Effective Leverage? aims to contribute to EU endeavours to promote democracy and fundamental rights with special focus on EU neighbours.

The event is held under the auspices of Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, and Pavel Svoboda, Member of European Parliament, EPP.

17:45 Registration

18:00 Opening of the Conference:
Jakub Dürr, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU
Jaroslav Kurfürst, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Kingdom of Belgium
Pavel Svoboda, Member of European Parliament, EPP

Moderator of the Discussion: Michael Žantovský, Executive Director of the Václav Havel Library

18:15 First Panel:
The EU’s Transformative Power: Is the Dream Fading Away?
Věra Jourová / Eric Maurice / Petras Auštrevičius / David Kramer

Promoting freedom, democracy, pluralism and the rule of law are the guiding principles for EU’s external action. The attractiveness of the EU’s political culture played a crucial role in the integration processes of the last decades. However, 70 years after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fundamental values and policies of the EU are increasingly called into question, even within the Union. The appeal of populists grows with mounting public discontent in many countries. Does the EU still inspire its neighbours? Does the US share the same vision for the Western Balkans and the EU’s Eastern neighbourhood? Can Europeans and Americans convince others about their agenda?

19:15 Second Panel:
The Western Balkans on the Road: Will the EU Succeed with its Neighbours?
Jerzy Pomianowski / Simon Pánek / Nenad Pejić

In spite of some setbacks in the face of liberal democracy that did not sidestep the EU, the fundamental values of the EU remain unchanged. But are they still seen as an inspiration by EU candidates and potential candidates in the Western Balkans, or is it rather EU’s standard of living and financial support that attracts them? Are the EU’s instruments effectively contributing to strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law in its neighbourhood? Is the EU engagement efficient in the face of disinformation campaigns and the involvement of third actors? How could the EU best help promoting civil society and media freedom in neighbouring countries?

Glass of wine
Strengthening Democracy in the EU Neighbourhood: Integration as an Effective Leverage?

27th November 2018
Prague House, Avenue Palmerston 16, 1000 Brussels
18:00 - 20:30

David J. Kramer, Senior Fellow at Florida International University
David J. Kramer joined Florida International University’s Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs as a Senior Fellow in the Václav Havel Program for Human Rights and Diplomacy in May 2017. Previously, Kramer was Senior Director for Human Rights and Democracy at the McCain Institute for International Leadership; President of Freedom House; and Senior Transatlantic Fellow with the German Marshall Fund. Kramer served during the George W. Bush administration as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. He also served as Executive Director of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. He is author of the recent book, Back to Containment: Dealing with Putin’s Regime.

Jerzy Pomianowski, Executive Director, European Endowment for Democracy
Jerzy Pomianowski has worked in international affairs for almost 30 years as Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland, director of OECD-UNDP’s Partnership for Democratic Governance and Poland’s Ambassador to Japan. In 2013 he led the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and has since served as its Executive director. Pomianowski began his career as a civil servant in 1990, just after the fall of communism, first in the Ministry of Education, and then in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He oversaw the launch of Poland Aid (2006-08) and served as Director General of the Polish Foreign Service (2005-06). From 1980-1989, Pomianowski was an active member of the democratic opposition in Poland.

Šimon Pánek, Executive Director of People in Need
Šimon Pánek is the co-founder and executive director of People in Need, a humanitarian organization based in the Czech Republic. People in Need provides humanitarian aid and solidarity for human rights and civil society, principally in authoritarian or conflict-ridden states and zones, including Chechnya, the Balkans, Belarus, Ukraine, and Cuba. Pánek’s activism goes back to 1989, when as a student activist in the Velvet Revolution he was a leader of several anti-regime occupation strikes. Pánek served as a foreign policy specialist on the Balkans and Human Rights issues in the presidential administration of Václav Havel. Pánek is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations (www.ecfr.eu), and a founding member of the Board of the European Partnership for Democracy (www.eupd.eu).

Nenad Pejić, Acting President and Editor-in-Chief, RFE/RL
Nenad Pejić, Acting President and Editor-in-Chief, joined RFE/RL in 1993 when he was named the first Director of RFE/RL’s Balkan Service. Prior to joining RFE/RL, Pejić held various positions with Sarajevo Television including head of the News Department, Belgrade correspondent, and Program Director. He also served briefly as the Head of Publications and Public Relations at the European Institute for the Media. Pejić lectured at universities in Ukraine, Georgia, Prague and Montenegro; international events such as NATO summits and the Salzburg Seminar; and to a number of non-governmental organizations around Europe.

Petras Auštrevičius, Member of European Parliament
Petras Auštrevičius MEP is a Lithuanian politician, diplomat, civil society activist and a member of the European Parliament (since 2014) where he serves on the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), acts as a coordinator for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI). Previously, Mr Auštrevičius was a member of the Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament) for 10 years. He has previously served as Chief Negotiator for Lithuania’s membership to the European Union and as Lithuania’s Ambassador to Finland. Mr Auštrevičius is a co-founder and first chairman of the Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania. Mr Auštrevičius holds a diploma in economics from Vilnius State University. He pursued doctoral studies at the Institute of Economics of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and attended the diplomatic training program at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution.