

2 SEPT.

Day 0

Welcome & Networking

- ✓ 17:30 - 19:30 | Networking Session – Informal meet-and-greet
- ✓ 19:30 | Welcome Aperitif

3 SEPT.

Day 1

Understanding Democratic Resilience

- ✓ 09:00 – 10:30 | Opening Session and Institutional Welcome - by Marco Boaria, Scientific Committee Director
 - Introduction to the School's objectives and interactive icebreaker for participants.
- ✓ 10:30 – 11:00 | ☕ Coffee Break
- ✓ 11:00 – 11:45 | 🗣️ Keynote Panel: Populism and Democracy Under Pressure
Speakers:
Paolo Graziano, PhD, Professor of Political Science at the University of Padua, Research Associate at the European Social Observatory, Brussels and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Surrey and Chercheur associé at Sciences Po in Paris.
Dino Piovan, Professor-Classical Philologist and Hellenist
 - Experts discuss global and regional perspectives on democratic backsliding and institutional resilience.

🎤 Followed by a Q&A
- ✓ 11:45 – 13:15 | Expert Session: Populism, Polarisation and Institutional Trust
Speaker:
Canan Tülüş Türk, PhD, Senior Specialist at Istanbul Policy Center and a lecturer in Comparative Politics at Okan and Medipol Universities.
 - Discussion on populist movements' impact on democratic institutions and local governance.

🎤 Followed by a Q&A
- ✓ 14:30 – 16:00 | World Café Discussion: What Makes a Democracy Resilient?
 - Small group discussions on characteristics of strong democracies and local governance responses.
- ✓ 16:00 – 16:30 | ☕ Coffee Break
- ✓ 16:30 – 18:00 | Role-Playing Exercise: Crisis Decision-Making in Local Governance
 - Participants assume roles (policymakers, activists, media) to navigate a simulated political crisis and propose democratic solutions.

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Day 2

Strengthening Institutions through Digital Innovation

✓ 09:00 – 10:00 | Multilateralism and Local Democracy

- Examination of international governance frameworks and multilateral cooperation in democratic resilience.


 Followed by a Q&A

✓ 10:00 – 11:00 | Expert Lecture: Collaboration of the Private Sector & Civil Society in Local Governance.

Speakers:

Valbona Karakaçi, Lecturer and Researcher at the University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Albania and founder of the Regional Advocacy Network for the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe on behalf of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation.
Bernd Steimann, PhD, Development Policy Coordinator at HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

- Debate on the role of businesses, NGOs, and governments in ethical leadership and citizen empowerment.

 Followed by a Q&A

✓ 11:00 – 11:30 | ☕ Coffee Break

✓ 11:30 – 13:00 | Interactive Panel: The Role of Digital Transformation in Strengthening Local Democracy

Speakers:

Kirsi Verkka, Development Manager, City of Helsinki and Advisory Board Member, ALDA
Samet Keskin, Director of the Data and Technology Center | Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) & Marmara Urban Forum (MARUF)

- Discussion on AI, e-democracy tools and digital participation enhancing transparency and governance.

✓ 14:30 – 16:00 | Fireside Chat: AI, Democracy and the Future of Citizen Participation

Denys Tkachov, International and European project developer, local democracy promoter, change manager.

- Interactive discussion on the ethical dilemmas of AI in democracy.

✓ 16:00 – 16:30 | ☕ Coffee Break

✓ 16:30 – 18:00 | Role-play Exercise: Designing a Digital Democracy engagement tool

- Participants develop digital engagement initiatives for their local contexts and receive expert feedback.

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INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

Resilient Communities:
Strengthening
Local Democracy in
Times of Change



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- ✓ 14:30 – 16:00 | Fireside Chat: AI, Democracy and the Future of Citizen Participation

Speakers:

Fabio Fraticelli, Chief Executive Officer of SocialTechno Impresa Sociale S.r.l. / TechSoup Italia

- Interactive discussion on the ethical dilemmas of AI in democracy.

- ✓ 16:00 – 16:30 | ☕ Coffee Break

- ✓ 16:30 – 18:00 | Role-play Exercise: Designing a Digital Democracy engagement tool

- Participants develop digital engagement initiatives for their local contexts and receive expert feedback.

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Day 3

Geographical focus & Practical Application

- ✓ 09:00 – 11:00 | Presentation of Real-World Case Study

- Democratic challenges and responses in the EU enlargement process.

- ✓ 11:00 – 11:30 | ☕ Coffee Break

- ✓ 11:30 – 13:00 | Group Analysis & Strategy Development

- Participants develop recommendations and solutions based on the case study.

- ✓ 14:30 – 16:00 | Simulation Exercise: Crisis Response and Institutional Resilience. Part 1

- Teams apply their learnings to a simulated governance challenge, presenting strategies to a panel of experts.

- ✓ 16:00 – 16:30 | ☕ Coffee Break

- ✓ 16:30 – 17:30 | Simulation Exercise: Crisis Response and Institutional Resilience. Part 2

- Participants share key takeaways; facilitators summarise actionable lessons.

- ✓ 17:30 – 18:30 | Closing Ceremony & Certificates

- Recognising participant contributions and outlining opportunities for continued engagement within the ALDA network.

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Provincia di Vicenza



CITTÀ DI THIENE

Via Trieste 43 - 36016 Thiene (VI)

+39 0444/540146

villafabris@alda-europe.eu

