



**Athens Democracy Forum**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
**The New York Times**

COSTA  
NAVARINO

## **The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of 'The Spirit of Democracy Weekend' at Costa Navarino, concludes following inspirational debates by creative leaders**

- Key speakers including artist Ai Weiwei, historian Bettany Hughes and author Elif Shafak, explored the importance of embracing the cultural differences of East and West to bring greater democracy to nations



**8 October 2021 - Costa Navarino**, the prime sustainable destination in the Mediterranean, welcomed **world-acclaimed speakers** including award-winning novelist **Elif Shafak**, renowned contemporary artist **Ai Weiwei**, and historian, author and broadcaster **Bettany Hughes**, to lead a series of discussions and debates, as part of the sixth edition of **'The Spirit of Democracy Weekend'** which took place 1 - 3 October 2021, in partnership with the **Athens Democracy Forum**.

*"We're living in an age of misinformation and we need to focus more on knowledge. Ultimately, we need wisdom – for that we need to bring the mind and the heart together, we need a bit more compassion",* commented **Elif Shafak** in her virtual conversation with Patrick Healy, Deputy Opinion Editor from The New York Times, while discussing the role of literature in democracy and current affairs, as well as her latest book "How to Stay Sane in an Age of Division".

Artist and activist **Ai Weiwei** also tuned in virtually for a discussion moderated by Liz Alderman, Chief European Business Correspondent from The New York Times, ahead of his long-awaited book due for release in November "1,000 years of Joys and Sorrows: A Memoir" focusing on his personal experience as well his fathers' story whilst in detention. When asked about the role of art expression in democracy as a tool of activism, he explained: *"Art is an extension of my life. It's what I believe. It's not a struggle for freedom...but rather freedom represented in some kind of artistic way"*.

Additionally, acclaimed historian **Bettany Hughes**, explored the differences and common characteristics between Eastern and Western philosophies and how the ideas of Socrates and Confucius influenced the two civilizations. Talking to Steven Erlanger, Chief European Diplomatic Correspondent from The New York Times, she commented on their common ground: *"What they all say is that enquiry is not seditious but central to what it is to be human and to live in healthy society - and that you can only find truth by asking questions, and that truth isn't actually a destination, it's a process and a journey"*.

The weekend's discussions culminated with a 'Talk with The Times', during which Liz Alderman, Steven Erlanger and Patrick Healy from The New York Times, debated on the role of democracy in our current societies, focusing on issues of inclusivity and diversity and on how to best engage and mobilise the younger generations.

The memorable weekend was attended by an international audience – including delegates from this year's Athens Democracy Forum, and guests staying at [The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort](#), Costa Navarino. In addition to the series of talks and book readings, guests were also invited to join other experiences including a philosophy walk with academics discussing modern-day ethics through the lens of ancient Greek philosophers.

-ENDS -

## **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 breathtaking 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 will comprise a number of distinct sites featuring five-star deluxe hotels, luxury private residences, conference facilities, spa and thalassotherapy centres, signature golf courses, as well as a wide range of unique year-round activities for adults and children.

Navarino Dunes, the first area, is home to two luxury five-star hotels, The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort, and The Westin Resort Costa Navarino; Navarino Residences, a collection of luxury villas for private ownership; and The Residences at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino – fully furnished resort apartments for sale; the signature golf course The Dunes Course; Anazoe Spa, a 4,000m2 spa and thalassotherapy centre; the state-of-the-art conference centre House of Events; specially designed facilities for children; and a variety of gastronomy venues, sports, outdoor and cultural activities. Navarino Bay, the second area, is home to the signature golf course, The Bay Course and to the earth-sheltered Bay Clubhouse, while an ultra-luxury, all suite and pool villas resort is currently under construction, alongside an upscale, vibrant, lifestyle resort at the nearby site Navarino Waterfront. At Navarino Hills, two new 18-hole signature golf courses are also being constructed.

[www.costanavarino.com](http://www.costanavarino.com)

## **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](http://www.athensdemocracyforum.com)

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