Milestones:  
Half a century of intergenerational debates

The St. Gallen Symposium was founded in 1969 as a response to the international student unrest of 1968 and has since then been organised by the International Students’ Committee (ISC), a student initiative at the University of St.Gallen. Currently, this platform for dialogue welcomes more than 1,000 participants from over 60 nations every year. Personalities such as Kofi Annan, Josef Ackermann, Mohammad Khatami, Laurence D. Fink, Dominic Barton, Sigmar Gabriel and Christine Lagarde have attended the symposium in recent years.

1969  The St. Gallen Symposium is founded by five students of the University of St.Gallen: Wolfgang Schürer, Urs Schneider, Franz Karl Kriegler, Clemens Ernst Brenninkmeyer, Terje I. Wölner-Hanssen

1970  First St. Gallen Symposium – formerly known as the “International Management Symposium” and the “ISC-Symposium” – takes place with 100 Leaders of Today and the same number of students

1972  Club of Rome study „Limits to Growth“ is presented at the third symposium


1979  Max Schmidheiny Freedom Prize presented at the St. Gallen Symposium for the first time

1986  St. Gallen Symposium is one of only three institutions in Switzerland running its own server.

1989  The first St. Gallen Wings of Excellence Award – one of the largest student essay competitions worldwide – is issued

1993  St. Gallen Symposium opens an office at Harvard University. Two Harvard students are responsible for the American contacts and run the Harvard-St. Gallen International Business Club.

2002  The ISC organises the International Federalism Conference, commissioned by the Swiss Federal Council.

2003  The ISC St. Gallen Club of Japan is established as an organization to promote the Japanese participation in the symposium.

2006  Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, visits the University of St.Gallen to receive the Max Schmidheiny Freedom Prize in person awarded to him in 2003.

2010  The ISC organises an international conference on democracy and decentralisation under the patronage of the Swiss Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

2012  To strengthen the St. Gallen Symposium in Asia, an office opens in Singapore.

2019  The St. Gallen Symposium kicks off the next fifty years with a brand new corporate identity.