

Shabka

The Strategic
Think & Do Tank

2019

Annual
Report

Introducing Shabka

Shabka is a European strategic Think & Do Tank based in Vienna focusing on foreign, security, development policy and analyses, crisis management as well as civil society engagement. As a next generation Think Tank, Shabka is combining all in one network to facilitate engagement in challenging and complex contexts.

We are a partner in comprehending conflicts and uncertain environments by providing sound analyses and crisis management expertise. Equally important, we are empowering democratic societies by fulfilling a deliberative function towards the public.

2019 - A Year of Contrasts

While the world is caught between challenging dynamics and confusion, for us the year was marked by further consolidation and professionalization. Above all, the past year was a story of growth and success. Our team and the Shabka network have continued to expand. More and more young professionals are getting involved in our formats and through their knowledge, commitment, and creativity they make strategic thinking into what Shabka wants it to be: innovative and independent.

In 2019 the **Salon Shabka** discussions showed again that our fingers are on the pulse of time as we continued the tradition of involving people in an open format, in order for them to gain first impressions of the work we do. The reorganization of our online journal's editorial team has not only improved the quality of the contributions but has also allowed us to reach out to new readers. Already in its third year, the initial objectives of our **CPD Policy Blog** have proven to be as relevant as ever, by reaching a broader audience with the expertise in peace and conflict research and thus actively shaping policy. The editorial team in cooperation with the Austrian Conflict, Peace & Democracy Cluster published a large number of articles and increased outreach.

A significant part of our work in 2019 was dedicated to the **Syrian Futures** project. We worked out a program that was incorporated into various interactive formats and reached a large number of people. Cooperation with the National Defence Academy, the Vienna School of International Studies, and various ministries proved the relevance of our approach and enhanced our profile as a Think & Do Tank. Consequently, partnerships related to our Syrian Futures project contributed to the expansion of Shabka's network by increasing the number of participating renowned experts.

In addition to our numerous public activities, we are particularly proud that we managed to further professionalize our internal

structures and processes. Our website was completely refurbished, the financial management was improved, more dynamic collaboration tools were introduced, and the overall processes were made more efficient. In addition to the expansion of our social media presence, Shabka's expertise is already highly regarded by well-known news media. As a result, Shabka was invited to share insights during a televised debate. More than ever before, we now have a professional structure that provides a stable foundation for our future work.

All these activities would be unthinkable without the countless hours of volunteer work done by all those who see themselves as part of Shabka. Our network is all of us - all of us who, during lunch breaks, in the evenings, or on the weekends, send emails, formulate project proposals, draft policy papers, or post social media content. Shabka's volunteers contribute their knowledge and expertise in order to actively shape our future. We realize that this valuable work by our volunteers can be exhaustive and have moments of frustration, and we therefore say, in all humility: **Thank you!**

Furthermore, our activities would not be possible without our large network of partners and experts, who are always ready to help shape and drive policy and strategy. On behalf of the entire team and network, we would especially like to thank the International Institute for Peace, which is generously providing us with the office space for our thoughts and ideas.

What the world will bring in the coming year is difficult to predict - but what it will bring for us is clear: we will continue to follow our path consistently. Planning the **Future Strategists Hub 2020** has already started in late 2019, simultaneous to creating innovative developments for the Syrian Futures project. The next Salon Shabka is also already in the starting stages. The year 2020 can come - we are ready.

2019 Flagship Projects

Syrian Futures

The [Syrian Futures](#) project is a multi-stakeholder scenario process that produces policy recommendations for a future EU foreign engagement with post-conflict Syria. Therefore, we address the question of how the situation in Syria could develop by 2025. As the future is known to be hidden, we develop various scenarios.

The project integrates the voices of civil society with those of external experts. To date, 17 external experts have been involved in the project. In November 2019, a participatory workshop organized by Shabka took place in Vienna, attended by 19 participants from Syria, many of whom came to Austria in 2014/2015.

Together we identified the key drivers shaping Syria's future. Among many other factors, the civil society in Syria and in the diaspora were identified as playing a decisive role in Syria's reconstruction.



Strategic Autumn

In autumn 2019, we offered a journey through the world of strategy-making in cooperation with the National Defence Academy, the Ministry of the Interior, and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences.

Following the Salon Shabka opening focus on the basics of strategic thinking and acting in September, 18 members of our network participated in the three day "[Strategic Gaming](#)" workshop on the world's nuclear situation in November. By simulating relevant actors such as the USA, Russia, or China, our members were able to develop and apply strategic skills directly under the guidance of experienced mentors.

LEAD Process

From July to December Shabka participated in the [Lead ImpactX](#) program. The program aims to support the further professionalization of NGOs and to build sustainable structures. A total of 12 NGOs and 24 coaches participated in the program. Shabka continued its work on formulating a clear mission statement and further adapting its projects to the target groups.

We were able to learn new, dynamic, and innovative methods that will increase our work efficiency in the future. Finally, we had the honor to pitch Shabka for the ImpactX-Award, achieving to be mentioned amongst the Top 3 participating organizations of the program.



