

Highlights



Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy

OECD Global Forum



17 November 2022



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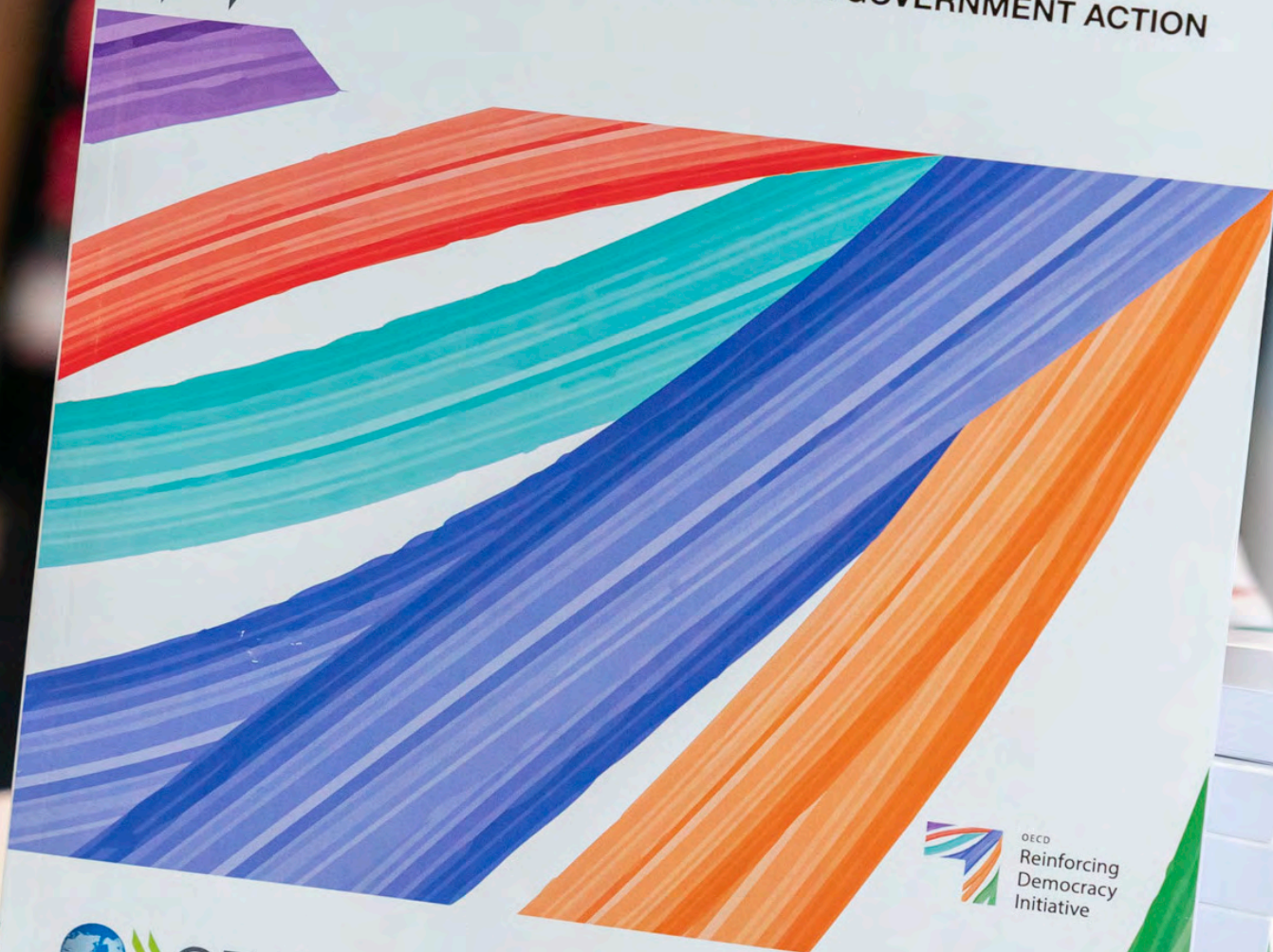
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OECD Public Governance Reviews

Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy

PREPARING THE GROUND FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION



ABOUT THE GLOBAL FORUM

The first [OECD Global Forum on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy](#) was held on 17 November 2022 in Luxembourg.

It brought together over 800 stakeholders from government, business, civil society, media, and academia from more than 60 countries to share perspectives on key challenges and solutions for making democracy fit for the 21st century.

Building on work under the five pillars of the [OECD's Reinforcing Democracy Initiative](#), sessions focused on how to:

- Combat mis- and dis-information
- Improve representation, participation, and openness in public life
- Embrace the global responsibilities of government and build resilience to foreign influence
- Gear up government to deliver on climate and other environmental challenges
- Transform public governance for digital democracy

Discussions were underpinned by data and analysis from two key recently released OECD reports:

