

# Can Foresight help guide European Democracies – 46 countries through the Storm?

## The Finnish experience, Helsinki and online

27 November 2025 at 17.30-19.00 (EET, UTC+2)

### Introduction

Democracy, the rule of law and human rights form a trinity that needs all three pillars to hold it together. A functioning democracy and the rule of law are key elements for comprehensive security and economic activity. Finland and the other Nordic countries are often ranked among the top nations in the world on democracy and rule of law indexes. The strengths of our democracies are open and transparent institutions, vibrant civil societies, active citizen participation, low levels of corruption and high-levels of trust.

The participatory foresight Finland has engaged in for decades can bring a key contribution to the political process the Council of Europe has launched with the [New Democratic Pact for Europe](#). Member States, citizen organizations, companies and partners have been invited to share the solutions to address the democratic backsliding, and Finland will share with this discussion a key experience on how to envision desirable futures in which people feel heard, empowered and protected.

### Program

Opening: **Ambassador for Democracy and Rule of Law Katri Viinikka, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Key-note speech: **Secretary General Alain Berset, Council of Europe**

Comment speech: **Member of the Committee for the Future Mr. Martin Paasi**

Moderator: **Director General Johanna Suurpää, Ministry of Justice**

### Panel Debate I: Building resilient democracies for the future

Nordic democracies are built on trust, openness, and strong institutions. However, rising authoritarianism, digital misinformation, and geopolitical tensions challenge societal cohesion and democratic resilience. To respond, we must strengthen democracy without compromising our values even in times of crisis. Media literacy, responsible journalism, and transparent communication are key tools – alongside cooperation with technology companies to ensure algorithms support democratic dialogue and do not reinforce polarization. By safeguarding participation, critical thinking, and inclusion, we protect both security and the democratic core of our societies.



This initiative is a contribution towards the  
**New Democratic Pact for Europe**



### Questions for discussion:

- *What current trends and challenges do we need to navigate to foster a secure democratic future?*
- *How can foresight practices help to secure democratic resilience?*
- *Which elements are recognised as being central to resilience of democracy, trust and security? What needs to be done to strengthen them?*
- *How can foresight be used to anticipate and address democratic backsliding or exclusion? Good practices and lessons learnt.*

### Panelists:

- Deputy chairperson of the Committee for the Future Mr. Timo Harakka
- Member of the Finnish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Ms. Saara-Sofia Sirén (tbc)
- Programme Manager, Juha Jokela, Finnish Institute of International Affairs
- Director Teija Tiilikainen, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- Secretary General, Government Report on the Future and Government Foresight Group, Jaana Tapanainen-Thiess, Prime Minister 's Office

## **Panel Debate II: Inclusive futures**

### **Engaging young people and underrepresented groups in meaningful decision-making**

This panel brings together policymakers, parliamentarians, and civil society actors to explore how democratic systems in Europe can better engage young people and underrepresented voices. Drawing on Finland's pioneering foresight practices, the discussion will examine how future-oriented thinking and participatory processes can help anticipate risks, strengthen legitimacy, and ensure that democratic decisions reflect the diversity of society.

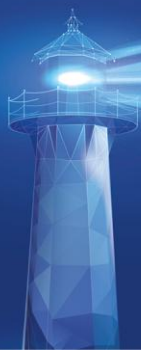
### Questions for discussion:

- *How can we strengthen democratic resilience and inclusiveness in a changing security environment, especially from the perspective of young people and underrepresented groups?*
- *What are the key barriers to participation for marginalized communities, and how can different actors collaborate to remove them?*
- *How can existing democratic structures evolve to accommodate new forms of civic engagement, such as digital platforms and deliberative citizen assemblies?*
- *How can foresight, technological innovation, and civic education work together to build inclusive and future-proof democracies?*

### Panelists:

- Director Veera Heinonen, Finnish Innovation Fund SITRA
- Professor Lauri Rapeli, Åbo Akademi
- Paula Pättikangas, Chair of the Finnish Youth, Peace and Security Network
- Samuel Oliveros De Nordenflucht, Member of the International Committee of the Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector

**Concluding remarks:** Head of the Finnish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Ms. Miapetra Kumpula-Natri



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## Why a New Democratic Pact for Europe?

Democratic backsliding, disinformation, impunity, and authoritarianism are undermining democracy in Europe. People are increasingly afraid and frustrated. It comes at a time when democratic security – the resilience of our democratic institutions, freedoms, and values – is our first line of defence against the threats we face. A collective response is needed. There is no quick fix and no single solution. With the New Democratic Pact, the Council of Europe unites with its partners to boost solutions that work and create new responses. To identify them, consultations are needed. The Pact will serve as a collective and inclusive process – not to reinvent democracy, but to reinforce its foundations, amplify its benefits, and innovate its form to make it tangible for everyone, especially younger generations. The directions set during the consultation phase running through 2026 will shape the work that follows.

Any initiatives, research and thoughts to contribute towards a [New Democratic Pact](#) to be sent [here](#).

### [Foresight and the work on the future - Finnish Government](#)

The Committee for the Future is an established, standing committee in the Parliament of Finland. The Committee consists of 17 Members of the Finnish Parliament. The Committee serves as a Think Tank for futures, science and technology policy in Finland. The counterpart cabinet member is the Prime Minister. The Committee was established in 1993.

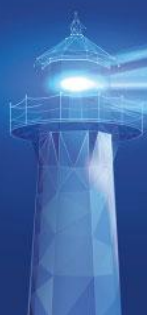
Committee's mission is to generate dialogue with the government on major future problems and opportunities. At least once during its term of office, the Government issues a report (Government's Future Report) on long-term future prospects and the Government's targets which is submitted from the Prime Minister's Office to the Parliament. The main task of the Committee for the Future is then to prepare the Parliament's response (Parliament's Future Report) to the Government's Report on the Future. By this way Finnish Government and Parliament can recognize important political themes at such an early stage that different alternatives and policy lines are still completely open and under development. Since 2017, The Government's implementation for Agenda2030 for Sustainable Development is also submitted to the Committee for the Future during each electoral term. Committee's other tasks are statements (draft submissions) to other committees in relation to other Government reports or budget and foresight projects and reports to examining different kind of societal issues and technological development.



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE  
FINLAND



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