Council of Europe: Reykjavik Summit. Von der Leyen, "join forces to protect democracy. We all stand by Ukraine.

"Dear colleagues, we should never forget that the first Summit of the Council of Europe" was held "30 years ago, after the fall of the Iron Curtain. When all of Europe united around the founding principles of this Council, all of Europe agreed that working together to promote democratic values is the best way to promote peace in Europe. Because – and this is right – war is unthinkable in a community of like-minded democracies", Ursula von der Leyen told the representatives of the 46 Council of Europe member states participating in the Summit in Iceland's capital. "Today, we gather against the backdrop of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Russia refuses to recognise the democratic right of Ukrainians to be the masters of their own future. Russia's war is an attack against everything we stand for in this Council of Europe. It is an attack against its founding principles". Hence it is all the more important that "we join forces to protect, nurture and foster democracy. We all stand by Ukraine". "Fostering democracy of course begins at home. Democracy is never for granted – it is a constant work-in-progress. And the risk of democratic backsliding is real. This is why in the European Union we are monitoring the state of the rule of law in all Member States, every single year. We also put forward new initiatives for the equality of all citizens, new rules to fight corruption and, for the very first time, a Media Freedom Act". "Cooperation with the Council of Europe plays a big role in this work for democracy. Today, I want to confirm the European Union's intention to join the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible".

Gianni Borsa