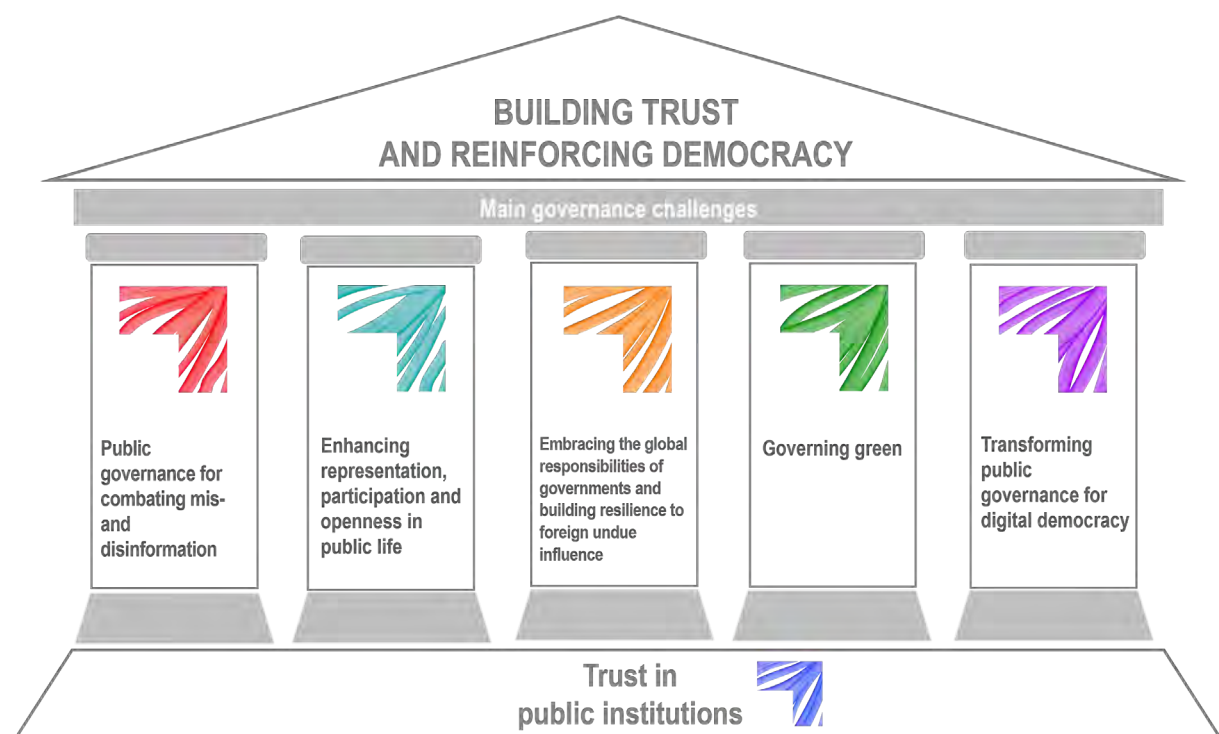


[Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy: Preparing the Ground for Government Action](#)



[OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institution](#)

This brochure provides key highlights from session discussions.



LUXEMBOURG

OPENING

KEYNOTE INTRODUCTION



Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Luxembourg

“Let us not be... powerless and defenseless witnesses facing a world that we believed belonged to the past and let us remain vigilant in defending our democratic values.”

Xavier Bettel
Prime Minister
Luxembourg

Democracies are under unprecedented levels of pressure from within and without. The polarisation of political discourse, geopolitical tensions, economic crises and creeping foreign influence in democratic processes – all also fuelled by mis- and disinformation – have made it urgent for governments to act to reinforce their democracies, in close partnership with citizens.

Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel opened the Global Forum with a sobering reminder that democratic values and multilateralism must not be taken for granted. He hailed the courage and steadfastness of the Ukrainian people in defending

“One of democracy’s unique strengths is the ability to acknowledge its weaknesses and imperfections and respond to them openly and transparently.”



Kerri-Ann Jones
Deputy Secretary-General
OECD

Opening session speakers:

- Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, Luxembourg
- Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister, Belgium
- Oleh Nemchinov, Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ukraine
- Kerri-Ann Jones, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD
- Master of Ceremonies: Martine Durand, former OECD Director of Statistics and Chief Statistician

their democracy against the Russian aggression and warned against foreign actors from autocratic systems seeking to undermine the foundations of democracy. He challenged the audience to keep championing democratic values and stressed that democracy remains the only governing system that enables an inclusive society through continual self-assessment and a commitment to self-improvement. He noted that at this historical turning point, both governments and individuals were responsible for standing up for democracy.

Prime Minister Alexander De Croo of Belgium further underlined that the incredible progress made by OECD countries in recent decades has only been possible through co-operation among people and countries grounded in mutual trust, the “most important social capital in societies”. Although trust in government is being challenged today, he reminded that trust can always be rebuilt as it is not a scarce resource, but a limitless driver of human progress.

Thanking participants and the OECD for their support for his country, Oleh Nemchinov, Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, reasserted Ukraine's commitment to democratic values and standards. He underscored that Ukraine's fight against the Russian aggression was a stand for democracy not only in Ukraine, but in Europe and across the world.

In her remarks, OECD Deputy Secretary-General Kerri-Ann Jones stressed that the unique strength of democracies is their very ability to acknowledge and address their weaknesses. She noted that to face the significant challenges threatening democratic institutions and values today, countries cannot work alone. The Global Forum offers a unique opportunity to explore with stakeholders from all parts of society an action-oriented agenda to rebuild trust in public institutions and discuss the key public governance challenges to democracy. She invited participants to be creative and bold in their discussions on the five pillars set out by the OECD Reinforcing Democracy Initiative.



At times when trust was being challenged, we always found new solutions and new progress through cooperation and human ingenuity. But above all we always succeeded because trust is unlimited and endless.



Alexander De Croo
Prime Minister
Belgium



PLENARY

PLENARY SESSION I

TAKING THE PULSE IN OECD DEMOCRACIES: TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Successive global crises have sorely tested public trust in recent years, with information ecosystems under unprecedented strain and rising citizen expectations around participation, representation and public integrity.

Underpinned by the report *Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions*, and drawing on national experiences, speakers during the first session discussed the current state of public trust and the concrete steps governments can take to strengthen citizen confidence and reinforce democratic institutions.

