



FUTURE 500

Voices Rising: Rebuilding Bridges. Dialogue, Trust and Solidarity Post October 7th

14 – 18 March 2026
Brussels, Belgium

@
Commons Hub Brussels
Rue de la Madeleine 51
1000 Bruxelles

Representation of the State of North Rhine–Westphalia
Rue Montoyer 47
1000 Bruxelles

B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise
Rue Paul Spaak 15
1000 Bruxelles



DIALOGUE
PERSPECTIVES
E.V.



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Saturday, 14 March 2026

- 3.00 pm **Arrival & Check-In**
@ B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise
- 4.30 pm **Welcome**
Kira Wisniewski | Programme Lead Future 500
@ Commons Hub
- 5.00 pm **Asset Mapping – Getting to Know the Group**
Maximiliane Linde | Researcher and Former Board Member of DialoguePerspectives e.V.
We all bring different perspectives, educational backgrounds, work experiences, networks, political opinions, and worldviews to the table. In this session we want to explore what assets this group holds. Originating in localised community organising, we will use an adapted approach to asset mapping to get to know the group and the knowledge we bring to this seminar.
@ Commons Hub
6. 45 pm **TWON – The Project, the Goals, the Need**
Cosima Pfannschmidt | FZI Research Center for Information Technology, TWON
How do online social networks impact societies? How can these platforms be designed to foster a fair online public sphere? And how can they be researched? These questions gain particular urgency at a time when global geopolitical tensions, disinformation, and the rise of right-wing extremist forces in many democracies worldwide increasingly shape digital infrastructures. TWON (Twin of Online Social Networks) is an EU-funded research project that set out to examine how the design of online platforms affects the quality of democratic online discourse. To this end, the interdisciplinary team has developed an innovative approach to studying social networks: using a digital twin, simulations are conducted to assess the effects of different ranking algorithms. The findings are translated into policy recommendations and discussed in participatory “Citizen Labs” with citizens from across Europe. Members of the consortium include the University of Amsterdam, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the University of Belgrade, the University of Trier, the FZI Research Center for Information Technology, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), and the Jožef Stefan Institute.
@ Commons Hub
8. 15 pm **Dinner**
@ Commons Hub

Sunday, 15 March 2026

Breakfast

@ B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise

9.30 am **From Speechlessness to Dialogue: How Do We talk Again?**

Greta Golberg | Psychologist and Psychotherapist
Lili Zahavi | Filmmaker and Political Trainer

Who has not experienced the moment when words suddenly fail us, even though we feel we do have something to say? The changing world shaped by recent wars – including the aftermath of the events of October 7 – has made speaking with one another both more complicated and, at the same time, more necessary.

We would like to invite you to reflect with us on this experience of speechlessness and to take a shared step toward looking at our own perspectives as well as those of others. With your participation, we aim to explore ways and tools that can help us keep conversations alive, even under difficult and emotionally charged circumstances.

@ Commons Hub

12.30 pm Lunch

@ Commons Hub

2.00 pm **The Limits of Research on Social Media Dynamics**

Prof. Dr. Damian Trilling | Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and University of Amsterdam (UvA), TWON

In this workshop, we discuss the question how we can actually study the effects of social networks. While many have intuitive ideas about topics like spread of mis- and disinformation, so-called echo chambers and filter bubbles, and so forth, it is often much more difficult to find clear evidence for such phenomena. The workshop will take the form of an interactive talk, in which I will outline the opportunities and limits of different approaches and hope for a lively discussion on your thoughts and experiences.

@ Commons Hub

3.45 pm **Community Work in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings: Experiences from Eastern Europe (Focus on Ukraine)**

Igor Mitchnik | Executive Director Austausch e.V.

In this workshop, we explore the opportunities and challenges of community work in conflict and post-conflict settings, drawing on experiences from Eastern Europe – with a particular focus on Ukraine. We will discuss questions of positionality, the difficulties of analysis and impact assessment in volatile contexts, and share some

success stories from the field. The workshop will also have an interactive element, in which we hope to reflect together on how civic participation mechanisms might look in different contexts – drawing on participants' own experiences and professional backgrounds.

