

Section 1 – Democrazia e democratizzazioni

Panel 6. “Ill” democracies in Europe – reasons and solutions

Chair: Agnieszka Bejma

According to the latest report published by Freedom House, democracy’s basic tenets – including guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law – are violated around the world. In the report, in which 195 countries were assessed only 88 (45%) were rated as a free, 58 (30%) partly free, and 49 (25%) not free. These results show that all over the world democratic values are in crisis.

The examples of Hungary and Poland, in which populist leaders continued to consolidate power, smearing the opposition in public media and passing laws designed to curb civil society. Poland’s ruling party also pressed ahead with an alarming effort to assert political control over the judiciary. Reverberations from the 2015–16 refugee crisis continued to fuel the rise of xenophobic, far-right parties in other European countries like France, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria.

The situation around the world shows that democracy cannot be seen as only an ideological and finished project. It can adopt different institutional forms and final solution does not exist. Democratic systems are always a compilation of the constants elements, constitutive and unique, characteristic for different societies and their experiences. Democracy is diversified geographically and culturally and has been changing over time. The dynamics of the change depends on many factors, but above all, it is related to the civilization ones. Today’s democracy need a political response to the current changes, that have been happened over last decades and have not been reflected earlier.

The main questions that should be answered during the panel revolve around the following questions: what are the challenges and threats for contemporary democracies and what kind of solutions should be taken to solve the crisis that had occurred around the world not only in Europe?