

Press release – 28 October 2025

## Announcing the 2025/2026 Europe's Futures Fellows

The Institute for Human Sciences (IWM Vienna) and ERSTE Foundation are proud to announce a new cohort of Europe's Futures fellows—a distinguished group of thinkers, practitioners, and public intellectuals dedicated to exploring and shaping the future of Europe and the liberal democratic project.

Over the past decade, the liberal world order established after the Cold War has collapsed. What the world is witnessing is not just a crisis of liberalism but an illiberal revolution, whose effects are acutely felt across Europe, as the European Union is, at its core, a liberal project. Against this backdrop, the 2025/26 fellows will examine the societal shifts fueling this illiberal turn and explore ways to renew the liberal vision for the future.

This year's ten non-residential fellows—**Francis Fukuyama, Leonie Haiden, Michael Ignatieff, Maciej Kisilowski, Hana Martínková, Yascha Mounk, James C. O'Brien, Tomáš Sedláček, Assaf Sharon, and Lea Ypi**—will contribute through research, writing, and public engagement, addressing a wide range of topics arising from the crisis of liberalism and the far-reaching shifts in global power relations. Their work will span subjects from U.S.–EU relations and religious nationalism to political imagination and the philosophical foundations of liberal democracy.

### Meet the 2025/26 Fellows:

- **Francis Fukuyama** is the Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and author of *The End of History and the Last Man*.
- **Leonie Haiden** is a researcher and former Austrian Foreign Ministry strategist whose work focuses on political and strategic communication.
- **Michael Ignatieff** is a historian, writer, and former leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, currently teaching history at Central European University in Vienna.
- **Maciej Kisilowski** is Associate Professor of Law and Strategy at Central European University, specializing in democratic resilience and institutional design.
- **Hana Martínková** is a Czech political adviser and commentator focusing on foreign affairs and international relations.
- **Yascha Mounk** is a Professor of the Practice of International Affairs at Johns Hopkins University and the author of *The Identity Trap*.
- **James C. O'Brien** served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, with a career spanning three decades in diplomacy.
- **Tomáš Sedláček** is a Czech economist and author of *Economics of Good and Evil*, known for his work at the intersection of economics and philosophy.
- **Assaf Sharon** is a professor of philosophy at Tel Aviv University and senior fellow at Molad: The Center for the Renewal of Israeli Democracy.
- **Lea Ypi** is a professor of political theory at the London School of Economics and the award-winning author of *Free: Coming of Age at the End of History*.

**About Europe's Futures:**

The Europe's Futures program is run in partnership with **ERSTE Foundation**. It awards non-resident annual fellowships to distinguished thinkers and intellectuals engaged in philosophical study and political analysis of the phenomena shaping Europe, the global order, and international relations more broadly. The new cohort of fellows builds on the achievements of the first program cycle (2018–2024), which engaged forty-eight fellows in developing policy responses to Europe's ongoing political crises. Their work addressed value challenges stemming from disillusionment with Europe's democratic promises, internal challenges such as the erosion of rights and institutions, external threats, including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the stalled accession of Western Balkan states, and forced migration.

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