Panellists noted that, according to the OECD Trust Survey, public trust remains at an even split, with 41.4% of citizens saying they trust their national government and 41.1% saying they do not. Despite the economic, social and health challenges of recent years, governments and public administrations have demonstrated an ability to adapt, evolve and innovate in the way they work. The results of the Trust Survey confirmed, for example, that citizens are reasonably confident that their governments will reliably provide important public services such as education, health care and administrative services, even when facing difficult and changing circumstances.

Governments have been obliged and compelled to innovate, to provide quick solutions. Innovation became a stabilisation factor, a resilience factor that helped trust remain at a very good level.



Mario Nava
Director-General
Structural Reform Support,
European Commission

Session speakers:

- Serge Allegrezza, Director, National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (STATEC)
- Susana Cordeiro Guerra, Sector Manager, Inter-American Development Bank
- Mario Nava, Director-General, Structural Reform Support, European Commission
- Julia Iversen, Head of Competence Center (Democracy, Digital Governance, Urban Development), GIZ
- Yves Leterme, Former Prime Minister of Belgium (2008, 2009-2011), Club de Madrid Member
- Gunn Karin Gjøl, State Secretary, Norway

Communication with empathy is crucial, as is rethinking the vertical top-down approach to one where communications start from the point of view of citizens.



Yves Leterme
Former Prime Minister of
Belgium (2008, 2009-2011)
Club de Madrid Member

Nevertheless, panellists underscored that many citizens feel disconnected from their governments. This “disconnection” is stronger among the most politically and economically vulnerable groups – such as those with lower incomes, lower levels of education, and minorities – who also report lower levels of trust. Diversifying and broadening people’s opportunities to engage in public life, addressing their concerns, and closing trust gaps are crucial to curb polarisation and reinforce democracy.

Panellists agreed that by regularly measuring levels of trust and its drivers, governments can gauge the ongoing health of their democracies and identify what actions are likely to have the

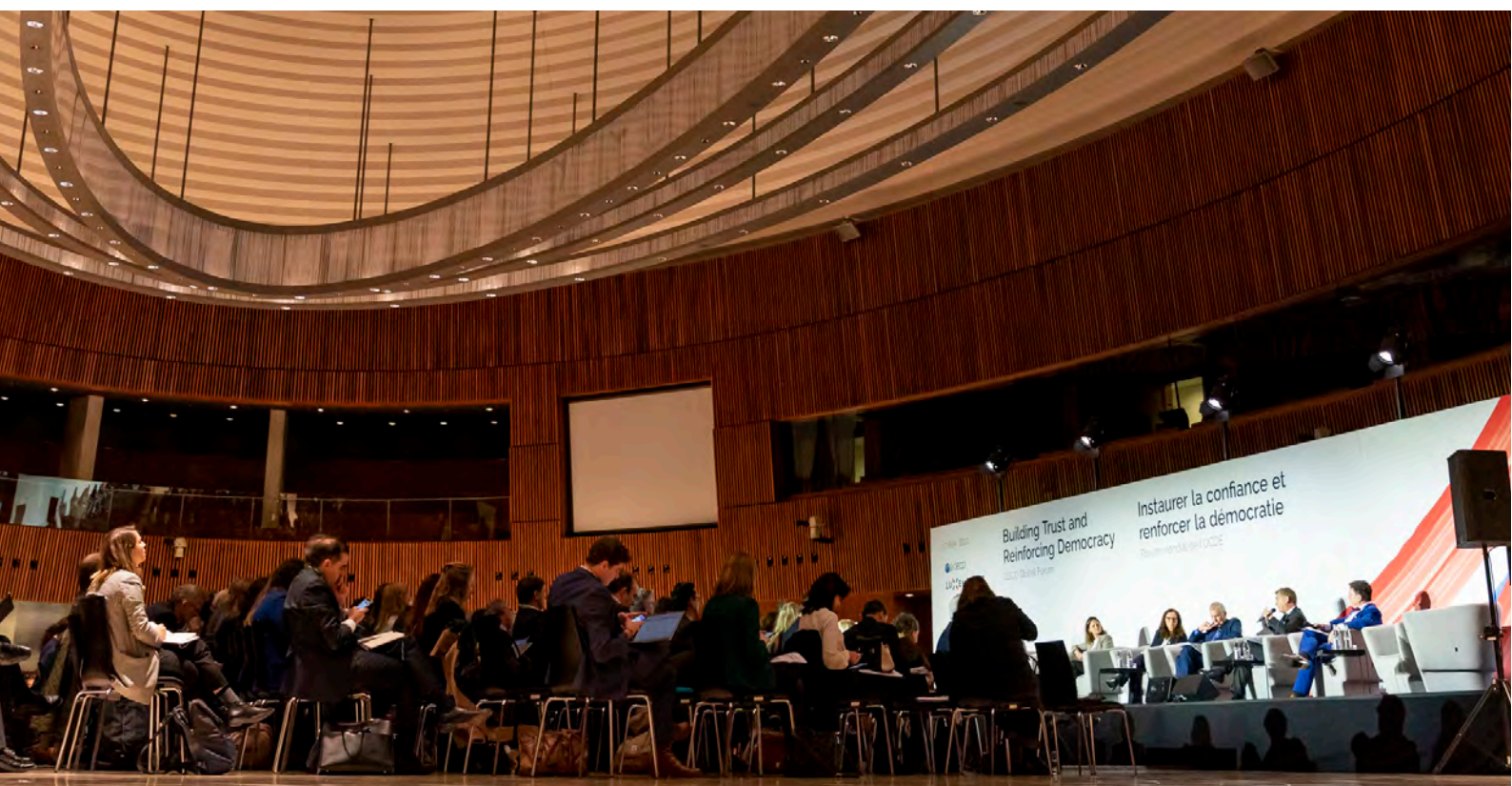
largest impact on building trust. It is critical to have trustworthy, independent, and quality measures of trust and public governance to spark constructive, fact-based discussions on the state of our democracies and engage citizens in these discussions.

