



Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen
Institute for Human Sciences

Press release – 16 April 2026

Star historian Anne Applebaum delivers Speech to Europe 2026



The Institute for Human Sciences, together with its partners, is delighted to announce that the award-winning American-Polish historian and author Anne Applebaum will deliver this year's Speech to Europe, marking the event's fifth edition. It will take place [on the evening of 13 May](#) on Vienna's Judenplatz.

"This is the hour of Europe — but do the Europeans even know it?"

This year's Speech to Europe by historian and author Anne Applebaum explores whether now is "the European Moment" and what that means. While systems of repression, coercion, and authoritarian control were once considered anomalies in the West, they are now re-emerging as increasingly viable models of society and government. In this unraveling global order, what are the choices Europe will face? How will they be shaped by its 20th-century history? Can the old continent offer itself as a credible alternative to the return of old ideas? Anne Applebaum argues that the answers to these questions will not only influence Europe's trajectory, but the fate of the world.

Anne Applebaum is a prize-winning historian, a staff writer for *The Atlantic*, and a senior fellow at the SNF Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Her history books include *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine* (London: Allen Lane, 2017), *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), and *Gulag: A History of Soviet Camps* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), which won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction. Her most recent books are the New York Times bestsellers *Twilight of Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, 2020), an essay on democracy and authoritarianism, and *Autocracy Inc: The Dictators Who Want to Rule the World* (New York: Doubleday, 2024). She was a *Washington Post* columnist for fifteen years and a member of the editorial board. She has also been the deputy editor of the *Spectator* and a columnist for several British newspapers.

About the event

The Speech to Europe allows public intellectuals to provide food for thought about the future of the European Project. Historian and IWM Lesia Ukraïnka Permanent Fellow Timothy Snyder delivered the first Speech to Europe in 2019, in which he argued that [Europe must face its history](#) and shed the oft-repeated myth of innocent nation-states banding together in unity. After a three-year hiatus, the Ukrainian lawyer and human rights activist Oleksandra Matviichuk delivered the second Speech to Europe in 2023 under the banner ["No Peace without Freedom, no Justice without Law."](#) In 2024, philosopher Omri Boehm [analyzed how the legacies of colonialism and the Holocaust shape, and complicate, Europe's political self-conception](#). Last year, Albanian-British political theorist and philosopher Lea Ypi [argued that migration is not the root of social and political crises in Europe but a symptom](#) of deeper failures in democracy, social justice, and international solidarity:

A joint event by [Wiener Festwochen | Freie Republik Wien](#), [ERSTE Foundation](#), and the [Institute for Human Sciences \(IWM\)](#). In cooperation with the [Jewish Museum Vienna](#).

Save the date:

A Speech to Europe 2026 with Anne Applebaum

13 May 2026, 18:00 CEST

Judenplatz, 1010 Vienna

The event will be streamed live via www.festwochen.at.

Contact information:

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