



EUROPA FORUM LECH, 10-12 April, 2019
European values: a model for the future

In the coming months, the European Union will have to make critically important choices. The far-reaching consequences of these choices will determine the fate of the European project, and shape the future of subsequent generations in Europe and beyond.

On 9 May 2019 the national leaders of the EU-27 will gather for a summit in Sibiu, Romania. While there, they will chart out the road ahead for Europe with a renewed commitment to a Union that delivers on the issues that really matter to people. And between 23 and 26 May 2019, EU citizens will have their say on the future by voting in the European elections.

The stakes in these elections are much higher than the exact composition of the European Parliament and the leadership of the EU institutions. The democratic legitimacy of the EU to conduct strong and effective policies that benefit its citizens is at stake. We must focus on our fundamental values: freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights and dignity. We must also focus on our shared aspirations for peace, security and prosperity. These European values and aspirations have made the EU the world's most successful example of political cooperation. Despite all the external and internal pressures, the EU remains an example and inspiration for millions around the globe.

Europa Forum Lech is an opportunity for high-ranking decision-makers from the private sector, public sector, NGOs, international institutions, and academia to take stock of Europe's current situation and discuss possibilities for its future. Bright ideas and bold leadership will be required to push through the necessary reforms and successfully carry out the EU's policies.

The European economy still needs to be made stronger so it can face global volatility, resist trade attacks, and cope with potential financial shocks. Strained trade relations threaten strategic European industries, which are already struggling to innovate and reform while simultaneously meeting their social obligations. Against the backdrop of the ongoing technological and digital revolution, Europe is falling behind in research, skills development, and the digital agenda. Increasingly complex geostrategic risks also demand intelligent security and defence strategies. Preserving our values and way of life will require us to deepen the single market and strengthen the common currency.

Our generation of decision-makers cannot afford to leave a legacy of a volatile and fragmented Europe. Coming together and standing up for our values will be essential if Europe is to continue to set global standards for democracy, peace and prosperity in the coming decades.

Wednesday 10 April

20:00 People who arrive early get together for an informal dinner and exchange of ideas with Commissioner Oettinger. *Hûs Nr. 8, Omesberg 8, Lech am Arlberg*

Thursday 11 April

12:30 – 13:30 Light buffet: *Hotel Gasthof Post, Dorf 11, Lech am Arlberg*

13:30 – 14:00 Welcome and opening remarks

14:00 – 16:00

Session 1: Standing up for European values

The European project has reached a point where maintaining the status quo is no longer an option. The EU is exposed to global uncertainties, surrounded by instability, and sees its most fundamental values under attack. Faced with these challenges, the EU must convincingly reassert itself, both internally and externally. The 2019 European elections will be a turning point for Europe and an unmissable opportunity to strengthen our values.

We cannot allow our welfare states and social-market economies to be taken hostage by populists who abuse democratic values and prey on the fears of our fellow citizens. A full-scale reply should be given by a critical mass of pro-Europeans, united around core values and driven by a sense of mission and common purpose.

The discussion will focus on the state of the EU, its upcoming political challenges, and its alternatives for the future. Why is it so important to defend our values? Can a less consolidated EU provide better opportunities for its people? How can we make the value added by the EU known and appreciated by its people?

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee break

16:30 – 18:30

Session 2: Economic outlook post-2020

Ten years after the most severe economic crisis in its recent history, Europe finds itself confronting new threats. The rules-based free-trade system that has generated unprecedented wealth and prosperity across the globe is now being questioned. Long-standing partners threaten EU exports with tariffs and protectionism, while trade wars between the world's largest economies place Europe in an awkward position. Sanctions and counter-measures from the east, and financial turbulence from the south, exacerbate the unpredictability of doing business. They also hamper much-needed investment.

These uncertainties mean that the strategic industries that form the backbone of the EU's economy may struggle to increase competitiveness, innovate, create jobs, and develop green products and services.

Europe should remain committed to rules-based free trade and to fighting climate change, but how will it protect its interests? What type of industrial strategy can ensure steady growth and increase prosperity? What political, legislative and funding support is needed for the EU economy to thrive again?

18:30 – 18:40 Family photo

20:00 Cocktail: *Hotel 'Die Krone von Lech', Dorf 13, Lech am Arlberg*

20:30 Dinner: *Hotel 'Die Krone von Lech'*

Dinner speech

Friday 12 April

09.00 – 10.30

Thematic breakfasts:

- *Energy Union: the way forward*

Global changes in energy production and demand have a significant impact on geopolitics and industrial competitiveness. This poses serious challenges for Europe, but also creates unique opportunities. The EU wants to step up its role as a global leader in the clean-energy transition, while providing energy security to all its citizens. Building on the progress already made, it is time to ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy receives appropriate support and creates further opportunities for European citizens and businesses.

- *Digital challenges: building a new, world-leading IT sector*

Protecting the security of data and intellectual property will require Europe to rebuild its weak IT sector. It is essential for Europe to remain at the cutting edge of artificial intelligence, digitalisation, 5G connectivity, and next-generation mobile devices. Mastering these technologies is vital for the creation of new jobs, especially in the less developed regions of the EU. A new and active industrial policy with a strong regional focus should bring verifiable results, while EU support for R&D should lead to new products, jobs, and firms.

- *Transport and automotive industries: key engines of change*

E-mobility and next-generation cars present an incredible opportunity for Europe's world-leading automotive sector. This sector accounts for 4 % of EU GDP and employs around 12 million people. The automotive industry is of great importance for other industries such as steel, chemicals, ICT, and mobility services. Strengthening the competitiveness of the EU automotive sector and preserving its global technological leadership will require

forward-looking strategies, targeted investments, and trade policies that promote market access to countries outside the EU.

11.00 – 13.15

Session 3: The future of the European model

Beyond its borders, the EU is being challenged by rivals. Within its borders, it is being challenged by nationalists and populists. Greater scrutiny is also falling on the costs and outcomes of EU policies.

To regain control of our destiny we must build a better and stronger Europe together. Viable solutions should be found for an EU of 27 that speaks with a stronger voice on the global stage and gives certainty and opportunity to its citizens. Doing more to help citizens will also require appropriate funding. A long-term budget that enables EU policies to prove their benefits and add value is therefore indispensable.

The participants will discuss what is needed in terms of financing, legislative procedures and decision-making. What is the role of security and defence for economies and societies? How can we encourage people, especially young people, to engage with the EU and its policies? What are the essential measures that must be taken to preserve our values and way of life?

13.15-13.30

Closing session (alternatively as speech during lunch)

Key messages from the Europa Forum Lech 2019 will be addressed to the EU leaders' Sibiu summit and to European voters before the 2019 European elections.

13.30 – 15:00 Lunch: *Hotel Gasthof Post, Dorf 11, Lech am Arlberg*