The OECD Trust Survey’s insights and recommendations will help guide evidence-based policy making and reforms at the national level to strengthen governments’ capacity to carry out reforms, improve communication with citizens, and, most importantly, help anticipate and be prepared for ongoing and future challenges.



Trust cannot be taken for granted, and we need to work every single day to keep it.

Gunn Karin Gjøl
State Secretary
Norway



PLENARY

PLENARY SESSION 2

STRENGTHENING INFORMATION ECOSYSTEMS AND TACKLING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

The increased spread of mis- and disinformation significantly alters public debate, fuels polarisation, and can threaten democracy. It also often disproportionately targets women and can be most harmful to already vulnerable communities.

This session brought together panellists from government, the private sector, international organisations and civil society to look at the challenges posed by the proliferation of mis- and disinformation and discuss ways that governments can strengthen information integrity.

An overarching message from the session was that to better understand and tackle the problem, a whole-of-society approach – based on new and strengthened partnerships – is needed. For example, governments will need to engage more systematically with researchers and boost investment in research.

Session speakers

- Christophe Deloire, Chair, Forum on Information and Democracy
- Jānis Sārts, Director, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (Riga)
- Gunta Sloga, Executive Director, Baltic Centre for Media Excellence
- Kathleen Stewart, Public Policy Manager, Content Regulation, Meta
- Camila Vallejo, Minister Secretary General of Government, Chile
- Mavroudis Voridis, Minister of Interior, Greece
- Alicia Wanless, Director, Partnership for Countering Influence Operations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

“Being open and clear, and producing documented answers – this is the way to deal with populism and with false news. Democracies are winning in this war, and we should reinforce them to make them stronger.”



Mavroudis Voridis
Minister of the Interior
Greece

“Debunking [mis- and disinformation] is important but not efficient. Prebunking is the only effective way.”



Jānis Sārts
Director
NATO Strategic
Communications Centre of
Excellence (Riga)

Panellists also stressed the need to strengthen the role of sources of trustworthy information, including traditional media which have been undermined by this new type of digital “information warfare”. Participants highlighted that governments should take measures to encourage a diverse and independent media environment, as well as support local media, which has been particularly hard hit by recent changes.

As false and misleading information will always exist, increasing citizen resilience to disinformation messages will also be key. “Pre-bunking”, or warning people of the risk of being exposed to disinformation to reduce their susceptibility to believing it, is a useful approach. Additionally, long-term support for digital and media literacy efforts will enable citizens – and especially youth – to better understand the information environment and curb the sharing of untruths.

Ensuring effective public communication and public debate, which participants called “the beating heart of democracy”, are also essential in this effort. Governments must be “open and sincere” and ensure that citizens are informed about what is at stake in the fight against mis- and disinformation to secure their buy-in.

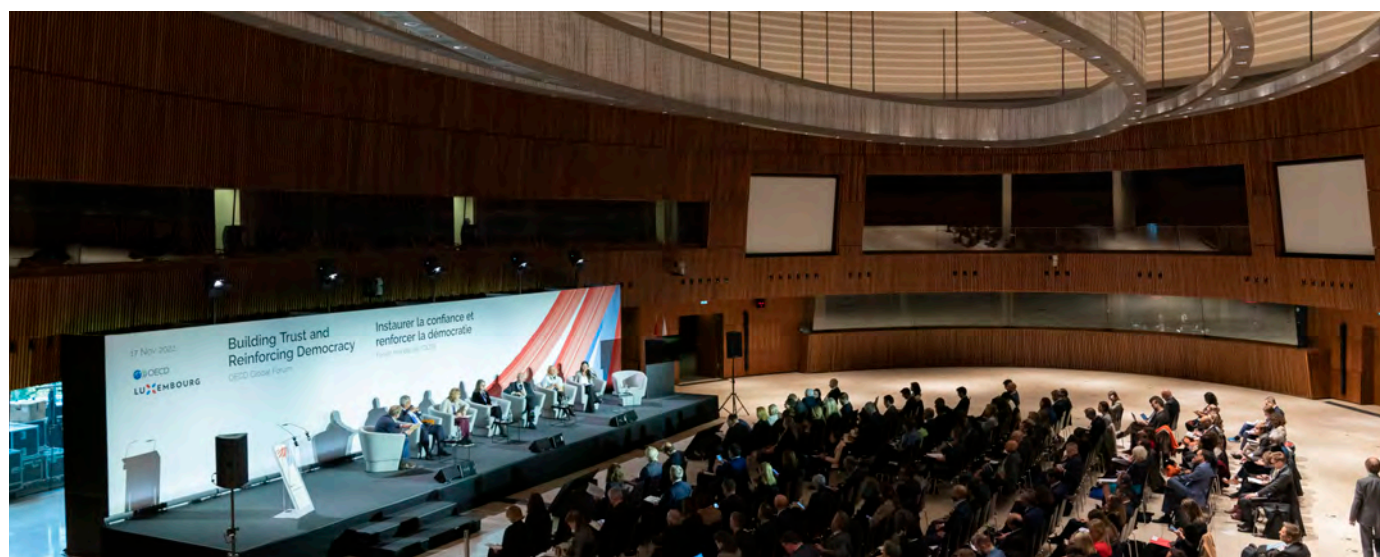
Finally, a multi-stakeholder approach to regulation of mis- and disinformation is critical to lay the groundwork for sharing best practices. Panellists noted that regulatory measures should be future-focused and driven by the values of promoting free speech and healthy public dialogue.

