

Council of Europe
The Secretary General

Strasbourg, 16 September 2025

Dear Minister,

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to address the 13th edition of the World Forum for Democracy, which will be held at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg, France, from 5 to 7 November 2025. I would be particularly grateful if you could deliver a special address and share your insights with the Forum's audience during the Second Plenary Session, with the title "How Can Culture and Cultural Policy Strengthen Democracy?" on 5 November, the opening day of the event.

We are witnessing a rapid erosion of democracy globally, and a decline in citizens' trust in its ability to deliver peace, prosperity and justice. The discussions of the 13th edition of the World Forum for Democracy will centre around answers to socio-economic and technological challenges for democracy, for building a solid democratic culture, and for ensuring media freedom, independence and pluralism. The World Forum participants will identify impactful action that policymakers, public watchdogs, civil society organisations and multilateral bodies can take to counter these trends.

As a long-time news editor and professional in the performing arts, now serving as minister, you bring a unique perspective on the role of both state and non-state actors in fostering a resilient democratic culture. With your country widely recognised as a leader in digitalisation, you are uniquely placed to reflect on the challenges and opportunities digital technologies pose for media and cultural policies. Your insights will, without doubt, enrich the discussion, inspire meaningful exchanges among the Forum's participants, and bring us all closer to defining concrete steps for advancing our shared democratic values and goals.

I look forward to your participation in the Forum.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Berset

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