@ Commons Hub

5.30 pm Coffee Break

6.15 pm **Demonstration of TWONy**

Christoph Hau | Trier University, TWON

Simon Münker | Trier University

The workshop introduces participants to the TWONy platforms (a micro & macro perspective) through a live demonstration, explaining its technical foundations such as AI-generated personas and different content ranking mechanisms (chronological vs. emotion-based). Using predefined scenarios, the system's functionality and visualizations of emotional dynamics are illustrated. Participants then work in small groups to develop their own simulation scenarios on topics like climate change, migration, or data privacy. They define virtual agents with varied political perspectives and communication styles, set initial discussion prompts, and use the TWONys to simulate interactions under different ranking systems, documenting their observations. Finally, each group presents their scenario, agent setup, and findings, highlighting emotional dynamics and drawing comparisons between ranking methods and real-world social media behaviour, followed by a collective discussion of insights and surprising results.

@ Commons Hub

8.15 pm End

Monday, 16 March 2026

Breakfast

@ B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise

9.00 am **How Polarisation Works: Recognising and Interpreting Political Narratives**

Atahan Demirel | Policy Advisor on Anti-Discrimination in the Berlin House of Representatives

This interactive workshop explores how political narratives shape perceptions, fuel polarisation, and influence democratic discourse, with a particular focus on far-right framing and migration-related myths. Participants will learn to identify narrative

mechanisms, understand why they resonate emotionally and socially, and reflect on their impact on public debate. Through practical examples and dialogue-based exercises, the session develops constructive strategies for responding to polarising narratives while strengthening democratic cohesion and inclusive conversation.

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

10.45 pm **Invoking the Past, Legitimising the Present: The Use of Collective Memory in Digital Diplomacy**

Maximiliane Linde | Researcher and Former Board Member of DialoguePerspectives e.V.

In this workshop we will explore the role of collective memories and historical narratives in state communication. With a focus on Israeli digital diplomacy, we will discuss how and why states narrate their own identity in situations of conflict. Participants will gain insights on how emotional dynamics shape antagonistic behaviour in the international arena and fuel the polarised social media dialogue surrounding the post-October 7th context. Understanding these patterns is especially important in the EU's highly digitalised public sphere, where narratives travel quickly, emotions escalate rapidly, and solidarity, identity, and belonging are increasingly negotiated online.

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

12.30 pm Lunch

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

2.00 pm **Historicising the Present: Antisemitism and Racism in Israel-Palestine Social Media Discourses**

Furkan Yüksel | Lecturer in Historical-Political Education

This workshop examines contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and racism in social media debates surrounding Israel-Palestine and related international discourses. While the focus is on current visual and textual content circulating online, these examples are analysed in relation to historically significant forms of antisemitic and racist imagery and narratives.

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

4.15 pm **From Social to AI Media – Personalised AI Agents for the Detriment or Benefit of Online Dialogue?**

Prof. Dr. Achim Rettinger | Computational Linguistics, Trier University, FZI Research Center for Information Technology, TWON

AI systems have a profound influence on the content we consume on social media. AI companions are the next technical evolution which pushes beyond personalised content selection towards personalised content creation. Their individual

optimisation for attention and engagement via personal affection might ultimately lead to bubbles of one. At the same time, this technology allows us to reveal the effects of AI mechanisms underlying social networks. In this workshop we will exemplify risks of AI systems for the civic discourse online but also how to mitigate them based on Twins of Online social Networks (TWONs).

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

5.45 pm Dinner

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

Public Event: “Voices Rising: Rebuilding Bridges. Dialogue, Trust and Solidarity Post-October 7th”

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

The breakdown of interfaith dialogue after October 7th revealed dialogue without structural change is too fragile to survive crises, while policy without relationship is hollow. Simultaneously, authoritarianism rises through democratic structures as institutions lack tools to challenge it from within. European societies now face converging crises: algorithmic curation and AI-driven communication reshape public discourse even as interreligious polarisation, displacement tensions, disinformation, and eroded dialogic capacity intensify. These intersecting challenges demand sustainable solutions that build both structural resilience and relational trust.