All speakers noted that while there is no “silver bullet”, exchanging experiences is essential to strengthening the social contract to fight disinformation. They underlined that the OECD is well placed to convene key stakeholders, identify what works and help shape collective responses that have real impact.

“Mis- and disinformation undermines democracy, particularly against the backdrop of citizen distrust, which is a breeding ground for disinformation.”



Camila Vallejo
Minister Secretary General of
the Government
Chile



PLENARY SESSION 3

REINFORCING INTEGRITY AND COUNTERING UNDUE INFLUENCE IN DEMOCRACIES

Public integrity is a cornerstone of democracy. From elections to policy implementation, integrity ensures that everyone has a voice, that elected officials properly represent and respond to the interests of their constituencies, that there is no undue influence of government policies, and that government actions are aligned with citizens' needs. Solid integrity systems also help strengthen the resilience of democracies to foreign interference by non-democracies.

During this session, panellists debated how governments can further strengthen integrity in elections, political affairs, and policymaking.

They agreed that integrity and transparency are prerequisites for representative democracies to function as they were intended – and deliver better lives for their citizens.

Democratic governments are responsible for setting the tone from the top and ensuring that integrity is upheld at the highest levels, including by elected and appointed officials. Ensuring clear responsibilities, leadership and a whole-of-society

“The strength of any democracy is dependent on the belief and trust that people have that their voices matter on issues that affect their lives. The presence of undue influence ... reduces the ability of ordinary voices to be heard.”



Jack Markell
Ambassador and Permanent
Representative of the United States to
the OECD

Session speakers

- Julio Bacio Terracino, Head of Public Sector Integrity, Public Governance, OECD
- Hannah Cameron, Deputy Commissioner, Public Service Commission, New Zealand
- Natalia Díaz, Minister of the Presidency, Costa Rica
- Jack Markell, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United States to the OECD
- Didier Migaud, President, High Authority for transparency in public life
- Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair, Transparency International
- Kristen Sample, Director of Democratic Governance, National Democratic Institute

“Transparency means being under the scrutiny of citizens and media.”

Didier Migaud
President
High Authority for
transparency in public life
France



approach to help promote a culture of integrity are essential. Panellists also highlighted the personal responsibility that befalls policy makers to enshrine the values of integrity. Speakers agreed that people generally choose careers in public service because they want to serve their communities. Leaders thus have a duty to preserve, protect and nurture this intrinsic motivation and spirit of service for integrity.

In particular, panellists discussed the risks of undue influence and stressed that domestic regulation is no longer sufficient to contain the threat. New forms of influence are increasingly complex, inter-related and involve a diverse set of actors including foreign autocratic governments and malign foreign actors. To tackle undue influence, panellists agreed that promoting transparency helps ensure that public officials, citizens, investigative journalists and researchers know who is benefitting from lobbying activities and how those activities are influencing the way public decisions are made. As actors who attempt to influence government may also be involved in illegal campaign donations, the role of political parties in buttressing political finance integrity and countering foreign interference in elections was also highlighted.

Panellists called on the OECD to help governments collaborate to raise standards for elected and appointed officials and strengthen their frameworks against lobbying and undue influence, based on good practices, lessons learned and the upcoming revised OECD Recommendation on Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying.

“As for political integrity, we need to institutionalise a coordination body to engage all agencies. We need to strengthen the bodies in charge of investigating corruption, and those in charge of international crimes.”



Natalia Diaz
Minister
Costa Rica

“Integrity is key for democracy, and it is key if we want to restore trust and prevent and tackle corruption and undue influence.”



Delia Ferreira Rubio
Chair
Transparency International

PLENARY

PLENARY SESSION 4

CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES: CONSEQUENCES FOR OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Current events, and in particular Russia's war against Ukraine, are redrawing the global geopolitical map in ways that will have immediate and far-reaching consequences for international development co-operation. This session explored how official development assistance (ODA) can continue to support democratic states in a fundamentally changing geopolitical context.

Panellists highlighted the enduring lack of trust in international relations. Another panellist called the Russian invasion of Ukraine a "geopolitical gamechanger" and emphasised the importance of strengthened multilateral engagement. Acknowledging the unprecedented accumulation of crises, speakers stressed that this may also trigger necessary reforms and that collaboration remains the key to addressing the breadth of challenges facing developing countries.

Panellists shared views on the role of development co-operation, with some arguing that it sustains injustice and others that it must adapt to a multipolar world with different sets of values but increasing development needs. They also underlined that ODA should not be seen as

Session speakers

- Thomas Greminger, Director, Geneva Center for Security Policy
- Frederik Matthys, Head, Global Partnerships and Policies, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD
- Susanna Moorehead, Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee
- Mamphela Ramphele, Co-President, Club of Rome

humanitarian aid, but rather as an investment in the development and long-term well-being of all. Panellists agreed that the engagement of youth across the world offers hope for finding new solutions.

“ We must nurture democracy and treat it with enormous care.

That means investing in political leadership and putting equality at the heart of everything we do.



Susanna Moorehead
Chair, Development Assistance
Committee
OECD

“ This is not about 'humanitarian aid', it's about investing in the development and long-term well-being of all.



