

DIPLOMACY & BEYOND 2021

Started in 2014, “Diplomacy & Beyond” is the first talk series organized by the Institute for Cultural Relations Policy. The aim of the discussions is to bring closer the sphere of diplomacy to the ones who are interested in the practice of international relations and diplomacy. The events are organized in various formats: talks, round-table discussions and presentations. Invited speakers include active and former diplomats, decision-makers, experts and cultural relations practitioners. The events are supported by the active participation of the members of the ICRP’s Internship Programme. Since 2021 the talk events are video recorded and shared online.

Fatima Al Ansar

Starting on the 13th of August 2021, the ICRP hosted the activist, social entrepreneur, and diplomat, currently working as the Head of Mission of the Center for Strategic Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. As well as being Mali’s youngest diplomat, Ms Al Ansar also founded the Tilwalte Girls Peace Network, an NGO that seeks to create a network of young women and girl’s peace ambassadors in entrepreneurship, and community-based activities. What’s more, she recently got appointed as Chief Delegate and Global Ambassador to promote the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals for the UN Master Plan program. In her talk, hosted by Yash Arya and moderated by Candice Stephens, Al Ansar discussed issues such as education, gender equality, diplomatic careers and Mali’s foreign relations.

Dr. Hannes Swoboda

Following Fatima Al Ansar's appearance, Dr. Swoboda joined for a Diplomacy and Beyond event on the 22nd of September 2021, hosted by Sibasish Kumar Sen and moderated by Yash Arya. In his previous work, he served as both a representative of the Social Democratic Party of Austria and the leader of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. Now, Dr. Swoboda acts as President of the International Institute for Peace, a non-governmental Vienna-based organization with the mandate of promoting peace and non-violent conflict resolution across the world. Moreover, he has been appointed President of the Vienna Institute for International Economics, the Center of Architecture, the University for Applied Science – Campus Vienna, and the Sir Peter Ustinov Institute. Having been a MEP in the European Parliament for nearly two decades between 1996 and 2014, Dr. Hannes Swoboda shared some of his political expertise during this Diplomacy and Beyond talk. Specifically, he discussed (among others) the tensions that arise in the process of promoting European values abroad while also remaining mindful of existing local customs and cultural practices.

Lucía González

Entering the month of October, Lucia González was hosted on the 7th of October to share her knowledge and experiences as an architect with a rich background in the cultural and social field, both in the public and private sector. Among others, González was the director of cultural entities such as the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, the Philharmonic Orchestra and the Museum of Antioquia. Furthermore, she served in public positions such as director of the Administrative Department of Planning of the Government of Antioquia; social director of the reconstruction of the Eje Cafetero after the earthquake of 1999 and general coordinator of Colombia Humanitaria, a program of attention to the effects of the winter wave in 2010. What's more, she has served as director of the Casa de la Memoria Museum in Medellín; advisor for Life, Reconciliation and Coexistence for the Mayor's Office of Medellín; director of the Equity Project at the Centro De Fe y Cultura – Medellín; regional director of the National Victims Unit in Antioquia. She worked with the office of the High Commissioner building strengths for peace in the territories and in pedagogy of the Peace Agreements, and in the Secretariat of the National Peace Council, among others. During the event hosted by Cristina Peregrina and moderated by Fabiola Faustini, González discussed building sustainable peace in Colombia, keeping going in the face of adversity, and the role of art within the process.

Igor Okunev

Following Lucia González, Igor Okunev was hosted by the ICRP on the 17th of November 2021 as part of the Diplomacy and Beyond event series. Having obtained a Master's degree in history from the University of Manchester and a Doctoral Degree in Political Science from the MGIMO University (Moscow State Institute of International Relations), Okunev is currently working as a

Professorial Research Fellow at MGIMO University and Director of its Center for Spatial Analysis in International Relations. Moreover, he is a Co-Chair of the Research Committee on Geopolitics at the International Political Science Association. In his talk, Igor Okunev touched upon Europe as a civilisational mirror of Russia (and vice versa), as well as the historical and geographical roots of cultural clash between Europe and Russia. Furthermore, Okunev's most recent book on political geography was first presented during this very event. The event, hosted by Andras Lorincz and moderated by Anna Sarkisyan, additionally delved into the waves of Europeanisation and isolationism in Russian culture and foreign politics, and their implications on current affairs in Russian-European relations from the perspective of critical geopolitics.

David A. Frank

Bringing 2021 to an end, the last event of the year hosted David A. Frank on the 2nd of December. Currently, Dr. Frank is working as a professor emeritus of rhetoric and political communication in the Robert D. Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon. Being an accomplished author and coauthor of six books and 50 scholarly journal articles, Professor Frank studies the use of rhetoric and argumentative reason in value conflicts. In addition, he writes and teaches courses on rhetorical history and theory, civil rights rhetoric, the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, and the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. Among his accolades, he was awarded the Kohrs-Campbell Prize in Rhetorical Criticism for his book *Shared Land / Conflicting Identity: Trajectories of Israeli and Palestinian Symbol Use*, alongside his colleague Robert Rowland. Further, David A. Frank was recognized with the "article of the year" award by the Communication and Religion Association. Hosted by Afonso Morango and moderated by Jan Kouril, Dr. Frank revealed how the international community can best express its support of the Palestinian people in the ongoing conflict.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the Diplomacy and Beyond event series is about bringing the sphere of diplomacy closer to those interested in said diplomacy and International Relations in general. During their talks, Fatima Al Ansar, Dr. Hannes Swoboda, Lucía González, Igor Okunev, and David A. Frank have all achieved this aim in their own unique way. Currently, in 2022, this is still the series' intention. As such, the year's first event will be held on the 27th of January and host Ferenc Laczo, who will address the lessons that can be learned from the Jewish holocaust for the 21st century.