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Recent technological advances have helped deepen our understanding of the world and, in certain areas, bring us closer together than ever, but the world remains rife with tensions. The predictions and indeed hope of many political thinkers at the end of the 20th century that access to information would result in greater homogeneity has not materialised. While many believe that facts are objective, we are now learning that in human interactions, distinguishing between facts and perceptions is harder than it seems, that reality is very personal, depending on our cultural experience, traditions and values. How do we distinguish a fact from a perception or a myth? How do we decide that what we see is true and not merely the result of subjective views? And when our realities differ, how do we bridge the divide?

We have developed the instruments needed to engage in effective, inclusive and transparent dialogue. The array of tools at our disposal has never before been seen in history, but these new technologies are merely tools, and they are also being used to perpetuate our differences.

We continue to remain enveloped? in our traditional perceptions and are better at judging each other than looking inwards and making improvements at home. When will we start searching with the same eagerness for things we have in common, and which would ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for everyone?

First, we need to look inward in order to move forward. We need to start making changes at home and engaging in a meaningful discussion about how we govern our societies and how we bring up and educate the next generation. We need to instil the next generation with greater emotional intelligence; only then will we make fundamental progress towards bridging the divide.

Furthermore, a comprehensive public discourse in society has become almost non-existent. The fundamental changes require time, they are generational in nature, and the time to start making them is now.

Leaders' Panel

To be announced.

State of the World

To be confirmed.

Special Panel

To be announced.



European Union: What Keeps Us United

In recent years, the EU has been facing significant challenges, which have lifted the veil of its unity, revealing its internal fragmentation. Sometimes, the Union seems to be criss-crossed with divisive lines running from West to East, from the centre to the periphery, and from North to South, making it seem like a variable-geometry Union. However, despite the reality of sometimes diverging interests which arise from different historical, demographic, geopolitical and economic backgrounds, interdependence remains a key underpinning element of the EU's daily reality. The key principle of managing our mutual dependence has been, or should be, solidarity, as proven from the outset of the integration process.

In the light of shared and recently unprecedented challenges, European leaders have reconfirmed the need for unity between Member States; however, the approaches to finding solutions appear to differ. The EU panel will seek to discover what unites us, how we are bridging the existing gaps and divisions within the EU, and how we will ensure that we maintain our unity.

Climate Change and Security Dynamics

Scholars and security agencies around the world view the issue of climate change from two angles: climate change as a threat, and climate change as a threat multiplier. According to IPCC, the increased magnitude of climate change disasters in coming years will alter countries' environmental, social, and economic fabric. The resulting degradation of natural resources, reduced opportunities for livelihood and mass displacement and migration will increase competition for resources, and could lead to conflicts, unrest and even wars. However, amicable strategies/policies can prevent the resulting conflicts and mass migration. All of the above and many more dimensions of climate change as a threat multiplier require concerted efforts at the policy level, and discussions among important stakeholders. The session with leading experts and policy makers from around the world will discuss the various dimensions of security threats emerging from climate change effects and possible policy options to prevent climate change from becoming a threat multiplier.

Cyber Security System: Achieving Resilience

The growing threat of advanced cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure and industrial systems presents a unique challenge for businesses and countries alike. Increasingly, governments are being called on to respond to cyber-attacks and provide a secure cyber environment, despite the fact that the infrastructure of cyber security has so far been in the hands of the IT sector and not under state control. Cyber security has become one of the pillars of national security, and partial solutions by individual organisations are no longer sufficient to counter cyber threats. It is imperative for countries to build a system that ensures cyber security.

How do we build such a system and what elements does it need to include in order to effectively address these threats? Will the information revolution work to further integrate and connect Europe through a single digital market? How is the private sector dealing with the challenges of cyber-attacks, and what new business opportunities does the cyber insecurity offer for companies?



Being Human in the Age of Technology

At times our society feels like a runaway train. Technologies in artificial intelligence, biotech, nanotech, to name only a few fields, are developing at an extreme pace, but are not accompanied by a strategic analysis of their impact not only on our daily lives but the whole of humanity – on social relations, on our emotional and biological selves, as well as on our legal systems and regulatory frameworks. The infrastructure for such fundamental changes is not in place.