Mamphela Ramphele
Co-President
Club of Rome

PARALLEL SESSION I

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

OECD Trust Survey data show that younger people tend to have lower trust in public institutions. This session looked at how governments can further empower young people in democratic processes and promote the well-being of today's youth and future generations, especially in the context of ageing populations.

Speakers noted that young people are significantly affected by precarious employment, lack of affordable housing, and have increasing concerns around mental health concerns. The Trust Survey shows that only 36.9% of OECD country youth (18-29) trust their government, compared to 45.9% for those over 50. Speakers warned that government consultations with youth-led organisations tend to be limited to narrow policy areas and, at times, tokenised. Youth also continue to be underrepresented in state institutions. According to OECD data, only 22% of members of parliament are younger than 40 and in some OECD countries less than 5% of the central government workforce are 35 years or younger.

Panellists agreed that efforts to reinforce democracy must involve youth and take their needs and perspectives into account. To this end, speakers welcomed the [OECD Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People](#) and ongoing work towards a Youth Policy Toolkit. They also called for proactive government action, notably to carry out youth impact assessments, adopt whole-of-government approaches to youth policy and service delivery, work with youth organisations to engage 'hard-to-reach' youth, and embed intergenerational justice commitments in policy making.

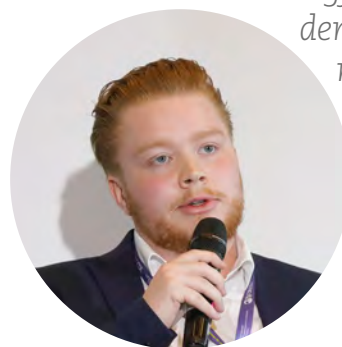
The discussion with the audience focused on young people's leadership skills and efforts to

Session speakers

- Miriam Allam, Head of the Youth Empowerment Unit, Public Governance, OECD
- Pitt Bach, National Secretary of OGBL, Independent Trade Union Confederation of Luxembourg, TUAC
- Liam Bremer, President, National Youth Council, Luxembourg
- Matjaz Gruden, Director of Democratic Participation, Council of Europe
- Frédéric Piccavet, Vice-President, European Youth Forum
- Jana Ticháčková, Representative of Friends of Youth, Czech Republic

support young elected officials.

“What skills do young people need to have meaningful roles in functioning democratic systems?” We need to ask ourselves these questions and respond accordingly.



Liam Bremer
President
de Jugendrot (National Youth
Council of Luxembourg)



PARALLEL SESSION 2

PROTECTING CIVIC SPACE AND ENHANCING PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

While in many countries, civic space is under strain and political participation is declining, democracies are renewing their commitment to civil liberties with innovative ways to meaningfully involve citizens in public decision-making, especially at the local and city levels. This session focused on how democracies can be reinforced through stronger citizen participation and representation, and innovative ways to involve citizens in public decision making.

Panellists highlighted evidence that governments deliver better designed policies and laws when they work with civil society. Citing examples of participatory processes such as citizens' panels, public consultations, participatory budgeting, and digital platforms and tools, panellists noted that participation creates buy-in, establishes links between governments and society, and enhances trust. Above all, greater participation in decision making is a key feature of citizens' changing expectations of democracy.

Challenges to increased participation and representation include restrictions on civic space, the digital divide and the risk of state capture by special interests. Panellists emphasised the need to institutionalise participation to make it a standard part of every policy cycle, create incentives for citizens to participate and make their voice heard, and strengthen democracy in the process. Further, it is not enough to simply initiate

“The benefit of a healthy civic space is to create a link between governments, citizens, and civil society between elections...and bringing more diverse ideas into the process.”



Hendrik Nahr
EU Public Affairs Manager
Make.org

Session speakers

- Martín Abregú, Vice-President, International Programs, Ford Foundation
- Mário Campolargo, Secretary of State for Digitalisation and Administrative Modernisation, Portugal
- Paul Maassen, Chief, Country Support, Open Government Partnership
- Iverna McGowan, Europe Director, Centre for Democracy & Technology
- Hendrik Nahr, EU Public Affairs Manager, make.org
- Elsa Pilichowski, Director, Public Governance, OECD

participatory processes. Governments need to be responsive to citizen input and transparent about how contributions are taken into account.

During the session, civil society called on OECD Members to develop a collective approach to protecting civic space and democracy.

“If you work with civil society, you get more ambitious, better-designed reforms and better, and earlier results. This shows that participation is not just an add-on, it pays off in terms of outcomes.”



Paul Maassen
Chief, Country Support
Open Government Partnerships



The accelerated digital transformation of governments, economies and societies bears important implications for the functioning of democracy. On the one hand, digitalisation offers many opportunities for reinforcing and renewing democracy through greater citizen participation and representation, as well as through greater government transparency, responsiveness and accountability. However, digital tools can also pose heightened risks to democratic institutions and processes that governments will need to mitigate. Speakers debated both aspects and how they will drive the future of digital democracy.

Panellists stressed that the digital age is creating unprecedented opportunities for collective action, citizen engagement, and greater public trust, but governments need to take a proactive role in shaping this transformation. One speaker noted that while digital technologies have created a new “agora” – or public gathering place, in ancient Greece – they have also brought increased risks of mis- and disinformation, polarisation, fragmentation of the public discourse, surveillance, and lack of transparency. The Netherlands’ Digitalization Agenda, Spain’s Charter of Digital Rights, Australia’s public sector reform, and Albania’s on-line consultation efforts are some examples of how governments are responding. The provision of inclusive digital public services and a trustworthy use of data were cited by all panellists as important enablers of healthier digital democracies.

