

Institute of National Remembrance

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Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance at the opening of the „Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy” conference, Warsaw 22 November 2018





WARSAW FOR DIALOGUE DEMOCRACY

The seventh edition of the "Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy" international conference, organized by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is taking place in Warsaw on 22-23 November 2018. The event is organized in the form of regular seminars aimed at continuously monitoring democratization processes on the international arena and creating recommendations, mainly for international organizations involved in supporting democratic change.

Every year, the conference begins with a high-level opening session with the participation of representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as human rights activists and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance took part in the session on behalf of the Institute. He spoke about the shaping of the historical policy with the aid of the Internet and social media, focusing on the benefits as well as the responsibility and full awareness of the dangers involved. He recalled examples from the Institute's experience.

“It is common knowledge that the phenomenon of shadow banning - or hidden blocking of unpopular views and opinions - for example, for reasons of political differences or disputes, is becoming more and more common. Not much can be done not only from the perspective of an individual citizen whose account has been blocked. It is simply a subjective corporate decision, to which it is difficult to appeal. As a public institution, the Institute of National Remembrance has repeatedly experienced and continues to experience the consequences of its coherent and consistent historical policy. Perhaps you remember, how last year the English version of “The Unconquered” film, portraying the history of Poland in the period between 1939 - 1990, produced on behalf of the IPN, was blocked on YouTube. The Institute's strong response and the support of the Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs made it possible to quickly restore the emission of this material. Nevertheless, as this example shows, a credible form of notification of alleged abuse by one person, is enough to block a large educational project.”

This year's edition of the conference is devoted to issues related to potential opportunities and challenges resulting from the growing role of new technologies, both on the political scene and with regard to the

processes of democratization and respect for human rights. “Dialogue” panelists will focus their attention on social media, especially in the context of fake news and disinformation campaigns, as well as the issue of free elections.

The panel debates taking place on 22-23 November are:

1. “Social media-potential or threat?”
2. “New tools of civic and public responsibility”
3. “Free elections in modern times”
4. “Innovative approach to conflict prevention”

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