

**Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini Dragoni
Press Statement**

It is also a great honour and pleasure for me to be in Cyprus to open this Ministerial Conference 'Securing Democracy through Education', organised in co-operation with the Cypriot Chairmanship of our Committee of Ministers.

I take the opportunity to thank the Minister of Education and Culture, Costas Kadis for his warm welcome and for the overall organisation of this very important event.

Today and tomorrow we will analyse major challenges for our Education systems, together with Ministers of Education from States parties to the European Cultural Convention along with representatives from the Mediterranean area and policy experts representing a total of 40 countries.

The Council of Europe attaches great importance to education as a force for democracy, human rights and stability in Europe.

Education is fundamental to guaranteeing our 'democratic security', in order to foster tolerant and inclusive societies.

Education plays a pivotal role in better managing diversity with shared and common values.

Education is a central pillar to building sustainable and resilient democracies to safeguard human rights and to strengthen the rule of law.

Finally, education is crucial for integrating refugees, migrants and asylum seekers arriving in large numbers in Europe.

We are facing many timely and relevant challenges directly related to the future of our democracies, especially for our young people.

I am confident that this Conference will successfully address these issues while taking a pan-European approach.

Thank you.