The panel will explore cutting edge technological advances and how they will affect our lives and the human race as a whole. What changes can we foresee in the coming decades? How can we ensure that they will lead us to a better existence and that we use technology to improve our lives and not to perpetuate the cycles of global violence and wars that mark human history?

International Criminal Court: 20 Years after Rome – Setting a Path for the Future

This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the first permanent international criminal court for prosecuting individuals for atrocity crimes. Over the years, the Court has become a meaningful actor and achieved notable results, including with its judicial pronouncements on sexual and gender-based crimes, child soldiers and cultural heritage. However, the Court also faces several challenges. With Burundi's withdrawal from the ICC, the goal of universality calls for greater attention. The Court's effectiveness continues to depend on cooperation with states and international organisations, particularly the United Nations, and on adequate funding. As it becomes increasingly active, the Court could come under greater pressure. The 20th anniversary is an important opportunity to celebrate the Court's many accomplishments and an encouragement to undertake a strategic assessment of the challenges with a view to securing its successful future.

Transforming World Development – Beyond the State-Centric Approach

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, world leaders pledged their commitment to a new approach to global development. This new approach is based on the realisation that states are no longer the only drivers of development, and that other partners have to assume greater responsibility for sustainable development, including financial institutions, the private sector, civil society and local communities. Only by engaging all partners will the 2030 Agenda produce transformative effects.

In light of the new development paradigm, the panel will discuss ways of changing the current mind-set to challenge the status quo and to better exploit the potential of all stakeholders, including through the empowerment of women. It will also look at the potential of innovations and technologies to overcome the global challenges defined by the 2030 Agenda.

It will also address the question of how to mobilise various developmental drivers in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals – that is, to end hunger, reduce inequality and ensure environment-friendly development – and in so doing, leave no one behind.

Mediation in a New Multipolar World – Between Expectations and Reality

The world today is increasingly exposed not only to more threats, but also to new ones – conflicts are becoming more asymmetrical and interconnected, with a number of new actors involved; after decades, we are again facing the peril of the use of nuclear weapons; the number of terrorist attacks around the globe remains high; cyber space is becoming a new theatre of war; climate change is the most important threat multiplier. How should we effectively address all these complex contemporary challenges to international peace and security, which are not limited to state, ethnic or religious borders? The world may never have had so many tools for conflict prevention and early warning mechanisms; but are we also using them to the benefit of the people who are most affected (people on the ground), whose expectations are very often overlooked/ignored, or just for the advantage of main actors/players involved?

Digital Bridge: Transformation for Institutional Resilience

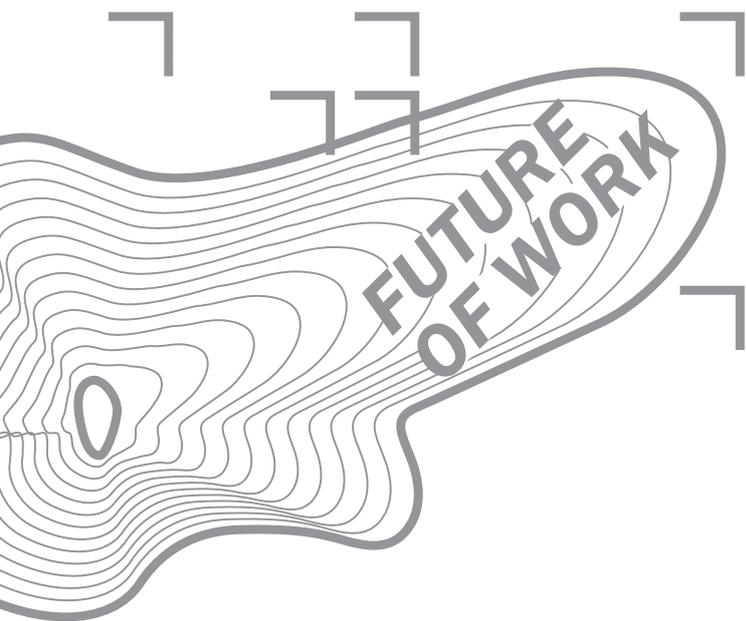
Digitalisation is a modern imperative. Institutions find themselves in a fast-paced and evolving environment in which rapid changes in communications media and power dynamics have significant effect on the role and voice of governments, business, media, and civil society organisations. In order to remain resilient and pliant while further serving the best interests of society, institutions must embrace on the digital future and transform and transcend traditional ways of operating. They must form the bridge.