Session speakers

- Ángel Alonso Arroba, Vice Dean for Management and Development, IE School of Global and Public Affairs
- Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
- Milva Ekonomi, Minister of State for Standards and Services, Albania
- Alexandra van Huffelen, Minister for Digitalisation, Netherlands
- Juan Jesús Torres Carbonell, General Secretary of Digital Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, Spain
- Peter Woolcott, Head, Australian Public Service Commission
- Andrew Wyckoff, Director, Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD

Panellists agreed on the need for governments to ensure that the digital transition aligns with democratic values and fundamental rights. In doing so, their actions need to remain cautious, conscious, and co-ordinated. One speaker underlined the importance of public administrations being “trained for resilience”. Another panellist stressed the need to explore agile and proactive ways to predict and shape how tech will evolve, bringing rights more in line with the digital age while not undermining innovation.

“Democracy for the digital age [must] guarantee that the rights and freedoms that citizens enjoy in the offline world should be equally protected in the online world.”



Juan Jesús Torres Carbonell
General Secretary of Digital
Administration
Ministry of Economic Affairs and
Digital Transformation
Spain

“Governments need to take responsibility - [and] to play a strong role - in shaping a digital transition.”



Alexandra van Huffelen
Minister for Digitalisation
Netherlands



PARALLEL SESSION 4

ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS FOR STRONGER DEMOCRACIES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AND MENA - FOCUS ON UKRAINE

Promoting and supporting continuous adherence to democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, and the protection of human rights and free market economies is crucial for global peace, security and stability.

The session brought together ministers and experts to discuss the impact that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine will have on the development of democracy and good governance in Eastern and Southeastern Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Countries in these regions still grapple with some of the fundamentals of democracy, such as media freedom and transparent and fair election processes.

Meanwhile, Ukraine continues to fight to defend its territorial integrity, freedom and democracy. However, the Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine noted that while the government now enjoyed unparalleled levels of citizen trust in this time of war, it was aware that afterwards, citizens will likely expect much more accountability from the government and its public administrations. As such, efforts to improve Ukraine's governance systems will need to be pursued during the post-war recovery process and improvement of Ukraine's governance systems in line with the Principles of Public Administration, as part of Ukraine's European integration process.

Panellists highlighted that no matter what the regional context, trust in government needs

“ To have good and effective public administrations, the focus must be on citizens.



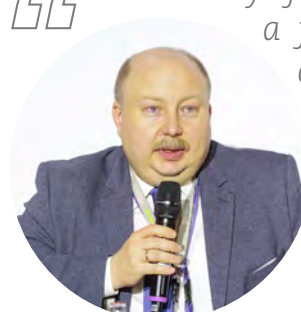
Slavica Grkovska
Deputy Prime Minister in charge
of Good Governance Policies
Republic of North Macedonia

Session speakers

- Sanja Ajanović Hovnik, Minister of Public Administration, Slovenia
- Mathieu Bousquet, Acting Director, DG NEAR A, European Commission
- Slavica Grkovska, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Good Governance Policy, North Macedonia
- Jovana Marović, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Montenegro
- Oleh Nemchinov, Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ukraine
- Sofiane Sahraoui, Director General, International Institute of Administrative Sciences
- Lina Viltrakiene, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of Lithuania to the OECD
- Gregor Virant, Head, SIGMA, Public Governance, OECD

to be earned. A responsive and accountable public administration that strives for continuous improvements is paramount in this regard. Governments must demonstrate respect for the rule of law, ensure openness and transparency and rely on evidence-based and inclusive policies to guide their actions. Administrations also need to show that they have the capability to manage current and future crises and that they can deliver quality services for citizens, even in the most difficult contexts.

“ The history of Ukraine has always been a fight to be in line with democratic standards.



Oleh Nemchinov
Minister of the Cabinet of
Ministers
Ukraine



PARALLEL SESSION 5

TOWARD GREEN DEMOCRACY: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Ambitious global action on climate and the environment will call for governments to take the lead on ambitious policies and reforms to meet these historic challenges.

This session discussed transformations needed in the public sector to deliver on green and the opportunities this presents to prompt higher-quality public governance and democratic institutions. The session highlighted that governments need to show that they are fit to handle long-term, complex, interconnected and systemic challenges, manage difficult trade-offs and achieve wider well-being outcomes. They cautioned that this was not always simple, as the short and long-term impacts of environment-related threats can make it difficult to generate the necessary focus and momentum to address them.

Panellists stressed that a key factor will be securing buy-in and consensus for the policies and reforms that are needed – which rely on strong public trust. They shared their countries' experiences on this, aware that citizens are not widely confident that governments are up to meeting the climate challenge. This is borne out by the recent [OECD Trust Survey](#), which reported that while half of citizens believe that their government should prioritise climate change, only one-third are confident that they will succeed. Panellists agreed that ultimately, effective public action on climate change will rely on strengthening public trust, which requires communicating and working hand-in-hand with citizens.

“Democratic governments are best equipped to deal with complex, interconnected and long-term policy issues. The success of climate and environmental policies depends on effective and efficient public governance.”



