

---

## **Democracy: Borrell and Suica (EU), threatened value. Commitment to defending rights in Europe and throughout the world. The role of young people**

On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell and EU Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica released a joint statement saying: “the events we have been witnessing over the past year are a stark reminder of the threats that democracy faces across the globe, including on our European continent. They have however also unequivocally proven our citizens’ strong conviction to the values and ideals that underpin democratic societies”. They went on to say: “by launching a brutal war against Ukraine, President Putin unleashed an unjustified aggression against a free and sovereign democratic European country, and a violent attack on the international rules-based order. The EU has reacted firmly against Russia’s aggression, demonstrating our unambiguous commitment to defend democracy, in the European Union and beyond”. Globally, “we are working with our partners around the world to defend more assertively democratic values and human rights. We stand with all the courageous people around the world who fight for their civil liberties on a daily basis, for human rights, for the rule of law, for free and independent media, often at great personal risk. Within the EU, we need to shield ourselves from malign interference”. The Conference on the Future of Europe “concluded its deliberations in May 2022. It was a unique exercise in deliberative democracy which provided the opportunity for European citizens to make their voices heard”. In response to the Conference, President von der Leyen stated in her State of the Union address that the European Citizens’ Panels will now become a regular feature of our democratic life. Citizens are not an object of democracy. They are primarily participants”. 2022 is also the European Year of Youth. “The present and future of democracy is in the hands of young people. The EU is committed to empower them and to enable them to have this important space to make a difference, to inspire positive change and to shape and steer the future of democracy”.

Valentina Bombelli