alda 2025

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Resilient Communities: Strengthening Local Democracy in Times of Change

Co-funded by the European Union

CONTRIBUTO REGIONE DEL VENETO

3 · 4 · 5 SEPTEMBER 2025

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2 SEPT. Day 0

Welcome & Networking

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

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3 SEPT. Day 1

Understanding Democratic Resilience

- ✔ 09:00 – 10:30 | Opening Session and Institutional Welcome - by Marco Boaria, Scientific Committee Director and Gianantonio Michelusi, Mayor of Thiene
  - Introduction to the School's objectives and interactive icebreaker for participants.

- ✔ ☕ 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 | Interactive Lecture: Populism, Polarisation and Institutional Trust
  Moderator:
  Cana 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*

- ✔ ☕ Lunch Break

- ✔ 14:30 – 15:30 | World Café Discussion: What can we do to make a democracy resilient? Part 1
  Moderators:
  Avventura Urbana

- ✔ ☕ Coffee Break

- ✔ 16:00 – 18:00 | World Café Discussion: What can we do to make a democracy resilient? Part 2
  Moderators:
  Avventura Urbana

With the Patronage of

European Committee of the Regions

Provincia di Vicenza

CITTÀ di THIENE

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4 SEPT.

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.*

🎙 *Followed by a Q&A*

✓ ☕ **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)*

✓ ☕ **Lunch Break**

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

Speakers:
Denys Tkachov, *International and European project developer, local democracy promoter, change manager.*
Fabio Fraticelli, *Chief Executive Officer of SocialTechno Impresa Sociale S.r.l. / TechSoup Italia*

✓ ☕ **Coffee Break**

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

Kirsi Verkka, **Development Manager, City of Helsinki and Advisory Board Member, ALDA**
Denys Tkachov, *International and European project developer, local democracy promoter, change manager.*

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5 SEPT.
Day 3

Governing Enlargement: Safeguarding Democracy in Transition

- **09:00 – 10:00 | Keynote Speech**
  Speakers:
  Clara Volintiru, Regional Director of The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) (German Marshall Fund)

- **10:00 – 11:30 | Democratic challenges and responses in the enlargement process**
  Speakers:
  Senida Mesi, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Albania | MP | Expert in Civil Society & Local Governance & ALDA Advisory Board Member
  Teona Macharashvili, Specialist in Human Security and Official Development Assistance (ODA)

- **11:30 – 12:00 | ☕ Coffee Break**

- **12:00 – 13:30 | CRISP - Crisis Simulation for Peace e.V.**
  Simulation Exercise: Crisis Response and Institutional Resilience. Part 1

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

- **🍲 Lunch Break**

- **15:00 – 16:30 | CRISP - Crisis Simulation for Peace e.V.**
  Simulation Exercise: Crisis Response and Institutional Resilience. Part 2

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

- **16:30 – 17:30 | Final Reflection**

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

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

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