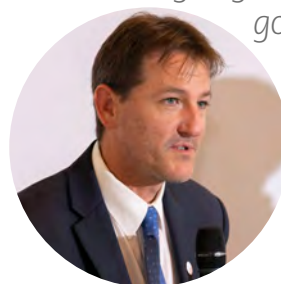
Sam Tanson
Minister of Justice
Luxembourg

Session speakers

- Dustin Brown, Chair of the OECD Public Governance Committee, Deputy Assistant Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, United States
- Kerri-Ann Jones, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD
- Juha Leppänen, Chief Executive, Demos Helsinki International
- Ossian Smyth, Minister of State, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform responsible for Public Procurement and eGovernment, Ireland
- Sam Tanson, Minister of Justice, Luxembourg

Panellists shared examples of their countries' efforts to gear up the public sector to address environmental challenges and how they are harnessing tools like green public procurement and green budgeting to deliver concrete progress in the coming decade. Speakers underscored that the success of government efforts will depend on their ability to adopt new approaches to policy making and ensure whole-of-government coordination. They also stressed the importance of leading by example through a greener and more resilient public sector.

“Climate change is an area where we are going to need to use all of the public governance tools we have – and new ones as well – both within our own countries but also globally to be able to meet the expectations of our citizens.”



Dustin Brown
Chair of the OECD Public Governance Committee and Deputy Assistant Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget
United States



OECD
PARALLEL SESSION 6

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

17-18 Nov 2022



Building Trust and
Reinforcing Democracy
OECD Global Forum and
Public Governance Ministerial Meeting

Women's representation and participation in public life continue to be hindered by long-standing and new obstacles, including gender norms and stereotypes, work-life balance challenges, limited commitment by political parties, as well as harassment, cyber violence, and gender-based disinformation. This session explored the measures that governments can take to prevent, address, and eliminate barriers effectively to promote stronger, more inclusive democracies.

Panellists reminded that the [2022 Report on the Implementation of the OECD Gender Recommendations](#) confirmed the need for further action to address both longstanding and emerging barriers to women's participation and representation in public life.

They noted that the fact that the vast majority of elected officials in leadership positions are men – despite efforts to increase women's numbers – indicates that persistent gender stereotypes still significantly brake women's access to leadership. One panellist recommended that political parties, which are not necessarily seen as allies, increase their efforts to appoint young women leaders and to encourage them to participate more proactively in public life.

In addition, women face specific challenges when they do access leadership positions. For example, one panellist noted that senior female politicians are three times more likely to be the target of hate speech than their male counterparts. Another warned that politically motivated gender defamation is pervasive in every country, which can be an early warning of worrisome deeper trends such as the undermining of women's rights and, more generally, the undermining of democratic values and institutions. Panellists pointed how governments could increase their efforts to promote a safe space for women in social media by tackling hate speech, cyber-violence, and gender-based mis- and disinformation.

Session speakers

- Bjarni Benediktsson, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Iceland
- Mary Hanafin, Mayor, County of Dunlaoghaire Rathdown, Dublin, Ireland
- Paulina Ibarra, Executive Director, Fundación Multitudes
- Silvana Koch-Mehrin, President, Women Political Leaders
- Nicholle Manz-Baazaoui, Senior Economic Policy Advisor and Director for Women's Economic Empowerment
- Lucina di Meco, Co-founder, #ShePersisted
- Maya Morsy, President of the National Council for Women, Egypt

Panellists noted that the OECD could play a significant role in closing existing gender gaps by improving the collection of gender-disaggregated data (including on technology-facilitated gender-based violence and disinformation campaigns), developing core gender impact indicators to track progress, and serving as a platform to convene officials and international experts across different areas to strengthen the coherence and impact of its work.

“After shattering the glass ceiling in politics, women see that there is a massive concrete block. In all countries, trust in women as political leaders is lower than there is in men – no progress has been made on reducing those stereotypes. It's essential to have role models, different personalities that speak to different kinds of voters.



Silvana Koch-Mehrin
President and Founder
Women Political Leaders

PRIORITIES FOR REINFORCING DEMOCRACY

The Global Forum concluded with an overview of the day's discussions, with speakers reflecting on the main challenges to our democratic institutions today and how governments can make democracies fit for the 21st century and beyond.

Acknowledging that liberal democracies are facing a unique set of serious challenges, closing panel speakers underscored that democracy cannot be preserved and strengthened if a large share of the population is excluded. They reiterated the need for the whole of society to work together and highlighted the need to join forces across countries for these purposes.

In outlining priorities for reinforcing and deepening democracy, panellists included: ensuring that democratic institutions are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances, improving the quality of public administration and public management, ensuring a healthy information ecosystem that can support transparent communication with citizens, and enhancing participation and representation.

Participants highlighted the importance of the Global Forum as an opportunity to reflect, listen, and share, to advance on common action to strengthen democracies.

“The Reinforcing Democracy Initiative by the OECD is so important because countries take decisions and act together to counter key challenges to democracy, like disinformation. We need each other and we need to work together.”



Sam Tanson
Minister of Justice
Luxembourg

Session speakers

- Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
- Christophe Deloire, Chair, Forum on Information and Democracy
- Jason Miller, Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, United States
- Elsa Pilichowski, Director, Public Governance, OECD
- Sam Tanson, Minister of Justice, Luxembourg

Insights from the Global Forum fed into the OECD Public Governance Ministerial Meeting on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy, held in Luxembourg the following day and were Ministers adopted the [OECD Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy](#).

A new edition of the Global Forum on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy will take place in 2024.

“The OECD is proud to be one of the institutions working hard to defend our democratic values and institutions. The Global Forum is a unique opportunity to bring together diverse voices – from governments, civil society, academia, business, and beyond – to collectively reflect on how we can strengthen and deepen our democracies.”



Elsa Pilichowski
Director, Public Governance
OECD



For more information:



<http://oe.cd/reinforcing-democracy>



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[OECD Public Governance](#)



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