

## **Ralf Dahrendorf Roundtable: Protecting Democracy in the Digital Era**

### **SHORT REPORT**

The Ralf Dahrendorf Roundtable on Protecting Democracy in the Digital Era, that took place at University Lusófona in Lisbon, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May had as a primary objective to develop a body of knowledge on how to understand democracy in the digital era, what are the threats to democracy in this new environment and how to create the conditions for democracy to prosper in a more connected world.

After the welcome to the participants from Luís Menezes, the President of MLS, and Prof. João Almeida Santos, the Director of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Education and Administration at University Lusófona, three panels took place with specialists in the area, including Elisa Lironi from the European Citizen Action Service, Tyson Barker from the Aspen Institute in Germany, Nad'a Kovalcikova from The Alliance for Securing Democracy, Ricardo Silvestre from MLS, Milosz Hodum from Projekt:Polska and Raquel Gomes from the European Commission Representation in Portugal.

The roundtable discussions focused in contents that intercrossed between speakers, albeit their different interests: from the protection of election systems and democratic institution from threats like deep fakes, artificial intelligence information breaches, psychographic microtargeting, advanced persistent threats (APT's) groups, to just plain misinformation and misconceptions. However, during the event, reasons were presented to remain positive on this area. Information and communications technology can also contribute in fostering democratic institutions and democratic processes. Some good examples are shown from citizen, NGOs, and local authority's participation. In addition, the utilization of electronic tools facilitate the tracking, in the digital realm, of disinformation that is spread with the purpose of undermining democratic processes and institutions.

The event had a great number of university students and professors from the fields of political and social science, which was a welcomed outcome.