Kosovo – These Days

With [Kosovo – These Days](#) Shabka launched an interview series with a focus on the current conditions in Kosovo within distinct political and social fields (1. Peacebuilding 2. Press & Media 3. Youth & Economy 4. EU integration 5. Environment & Education 6. Minority Issues 7. Art & Culture 8. Religion).

The aim was to capture a diverse range of voices from and about Kosovo. 20 years after the war in 1999 the situation of the country and its inhabitants has clearly changed; but to what extent? For this analysis Shabka met with several stakeholders and individuals from all areas of Kosovar society.

Shabka Salon 2019



Selected Travels

USA

In spring 2019 our Co-Director Lukas Wank travelled to selected cities across the US for five weeks as a Marshall Memorial Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

He used this opportunity to learn from established think tanks with a global reach. Among others he met with RAND Corporation Vice President Charles Ries in Washington D.C., the President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs Ivo Daalder, the Mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel, and the Governor of Oregon Kate Brown.



Brussels

In October 2019 Shabka's Co-Director Lukas Wank had the pleasure of giving a lecture for the fellows of the European Leadership Programme in Brussels.

Together with a select group of aspiring leaders from across Europe, Lukas Wank discussed his personal understanding of leadership, Shabka's role in giving a voice to civil society in foreign, security, and development policy and strategy, as well as the importance of a human-centered approach to policy-making.



Berlin

In June 2019 the Aspen Institute Germany held its fifth Transatlantic Workshop. This year's workshop inaugurated the Aspen NEXT initiative, a dedicated effort to engage the next generation of Atlanticists.

Our Co-Director Lukas Wank had the honor of opening the second workshop day with an input on whether there has been a change in what we understand as transatlantic values and its implications for policy and institutions.



2019 By The Numbers



16

Core Members

Shabka's team grows constantly every year. Our active and highly engaged members represent the core spirit. They are strongly connected in their fields of expertise.

53

Activities

Restlessly, we organize and join various activities in different countries, collaborating with our partners and experts, sparking progressive ideas.

110+

Experts

Our network spans across the globe. Connected through Shabka, we work with junior and senior experts in all disciplines.

26

Partner Institutes

Good work needs good partners. Since the very beginning we are actively joining forces for events, projects and publications.

35

Affiliates & Advisors

Integrating our affiliates and advisors, we leverage their professional expertise and connect to the private sector, political decision-makers, and academia

77K

Social Media Outreach

Shabka's global approach is reflected in analytical data. We primarily reach out to Europe (Austria, Germany), North Africa and the Middle East.

Endless

Working Hours

Professionalism plus innovation equals determination. Driven by our neverending determination & aspiration to actively shape our future, our voluntary work pays off.

Events 2019

Jan	●	Project Launch - Syrian Futures Project
08 Feb	●	Discussion - Discussion with China Experts from Nanjing University
12 Feb	●	Public Round Table - Salon: Syrian Futures
27 Feb	●	Discussion - Experts Round Table on the Reconstruction of the City of Mosul
07 Mar	●	Discussion - Erste Campus: Tipping Point Talks 2019 with Francis Fukuyama
12 Mar - 03 Apr	●	Fellowship - Marshall Memorial Fellowship Transatlantic Exchange
13 Mar	●	Research trip - Exchange with RAND Corporation in Washington DC
20 Mar	●	Research trip - Exchange with Chicago Council on Global Affairs
01 - 26 May	●	Social Media Campaign - Awareness Campaign EU-Parliament Elections
30 May	●	ISPS-Interactive workshop on cyber security
30 May	●	ISPS-Interactive workshop on security policy making in the Western Balkans
12 - 14 Jun	●	Workshop - Aspen Institute NEXT Workshop
12 - 14 Jun	●	Simulation game on the future of Syria at the Austrian National Defence Academy
24 Jun	●	Public Round Table - Salon: Die Narrative im Libyen Konflikt
10 - 14 Jul	●	Conference - Participation at the Budapest European Agora
15 - 16 Jul	●	Leadership Program - Lead ImpactX Programme
01 Aug	●	Interview Series - Launch of the Interview Series "Kosovo - These Days"
19 Sep	●	Public Round Table - Salon: Gehen wir's strategisch an...
17 - 18 Oct	●	Leadership Program - Lead ImpactX
22 Oct	●	Discussion - Discussion with Fellows from the European Leadership Programme
31 Oct	●	Public Round Table - Salon: Westbalkan auf dem Weg auf dem Weg in die EU?
05 Nov	●	Participation at the round table discussion: Belarus at a crossroads?
07 Nov	●	ISPS-Workshop on security policy making in the Western Balkans
09 Nov	●	ISPS-Workshop on perspectives and challenges of European integration
12 - 14 Nov	●	Workshop - Strategic Gaming 2019: "Zur nuklearen Lage der Welt"
18 Nov	●	Workshop - Syrian Futures: A strong civil society for a peaceful Syria
27 Nov	●	Discussion - ERSTE Foundation Tipping Point Talks
29 - 30 Nov	●	Annual Conference of the Austrian Network for Peace and Conflict Research

and counting...



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