

Hannah Arendt Network on Democratic Resilience and Renewal



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Arendt
Network



“If we are to save democracy from ourselves, we have to omit what has become superfluous, to draw a line between what is real and what is mere appearance.”

— Hannah Arendt

Our **mission** is to establish and nurture a dynamic European network committed to strengthening **democratic resilience and renewal**. With a steadfast dedication to collaboration, education, and advocacy, we aim to empower individuals and communities across the European continent to safeguard democratic values and institutions actively.

Drawing inspiration from Arendt's insights, we recognize the importance of **critical thinking, active citizenship, public engagement, and the vitality of political action**. Embracing Arendt's emphasis on plurality, we celebrate the diversity of voices, perspectives, and experiences within our network, understanding that vibrant democracy thrives on the richness of its collective discourse. We uphold the significance of public space as a forum for dialogue, deliberation, and the exercise of freedom, where individuals can come together to shape the shared future of our continent.

Political scientists Wolfgang Merkel & Anna Lührmann define **democratic resilience to rising autocracy** as “the ability of a democratic

system, its institutions, political actors, and citizens to prevent or react to external and internal challenges, stresses, and assaults.” Democratic regimes are resilient when they withstand autocracy by adapting without losing their democratic character and maintain their constitutive core institutions.

This definition inspires the Hannah Arendt Network to foster democratic resilience across all four levels. We aim to **strengthen civil society, democratic institutions, public administration, and the media** through diverse actions and activities. As a network organization, we also support the **(re-)pluralization of the democratic debate**.

All our activities actively oppose anti-pluralism and autocratization. We believe that repluralization leads to democratic renewal, which is essential for a new democratic revival and stimulates democratic resilience. By fostering a culture of dialogue, respect, and inclusivity, we aim to create a robust democratic fabric capable of withstanding and adapting to the challenges of our time.

Levels of engagement in the Hannah Arendt Network

We foresee three levels of engagement in the Hannah Arendt Network.

1. Founding members

The core of our network consists of our founding members, who are all existing centers dedicated to preserving and promoting Hannah Arendt's legacy. These include:

- Hannah Arendt Center in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York;
- Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies in Dresden, Germany;
- Hannah Arendt Institute in Mechelen, Belgium;
- Hannah Arendt Center in Verona, Italy.

2. Mission-Aligned Public and Civil Society Organizations

We aim to unite various public and civil society organizations that share our mission. These organizations are committed to fostering liberal democratic values, promoting its renewal, and enhancing democratic resilience against anti-pluralist movements and political parties, both domestically and across the European Union.

3. Supportive but Independent Organizations

We welcome support and cooperation from organizations that do not wish to align themselves with our mission statement but wish to contribute to the pluralization of democratic debates. We value opposing views that challenge us to rethink and renew democratic leadership and institutions.

Main Activities

The Hannah Arendt Network wants to engage and unite these organizations through various working groups that center on the intersection of democracy and key topics relevant to our members. Examples of such topics include "Democracy and Police", or "Democracy and Migration." Member organizations are encouraged to propose new working topics and participate in actions that support and enhance local initiatives.

In the discussions and exchanges, the **collective impact model is a guiding principle** to ensure successful collaborations around complex social issues. The model favors a collective approach and is enriched with different **key activities**, meant to foster and advance the impact of the members' initiatives on democratic values and resilience:

1. Capacity-Building Initiatives

Develop capacity-building initiatives to empower individuals and organizations with the skills, resources, and networks needed to advocate effectively for democratic values and to allow for participation in political processes. This could include training programs, mentorship opportunities, and networking events.

2. International Exchange Programs

Facilitate international exchange programs and partnerships to foster cross-cultural dialogue, share best practices, and learn from experiences in other countries. This could involve arranging study visits and conferences. The network also aims to promote international collaborative projects between partner organizations.

3. Educational Workshops and Seminars

Host regular workshops, seminars, and training sessions to educate citizens on democratic principles, political processes, and civic engagement. These events could cover the following topics: media literacy, critical thinking, and the importance of active citizenship.

4. Community Dialogues and Forums

Organize community dialogues, town hall meetings, and public forums to facilitate open discussions on pressing social and political issues. These events provide an opportunity for citizens to exchange ideas, share perspectives, and engage in constructive debates.



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