The public panel examines critical questions: How can dialogue rebuild after crisis and collective trauma? How are AI, platforms, and media shaping narratives and interreligious relations? What can practitioners working across war, discrimination, and community activism teach us? How do we create spaces – online and offline – that strengthen trust and genuine conversation?

With international experts, we'll explore how digital technologies, media narratives, and community practices intersect – amplifying division or opening pathways to rebuild dialogue, strengthen solidarity, and renew democratic culture through cross-border cooperation.

6.30 pm Entrance

7.00 pm Welcome Adresse
Johanna Korneli

7.30 pm Panel Discussion with
Camila Piastro | Deputy Director at European Union of Jewish Students
Barbara von Freytag | Journalist & Expert on Eastern Europe
Furkan Yüksel | Political Educator
Prof. Dr. Achim Rettinger | Trier University, TWON
Moderation: Igor Mitchnik | Executive Director, Austausch e.V.

9.00 pm Panel End

9.30 pm End

Tuesday, 17 March 2026

Breakfast

@ B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise

9.00 am **Together Instead of Against Each Other:
An Attempt to a Differentiated Dialogue on the Israeli–Palestinian
conflict (A German Perspective)**

Sophie Orentlikher | Socio–Political Educator and Clinical Social Worker,
Research Assistant at the Centre for Applied Research on Education and
Diversity at the Catholic College of Aachen

Mohammed–Arfan Ashmawi | Social Educator and Clinical Social Worker,
Research Assistant at the Centre for Applied Research on Education and
Diversity at the Catholic College of Aachen

The conflict in Israel and Palestine has been dividing German society since well before October 7th. Public discourse is characterised by polarisation, ideologically charged language, and selective empathy. Mohammed and Sophie are social workers and fellow students at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Aachen, where they are studying clinical–therapeutic social work. He is Palestinian, she is Jewish – together they create spaces where this charged topic can be discussed. In their dialogue, they talk about their biographical approaches to the region, the German discourse, transgenerational trauma, and lived solidarity. As part of their studies, they are also researching the psychosocial effects of October 7th and the Gaza War on Jews and Palestinians living in Germany. In the workshop, they will provide an initial insight into the study.

@ Representation of North Rhine–Westphalia to the European Union

11.15 am **Media Literacy in a Digital World**

Amie Liebowitz | Journalist, Broadcast Presenter and Media Consultant

This workshop equips participants with the essential skills to navigate fake news and online disinformation while also examining how the origins, ownership, and funding of media outlets shape the information they produce. The session also explores how political, commercial, and ideological interests can influence editorial decisions, framing, and narratives. Participants will gain practical tools to investigate media ownership, recognise bias and underlying agendas, and critically assess the credibility of information. By the end of the workshop, participants will be better

prepared to distinguish credible reporting from disinformation and understand the broader forces shaping the news they consume.

@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

13.00 pm Lunch
@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

2.30 pm **World Café**
Camila Piastro | Deputy Director at European Union of Jewish Students
Sara Rocchetto | Executive Board Member of JEF Europe
tba | Muslim Jewish Leadership Council
In this interactive World Café session, participants will engage in small-group conversations with practitioners and representatives of civil society initiatives. The format offers an opportunity to learn directly from their experiences in fostering dialogue, democratic engagement and social cohesion.
@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

4.30 pm Early Dinner
@ Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union

5.30 pm **Public Event**
From Research to Sovereignty in the Digital Public Sphere – Insights from the TWON Project
@ KBR Royal Library in Brussels

Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Breakfast
@ B&B Hotel Brussels Centre Louise

9.30 am **TWON Hackathon: From Utopia to Policy - Reimagining Online Social Networks**
Cosima Pfannschmidt | FZI Research Center for Information Technology, TWON
Hate-speech, disinformation, and addictiveness: the undesirable aspects of today's online social networks are well-known. The need for alternative platforms is becoming increasingly urgent as geopolitical tensions are amplified in digital spaces and as economic and political interests shape the governance of online platforms.

But what would a utopian online social network of the future, that safeguards democratic societies, actually look like? What needs to change in the design and governance of online social networks to serve democratic needs? And which political action is necessary to support these changes? Together, let's reimagine digital spaces and develop actionable policy proposals!

