

## CONCEPT NOTE AND SESSIONS

### A WORLD OF PARALLEL REALITIES

The international community is unable or unwilling to break the cycles of competition, insecurity and consequential antagonism, which sometimes lead to instability, violence or even conflict. Issues such as climate change, global health, addressing poverty and inequalities, ensuring food and water security, respecting human rights, navigating emerging technologies and adhering to fundamental rights and freedoms are being overtaken by the struggle for power and particular interests that hinder our potential for just and inclusive development.

The world's relative, if often deceptive, age of peace, has come to an end; our peace dividend has expired. The Russian aggression on Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East, both with unimaginable humanitarian consequences, are a vivid and catastrophic reminder of what can happen when the international community fails to act and uphold the necessary responsibility for global stability. Realpolitik and sabre-rattling are once again winning – bilateral and regional alliances, which are driven by competitiveness, partial interests, hedging and confrontation, are replacing multilateralism and global cooperation with narrow plurilateralism.

Roughly half the world's population is expected to go to the polls in 2024, with some of the world's most populous countries holding elections. With the upcoming elections in the United States and elections to the European Parliament just around the corner, the global political and security scene is growing in complexity and could be difficult to navigate.

What can be done to ensure that the instruments of the past are no longer used to solve today's problems? We need return to a multilateral cooperation, based on shared principles of democracy, human rights and a rules-based international order. But what if these principles and rules are no longer broadly accepted? How can we enhance mutual understanding to safeguard the future?

Europe is in the midst of high expectations, but also quite difficult decisions; strengthening the continent's cohesion will take time, confidence, fortitude and perseverance. Simultaneously, it is of the utmost importance that the EU act as a global player capable of demonstrating and leading the way toward a different, more sustainable, just and resilient international community.

A dedicated global commitment is needed now. But how can cooperation and dialogue be strengthened and parallel tracks overcome? How can we avoid double standards and, at the same time, take into account specific situations and contexts? And how can we ensure that global concerns are addressed equitably around the world and ensure that human life is valued equally everywhere? We must preserve human dignity and move towards more responsible politics.