



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Summit for Democracy

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 10, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yesterday and today, coinciding with International Human Rights Day, President Biden is hosting a *Summit for Democracy*. As the OSCE has long recognized, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The *Summit* virtually convenes global leaders, governments, civil society, and the private sector to set forth an affirmative agenda for democratic renewal and to tackle together the greatest challenges democracies face today. The *Summit* also serves as a platform for governments to announce new commitments, reforms, and initiatives to advance and strengthen democracy, which the participating States of this Organization in the Charter of Paris undertook to build and consolidate as the only system of government for our nations. Several OSCE participating States and heads of institutions, as well as civil society representatives from this region, are also taking part.

History and overwhelming data indicate societies that respect and defend democratic institutions, the rule of law, human rights fundamental freedoms, and gender equality are more stable, prosperous and secure, and are better equipped to confront global challenges. Individually and collectively, democracies must continually demonstrate that they can deliver for their people. The Biden-Harris Administration expects the *Summit for Democracy* to serve as a rallying point to do just this.

As many participating States have raised here at the Permanent Council, democracies in the OSCE region face challenges from within and outside their borders. Some are backsliding. These are issues of concern that we need to address, in partnership with civil society. Unfortunately, the Chairperson's initiative to have a declaration on democracy that showed our collective commitment to pluralistic democracy, the rule of law and human rights as well as the right of citizens to vote and participate in public affairs such that they may freely determine the leadership and course of their countries did not advance to the Ministerial Council. This setback shows why international events galvanizing action like the *Summit for Democracy* are necessary, and why we must continue to raise and honestly discuss these important issues wherever and whenever possible. Once the *Summit* has taken place, we will be happy to report back to the Permanent Council on the discussion and next steps.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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