@ Commons Hub

12.30 pm **Wrap-Up**
Kira Wisniewski | Programme Lead Future 500
@ Commons Hub

13.00 pm **Lunch (optional)/End**
@ Commons Hub

SPEAKER

Prof. Dr. Achim Rettinger

Achim Rettinger studied Computer Science at Universität Koblenz (Germany), the Artificial Intelligence Center at University of Georgia (USA) and the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute at University of Alberta (Canada). He did his PhD studies in machine learning at the Technische Universität München and at the Siemens AG with Volker Tresp. Then he joined Rudi Studer's group on semantic technologies at KIT where he obtained his habilitation in 2016. Since 2014 he was head of the KIT Research Group "Adaptive Data Analytics" and had an interim professorship at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in 2018/19. He ran several research projects, including DFG projects, national BMBF and BMWi projects, as well as large collaborative EU projects.

Amie Liebowitz

Amie Liebowitz is a multi award-winning journalist and broadcaster from Sydney, Australia. For the past 8 years Amie has been living in London, UK working for the BBC World Service presenting and producing radio, podcasts and documentaries. Besides covering daily news, Amie is known for her coverage of far-right politics in Europe, Antisemitism, the Shoah and Jewish culture. She was one of the presenters of the BBC's coverage for the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. Besides working for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Sydney, Amie is still working for European and UK broadcasters whilst enjoying the tropical weather of her home.

Atahan Demirel

Atahan Demirel works as a policy advisor on anti-discrimination in the Berlin House of Representatives and previously focused extensively on narratives within migration societies in his role as a political communications officer at a migrant self-organization. He studied in Oxford and Vienna.

Barbara von Freytag

Journalist, political scientist and expert on civil society in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Russia and Central Asia. Board member & former International Relations & Advocacy Advisor at Prague Civil Society Centre. Founding Member of Zukunft Memorial e.V. Worked with Reuters News Agency (London, Vienna) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (Paris, Moscow). RFE Research Institute and Centre for Applied Policy Research (CAP). Extensive NGO work in Russia. Eastern Europe Advisor for Bundestag European Affairs Committee & Advisor for German Government Russia coordinator. Director of Secretariat of EU-Russia Civil Society Forum (now CSF) and head of working group for cooperation with EaP CSF.

Camila Piastro

Camila is originally Mexican and was born in Barcelona. She holds a degree in International Relations, a postgraduate diploma in Peace and Gender Studies, and a Master's degree in

Euroculture Studies. Previously she served as Policy and Project Officer at CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, working on EU policy development and advocacy examining antisemitism and anti-racism within broader frameworks of intersectional discrimination.

Prior to this, Camila worked within the Jewish community in Barcelona and contributed to initiatives such as Salam-Shalom Barcelona and Women Lawyers for Social Justice in Tel Aviv. She is currently the Deputy Director and Diversity & Equality Officer at the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS), where she coordinates the Embracing Jewish Diversity Microgrant Programme and oversees the organisation's EU project management activities.

Christoph Hau

I studied Media Studies (B.A.), where I first came into contact with Natural Language Processing (NLP). Alongside my studies, I worked as a software developer and later pursued a Master's in NLP. During this time, I transitioned from industry back to academia and worked as a research assistant in the TWON project. I am currently completing my Master's degree and will begin my PhD in April within the KUKI project, focusing on NLP.

Cosima Pfannschmidt

Cosima Pfannschmidt is a research associate at FZI Research Center for Information Technology, and PhD candidate at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. Her work focuses on issues of Digital Democracy, such as polarisation, the role of online social networks and their regulation. She coordinates the research projects "TWON – Twin of Online Social Networks", "KuKI – Kulturalisierungssensible KI-Assistenz für eine desinformationsresiliente multilinguale Gesellschaft" and "Tech for Democracy – German-Israeli Research Initiative on Digital Democracy" at FZI. From 2022-2024 Cosima Pfannschmidt worked in the German Bundestag as parliamentary assistant. She holds an M.A. in Sociology and a B.Sc. in Economics from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

Prof. Dr. Damian Trilling

Damian Trilling is a professor of Journalism Studies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). He is also affiliated with University of Amsterdam (UvA), where he leads the TWON consortium at the Communication Science department. After his PhD on patterns of media use (UvA, 2013), he worked mainly in the area of how the changing media environment impacts the way how citizens engage with news. In his research, he uses a wide range of methods, in particular computational ones involving large-scale content analysis and the analysis of digital traces.

