

Interdisciplinary platform

European Forum Alpbach: Diversity & Resilience 2018

Since 1945, European Forum Alpbach has been trying to open dialogue across all societal spheres – be it generational, ideological or cultural. Once a year, Alpbach, a small village in Austria, becomes the place where international decision-makers and academics from all levels of society across the world meet with a diverse and proactive audience of young people. In this beautiful village surrounded by mountains, European Forum Alpbach becomes the main interdisciplinary platform for discussing relevant contemporary questions from the realms of politics, society, business, science, culture, and technology. This great event that lasts two and a half weeks is hosted by European Forum Alpbach, a non-profit organisation based in Vienna, Austria.

Last years' European Forum Alpbach (August 15–31, 2018) focused on the general topic of “Diversity and Resilience” and their interconnection. In a world that is marked by rapid transformation, where every aspect of our lives is subject to change, we need to act with purpose and put new ideas forward. This is where diversity and resilience come into play. At the opening ceremony of European Forum Alpbach 2018, Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz reminded us in his keynote speech of the importance of these two notions. Stiglitz believes we need more diversity in energy sources so we can be more resilient to climate change.

During the first week of European Forum Alpbach, the participants had the opportunity to take part in a variety of different seminars on topics such as art, health, technology, politics, law, economy and finance, which enabled them to explore the ideas of diversity and resilience in different spheres. The participants also had the chance to meet Sophia the humanoid robot and discuss the ways in which artificial intelligence could affect our lives. Furthermore, they could attend global leader in sustainable development Jeffrey Sachs’s speech on combating corruption or Ban Ki-moon’s keynote speech on sustainable goals in practice. Apart from these seminars and sessions, the attendees could enjoy fireside conversations in small groups on the beautiful hillside where they discussed today’s relevant issues with distinguished guests (such as MEPs and academics). Further activities included sunrise hikes, evening meditations, interreligious contemplation, a soccer tournament, an innovations marathon, as well as performances of dramatic plays by Sophocles and Shakespeare by students from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and scholarship holders.

With more than 5000 people attending the Forum, 105 different nations represented, and a total of 787 speakers (36% of which were women), this event is the largest one of its type in Europe. Not to mention that there were 688 scholarship holders! Even after the Forum ends, scholarship holders have the chance to keep growing their network for the years to come on alumni associations in 22 different countries. One of them is Club Alpbach Croatia which tries to encourage cooperation among young locals and students, promote lifelong learning, peace and stability through open democratic discussions in the Zagreb metropolitan area. For more information you can contact the association via the following email address: klub.alpbach.hrvatska.kah@gmail.com. You can also visit the website of European Forum Alpbach: www.alpbach.org for additional information about the project.

European Forum Alpbach is a one-of-a-kind experience for proactive young people. It is a place where you can discuss relevant topics with top academics and decision-makers from all around the world while enjoying sunrise hikes with like-minded people. Don't miss your opportunity and apply for a full scholarship every year in March!

Ivana Geto¹

¹ Ivana Geto is a MA student at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb.
Contact: ivanaageto@gmail.com