

EUROPANOVA

Press release
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CONCLAVE

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Cascais, Portugal – The first edition of the "European Conclave," a new annual strategic gathering, is taking place from November 24th to 26th, 2023, at the Presidential Palace of Cascais, a peaceful coastal town West of Lisbon. Led by a dozen prominent European figures, the Conclave is organized by EuropaNova and held under the high patronage of the President of the Republic of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo De Sousa. This transpartisan and transdisciplinary event brings together about fifty influential personalities from the EU.

"Each participant brings a unique vision to the table, and this is essential for building a resilient and innovative Europe," emphasizes Guillaume Klossa, Executive President of EuropaNova, former sherpa of the European Council Reflection group on the future of the EU chaired by president Felipe Gonzalez, and initiator of the Conclave.

The objective is to identify key issues at the horizon of 2040 and that are not yet part of European priorities or are insufficiently addressed. The Conclave marks a turning point in the strategic reflection on the future of Europe, aiming to prevent the recurrence of European inertia seen in the past, such as in 2014 with Ukraine or in 2019 with COVID, two crises that had been identified but did not lead to sufficiently concrete European policies.

Guillaume Klossa insists that "this event represents a unique opportunity to bring together some of Europe's brightest and most influential minds to collectively outline the contours of a shared future. Our goal is clear: to contribute to identifying and effectively framing strategic questions for a strong, united, and prosperous Europe by 2040 in the fields of geopolitics, technology, democracy, and common goods."

Maria João Rodrigues, a member of the organisation committee and final negotiator for the Lisbon Strategy, the Lisbon Treaty, and the European Pillar of Social Rights, adds: "the Lisbon Treaty and the Lisbon Strategy, two landmarks in recent European history, were prepared by meetings in the Lisbon region. Portugal remains a very pro-European country and the Lisbon region is an inspiring one to bring up new visions for the European project. The Conclave should build on this legacy."

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The Conclave is organised by a committee of a dozen personalities, including Guillaume Klossa and Maria João Rodrigues, as well as Piero Benassi, former Italian permanent representative to the EU; Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, mathematician who chaired the European Research Council until 2021; Etienne Davignon, Belgian industrialist who long presided over Bilderberg; Philippe Etienne, former sherpa to President Macron and ambassador to the EU, Germany, and the US; Aart de Geus, former Dutch minister and Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD; Peter Grk, Secretary General of the Bled Strategic Forum; Grégoire Roos, Head of Political Dialogue & Policy Innovation at the BMW Foundation ; Daniela Schwarzer, German political scientist who has just published a report on the reform of the Treaties; Erika Staël von Holstein, Director general of Reimagine Europa; Loukas Tsoukalis, President of ELIAMEP Athens and Professor at Sciences Po, Paris; and António Vitorino, outgoing director-general of the International Organisation for Migration and former European Commissioner.

The inaugural conference on November 24th will feature the participation of international leaders from America, Asia, and Africa, providing a global perspective on European issues. "This intercontinental dialogue is vital. It enriches our understanding of global dynamics and should strengthen Europe's position on the international stage," notes Philippe Etienne.

The Conclave allows its participants, including prime ministers, business entrepreneurs, and citizen participants in the conference on the future of Europe, to engage in a deep reflection over three days in a serene environment, with the aim of developing a report containing concrete and essential strategic proposals for Europe's future. As Daniela Schwarzer says: "It is all too easy to tell the story of permacrises in the EU. But Europe is also a continent of ideas, innovation and still has a strong economic and democratic base. While we need to prevent and fight crises, it is as important to release Europeans' positive energy and projects for the future."

To this end, the results of the Conclave will be published in a detailed report at the end of the year, aiming to contribute to the discussions ahead of the European elections in June 2024 and shape the EU's strategic agenda. Guillaume Klossa adds, "Our mission is to contribute to nurturing the debate so that Europe is better positioned to anticipate the major challenges ahead, rather than merely reacting as it has done for the past 20 years."

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