

The 'Democracy and Happiness Weekend' at Costa Navarino, concludes following inspirational debates by innovative thinkers

Key speakers including professor and writer Yascha Mounk, academic Dr. Karolina Wigura and psychotherapist Kostas Kouris, explored whether a happier society equates to a more resilient democracy



05 October 2022 - [Costa Navarino](#), the prime sustainable destination in the Mediterranean, welcomed **acclaimed speakers** including professor and author **Yascha Mounk**, academic **Dr. Karolina Wigura** and psychotherapist **Kostas Kouris**, to lead a series of discussions and debates, as part of the ['Democracy and Happiness Weekend'](#), held in partnership with the [Athens Democracy Forum](#).

The speakers covered a variety of topics, exploring whether a happier society equates to a more resilient democracy. The event took place for the 7th time, this year at the vibrant new resort [W Costa Navarino](#), from 30 September to 2 October 2022.

At a time when daily life is punctured by a series of global crises – from climate change to the pandemic to all-out war – the quest for happiness seems ever more elusive, and even a bit indulgent. But more people than ever are seeking it out.

The weekend started with an interactive discussion led by Kalypso Nicolaidis, Chair of Global Affairs, School of Transnational Governance, European University Institute – who explored the relationship between ancient mythology and modern politics.

The main discussion was moderated by Roger Cohen, Paris Bureau Chief at The New York Times, and was held at The Bay Clubhouse, delving into the connection between democracy and happiness.

Yascha Mounk questioned if modern democracy is able to bring happiness by claiming that *'what democracy can do is to put in place the conditions for people to pursue happiness'*. Karolina Wigura highlighted that *'happiness is connected to ethics'* and referred to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, according to whom, *'happiness is on the same wheel of virtue, good life and philosophy'*. Kostas Kouris also referenced Aristotle and the definition that *'happiness is the end of all goals'*. He mentioned that *'unless everyone is happy you cannot be happy. This is the virtue. And this is a good connection with democracy – virtue is a way of making choices, for you and the society. You are informed by your values'*.

Wigura added that *'Democracy is capable to allow us the pursuit of happiness – because it doesn't impose happiness on us'*. Mounk stated that *'it's important to learn to be indifferent*

to things that don't truly matter – but take the decision of taking the conscious risk of making happiness depend on things that do'.

In addition to the series of talks, Jon Alexander and Irenie Ekkeshis, co-founders of the New Citizenship Project, held an interactive workshop about '*Redefining Happiness to Create Stronger Democracies*'. Moreover, guests were able to enjoy morning yoga and a 'Philosophy Walk', led by Prof. Eleni Volonaki from the University of Peloponnese, discussing the topic of happiness through the lens of ancient Greek philosophers.

An international audience, including delegates of this year's Athens Democracy Forum, journalists from The New York Times and guests of W Costa Navarino, attended the memorable weekend and were able to take full advantage of the spectacular coastal location.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

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About Costa Navarino

Costa Navarino is the prime, sustainable destination in the Mediterranean, located in the Greek region of Messinia in the southwest Peloponnese. One of the most unspoiled and breath-taking seaside Mediterranean landscapes, this area has been shaped by 4,500 years of history. Its philosophy is driven by a genuine desire to promote Messinia, while protecting and preserving its natural beauty and heritage. It comprises five distinct sites featuring five-star deluxe hotels, luxury private residences, and a total of four signature golf courses. Navarino Dunes, the first area, is home to The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort, and The Westin Resort Costa Navarino, as well as the luxury private properties Costa Navarino Residences. Navarino Waterfront is home to the upscale, vibrant W Costa Navarino, while the Navarino Agora is scheduled to open in 2023. Navarino Bay is set to welcome the Mandarin Oriental, Costa Navarino in 2023.

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ATHENS DEMOCRACY FORUM

The Athens Democracy Forum (ADF) is an international conference held annually in September or October that explores the evolving state of democracy. It has taken place in Athens, Greece since 2013. ADF brings together international business leaders, academics, policy makers and experts to discuss and focus on new solutions to the most pressing issues facing democracy. Key events include the Aristotle Address, the City of Athens Democracy Award and the Ancient Agora Global Conversation.

www.athensdemocracyforum.com