition in the 1980s, as well as experts studying civic movements in Poland and representatives of the world of culture. Together we reflected on the role of civil society in changing the seemingly unchangeable social reality. We also asked the question why the positive emotions of those days (1980s) were not able to be transformed into the founding myth of a democratic Poland that unites society? We posed a hypothesis that making up for this may now be one of the most important tasks for the citizens of Poland.

All podcasts in this series are available at <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/przeskok-do-zgody-podkasty>.

History of optimism podcast:

Our New Europe is born – conversation about the EU accession in 2002 with Poul Skytte Christoffersen
2020 proved to be an unexpected stress test for democracy and human rights in Europe. From mass protests against abortion legislation in Poland, to the closure of the media in Hungary and the curtailment of civilian freedom, it makes us ask unpleasant questions about the health of our democracies within the EU.

Steen Gade asks Poul Skytte Christoffersen, former representative of Denmark at the EU and chief negotiator at the accession of new member states in 2002, what we can learn from the past when it comes to dealing with the present. He asks how the enlargement was seen at the time? Did we remember to secure our democracies well

enough in Eastern enlargement? And whether it's time to revise our common ground and evaluate how best to safeguard our European values going forward?

[Stream Our New Europe is born - samtale om EU udvidelsen i 2002 med Poul Skytte Christoffersen by Nyt Europa](#)
[| Listen online for free on SoundCloud](#)

How do we secure our European Democracy? With Francis Fukuyama and Anders Fogh Ramussen

At this moment, the democratic rights and values are under pressure in Europe, and we even see some governments themselves taking part in applying it. It is especially the stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities, that are being threatened. We need to discuss how we can overcome these threats, and what we can learn from historical events on how to deal with these issues and prevent democratic backsliding. Professor Francis Fukuyama and former Prime minister Anders Fogh Ramussen are having a conversation about this, live at Grundtvigs Højskole in Hillerød, Denmark.

They will discuss the current trends of democratic back-sliding in Europe. We will look back and take stock of historical moments, that have helped to shape our European Democracy from 1989 until today. We will discuss the EU enlargement process in 2002, in relation to the agreements made on democracy and the rule of law, and what this means for new EU-member countries. We will also discuss what can be done to protect champions of democracy going forward.

[Stream How do we secure our European Democracy? With Francis Fukuyama and Anders Fogh Ramussen by Nyt Europa](#)
[| Listen online for free on SoundCloud](#)