
Forum for Democracy: Strasbourg calling Glasgow. Politics, citizenship, protection of the environment

(from Strasbourg) “When you decide on a priority – and this is happening –, it become the politicians’ priority. So, your role is extremely important”. This is how in Strasbourg earlier today the secretary general of the Council of Europe, Maria Pejcinovic Buric, officially opened the World Forum for Democracy 2021, about “Can democracy save the environment?”. The surveys show that “the environment is worrying citizens ever more deeply”, the secretary general went on, but while “a few years ago, citizens were ready for gradual progress, now they want radical one”. Pejcinovic Buric also called to “participate: there are many ways to participate, make oneself visible and present, make oneself heard”, thus making pressures that “are needed at all levels”. Cooperation and multilateralism, two keywords; and that’s why the European Court of Human Rights is developing remarkable jurisprudence; some treaties concern the environment; a legally non-binding environmental legislation is also being worked on. But while awareness is raising, “the real question is: how fast do we want to go?”. The permanent representative of France to the Council of Europe, Marie Fontanelle, emphasised the “synchronism between the discussion at the Forum and the one that is taking place in Glasgow” and told about the French experience with the “citizens’ convention for climate” 2019 that led to outline 149 recommendations, which the “climate and resilience law” of last August was born out of in a delicate, difficult “balance between participation and action-taking”. From the floor, a young Nigerian participant asked: “we have too little democracy to save the planet. How can we do?”.

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