Global digitalisation was envisioned as a means of bringing us closer together, but discussions now focus on how it pushes us apart. Is digitalisation responsible for deepening social cleavages, or is it simply exposing us to rifts that existed already? The filter bubble phenomena, often cited as a result of digital communication platforms, existed long before the digital communication revolution, but has the volume and social element of modern media exacerbated this problem? How has empowering individuals to be their own editors and arbiters of truth hindered the ability of everyone to validate the accuracy of the information to which they are exposed?

Western Balkans: Lost Years or New Hope?

The EU enlargement process has always been a political process. Despite the technical benchmarks, monitoring missions, evaluations and progress reports, it took only one sentence from the President of the European Commission five years ago to raise doubt and fear about belief in the enlargement policy and the Western Balkans. After several years of uncertainty, it again took only one sentence from the same President to revive hope and enthusiasm in the region, which in the past was much more concerned about having a positive external appearance than internal reforms. This hope was translated into concrete language with a new strategy on enlargement; new tasks have been divided among the countries of the region, and uncertainty has been replaced by actual dates for enlargement.

But why will things be different this time? How will the lost years of slow progress be replaced by the swift and successful transformation of a society ready to embrace the norms, standards and values of the EU? Are the political elites ready to embark on this road, which in the end might cost them their privileges and functions? Is civil society ready to act as a watchdog and catalyst for changes?



Organised in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia, the business forum will focus on the evolution of work and its impact on jobs, businesses and society at large.

Globalisation, technological progress and demographic change are having a profound impact on work. While the future offers unparalleled opportunities, it also presents significant challenges. How will these changes affect workers, employers and society? The future of work is already here. And we will all have to deal with it.

AmCham Business Breakfast

We are in an economic cycle in which jobs as we know them are rapidly changing. The World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs" study predicts that 5 million jobs will be lost before 2020 as artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology and other socio-economic factors replace the need for human workers. The good news is that those same technological advances will also create 2.1 million new jobs. But the manual and clerical workers who find themselves out of work are unlikely to have the skills required to compete for the new roles. According to the latest research, we will soon be only as good as the skills we possess, and for this reason we will have to refocus skills education.

What will automation, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) mean for tomorrow's workforce and what effect will they have on jobs, skills, and wages? What are the skills and competences of the future, and how can we make sure that we keep pace? How do we bridge the rising divide between human beings and artificial intelligence?

Session 2: Bridging the Divide: the Human Brain and Artificial Intelligence

The power of the human brain is enormous, and in order to behave more productively in complex business situations, we need to better understand how the brain works. With new technological advances such as AI, many opportunities related to solving these complex issues emerge, but also many challenges. How is the power of AI transforming society? Is the fusion of technology and human brain capacity creating a new hybrid species?



Session 3: Moving from a Physical to a Digital Society

A digital society is quickly emerging and blending the physical and the virtual worlds. It is affecting not only business models and how we work, but how we live and interact. More than ever, technology is becoming a part of our identity, while our digital and physical worlds are increasingly converging. The Internet of Things, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence are changing the nature of work in ways that could empower and liberate people and reduce inequalities between people and between countries; or the outcome could be diametrically opposite.

Session 4: The Positives and the Dark Side of a Hyper-Connected World

The world in which we live is more interconnected than ever. Physical and cyber boundaries have almost vanished, and almost every move we make affects every other individual in society. As interconnectivity simplifies many areas of our lives on the one hand, many challenges and security threats persist on the other.

Tourism as an Instrument for Cultural Co-Operation

Strengthening cooperation between the tourism and culture sectors has become a major driving force of destination attractiveness and competitiveness in recent years. Meanwhile, tourism has not only economic effects, but also influences social and cultural relations at the national and international level. Therefore, tourism is an excellent instrument for connecting people, and learning about and accepting the diversity of cultures. Cultural tourism based on tangible and intangible cultural assets is one of the biggest and fastest-growing global tourism markets. Culture and the creative industries, with the support of innovative ICT, are increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. The creation and promotion of local distinctiveness is becoming a very important comparative advantage in the competitive, globalised tourism market.

The tourism panel will discuss the wide possibilities of cultural tourism, new technologies in tourism and opportunities for international co-operation in this field, including a presentation of good practices.



