
Council of Europe: Reykjavik Summit. Pejcinovic Buric called for urgent action from European leaders to reverse democratic backsliding

Speaking at the opening session of the 4th Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government, held yesterday and today in Reykjavik, Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić stressed that Russia's aggression against Ukraine "was an extreme example of democratic backsliding".



[Other issues addressed include freedom of expression, especially in the media, freedom of association, and a rise in discrimination and hate speech against minority groups. "You can stop this. You can reverse these trends. You can answer Russia's spiral of descent by lifting Europe up and ensuring the peace and democratic security that come when the rights of every individual are respected. This Summit provides you with that opportunity... And not just in words, but by deeds", she told the representatives of the 46 Council of Europe member states. "Russia must be held accountable through the adoption of a register of damage to pave the way for a future compensation mechanism", and action must be taken to tackle the "outrageous abduction of Ukrainian children". The Secretary General encouraged the Summit to endorse the Reykjavik principles on democracy and to strongly back the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council of Europe's "timeless standards" should be applied to contemporary challenges, such as artificial intelligence and climate change, the Secretary General said. Europe faces a stark choice: "We can let our standards fail and see Europe slip backwards into the wild. Or we can reinvest in what has brought so much good to so many people for these past seven decades... This is a chance for you to set a strong and lasting course for the Council of Europe".](#)

[Gianni Borsa](#)