Furkan Yüksel

Furkan Yüksel studied History and Philosophy in Tübingen. He works as a freelance political educator in historical and political youth work and in adult education. His main areas of focus include antisemitism, racism, right-wing extremism, and cultures of remembrance. Since 2021, he has been an ambassador for the Stuttgart-based project

“Schalom and Salam”. He is working at the Anne Frank Educational Centre and is part of the CPPD network, which advocates for multiperspectival approaches to remembrance. Since 2025, he has held a teaching assignment at University of Applied Science in Ludwigsburg.

Greta Golberg

Greta Golberg is a psychologist and psychotherapist based in Berlin. She currently works as an outpatient psychotherapist. From 2020 to 2023, she worked as a psychosocial counselor at OFEK e.V., Counseling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination. Since 2019, she has been a scholarship holder of the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Scholarship Fund.

Igor Mitchnik

Igor Mitchnik is Executive Director of Austausch e.V., an NGO dedicated to international civil society cooperation and democracy support in Eastern Europe. His professional work has long focused on civil society, humanitarian, and analytical projects in crisis and conflict regions, particularly in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. From 2019 to 2021, he co-founded a civil society center in Sloviansk, eastern Ukraine (Donetsk region). Following Russia’s full-scale invasion, Ukraine has remained his primary field of engagement, including in cooperation with CORE and Mercy Corps.

Lili Zahavi

Lili Zahavi is a filmmaker and political trainer. Alongside her film and acting work, she has long been engaged in political education projects promoting diversity and pluralism and opposing racism, antisemitism and discrimination. She is an alumna of the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Scholarship Foundation and is currently in post-production of her feature-diploma-film. Lili graduated from Film Academy Baden-Württemberg in 2025. She lives and works in Berlin.

Maximiliane Linde

Maximiliane Linde is an expert in international relations, political science and religious studies, having studied in Berlin, Münster and Warsaw. Her work focuses on peace and conflict studies, feminist foreign policy, civil crisis prevention, transitional justice and the impact of religious narratives on protracted conflicts. She is a founding member and former board member of DialoguePerspectives e.V. and has been facilitating its seminars for many years. Maximiliane is actively involved in foreign policy through party politics and contributes to grassroots think tanks that reflect on global crises and promote collaborative approaches to conflict resolution.

Mohammed-Arfan Ashmawi

After completing his bachelor's degree in social work and social pedagogy at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Aachen, Germany, he is currently completing his master's degree in clinical therapeutic social work in Aachen. Since 2022, he has been working at

the Institute for Applied Education and Diversity Research at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Aachen. Mohammed-Arfan Ashmawi focus is on political education, anti-discrimination work, and postcolonial studies.

Simon Munker

Simon Munker started his career as a media designer and front-end web developer (IHK), focusing on WordPress and reactive JavaScript while working on projects of various scales in finance, education, and health. During this time (2016), voice assistants and text-centric user interfaces began to rise. Thus, he decided to pivot his career and actively participate in the research and development of language processing techniques and generative text-based AI. He pursued an undergraduate in computational linguistics (2017) to complement his programming skills with a linguistic foundation. He continued his education with a master's in natural language processing (2021), specialising in text analysis and generation with large language models. Afterward (2023), he joined the Department of Computational Linguistics at Trier University as a research fellow, focusing on language models as synthetic online social media users in the scope of an EU-funded research project.

Sophie Orentlikher

After completing bachelor's degrees in Social Work and Educational Science in Vienna and Heidelberg, Sophie is currently finishing her master's degree in Clinical Therapeutic Social Work in Aachen. For more than five years, she has been involved in political and cultural education with children and young people, focusing on anti-Semitism, art education on contemporary Jewish life, and the promotion of democracy. She also organises and leads international youth exchanges on socio-political topics and works as a research assistant at the Centre for Applied Research on Education and Diversity at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences Aachen. Moreover, she has been engaged in Jewish-Muslim dialogue and peace activism for many years.

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