

## ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

3<sup>rd</sup> International Student Forum on Future Democracy in  
Eisenach/Thuringia (Germany) from 13-19 October 2025

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| <b>Where?</b>               | Eisenach, Thuringia (Germany)   |
| <b>What?</b>                | Workshops, projects, and discussions: one week of intensive collaboration and shared learning within a group of 20 students from around the world |
| <b>When?</b>                | 13 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 (Monday-Sunday)   |
| <b>Any Costs?</b>           | Travel costs, accommodation and daily meals will be covered   |
| <b>Who can apply?</b>       | International students from European universities (exchange students from non-European countries included)  |
| <b>Application Deadline</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025   |



Participants working on the Wartburg Declaration 2024. (M.Puhl/ GEDG)



## **What is the Student Forum on Future Democracy?**

The Student Forum on Future Democracy takes place annually in Eisenach. It aims to foster international dialogue among young people and encourage democratic engagement. The week-long forum includes thematic workshops with experts, open working sessions, and free time to get to know one another as well as the city and its surroundings. In 2025, the forum will be held for the third time. This year's thematic focus will be Electoral Integrity.

## **Topic 2025: Electoral Integrity**

Elections are a central instrument of participation in democracies: by casting our vote, we periodically express support for certain individuals or groups – whether in school elections, clubs, workplaces, neighborhood councils, municipalities, national states, or unions of states. Elections serve a legitimizing function and reflect the political mood in a group or country.

Elections follow specific rules, which vary greatly across countries and in terms of their fairness. And they are increasingly under pressure due to economically powerful as well as politically authoritarian actors, by foreign interference, or by the spread of disinformation via social media. According to the *Democracy Index 2024* by the *Economist Intelligence Unit*, the number of free and fair elections is declining globally.

The *Student Forum on Future Democracy* places the issue of electoral integrity at the center of discussion:

What does it truly mean for an election to be *fair*, and how is it connected to democracy?

What is the current state of electoral justice around the world, especially in your home countries?

What role do authoritarian rollbacks, polarization, and social media play?

How can fair elections be secured on both a national and international level?

## Programme

What we can already tell you: A diverse and exciting programme awaits you! In addition to academic workshops with experts, there will be space to bring in and discuss your own topics. The schedule furthermore includes a dedicated writing phase for the Wartburg Declaration 2025, an excursion to the surrounding area as well as a formal evening event including a reception. Of course, there will also be plenty of free time to get to know each other.

## Who is SNFD?

The Student Network on Future Democracy (SNFD) is an international, student-led initiative that grew out of the first Student Forum in 2023. It brings together students committed to democracy, elections, and civic engagement through media, dialogue, and international collaboration.

SNFD is a space for continued exchange between the yearly forums and beyond them, where members organize and participate in democracy-related events across different countries, co-create social media and journalism projects, and gain hands-on experience in democratic action and transnational cooperation. It offers a dynamic platform for students to actively shape the future of democracy year-round.



Workshop Session in the city council chamber of Eisenach. (M.Puhl/ GEDG)



## **Why Eisenach?**

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1817, around 500 students gathered at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach to advocate for democratic rights. This historical event, known as the Wartburg Festival, marks an important yet ambivalent chapter in German history. With the Student Forum, we aim to reconnect with its democratic legacy and take a transnational perspective on democracy today.

## **Application**

Are you currently studying at a European university, either full-time or as an exchange student? Are you passionate about the future of democratic societies and curious to explore the challenges of electoral integrity across different countries? Are you eager to engage in respectful, thought-provoking discussions and become part of a dynamic network of politically engaged students?

Then send a one-page letter of motivation in English and a short CV to [student-forum@gedg.org](mailto:student-forum@gedg.org). The deadline for applications is 1st July 2025. We look forward to hearing from you!

*The Student Forum on Future Democracy is a project of the Society for the Study of the History of Democracy (GEDG), in cooperation with the city of Eisenach, the Wartburg Foundation Eisenach, and the Student Network on Future Democracy (SNFD).*