

Speech at the Ceremony for the 2023 Museum Prize Ceremony

Palais de l'Europe, Tuesday 25 April 2023

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to open this ceremony on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which awards the Council of Europe Museum Prize, in partnership with the European Museum Forum.

I wish to extend our gratitude to Ambassador Erik Laursen, Permanent Representative of Denmark, and the Danish parliamentary delegation for hosting a buffet at the end of the ceremony today. As you know, we used to hold this ceremony at the Palais Rohan, an historical place in Strasbourg which hosts three museums, but it is under renovation this year, and I would like to thank the City of Strasbourg for the excellent partnership over the years.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank the European Museum Forum (EMF), its Chairperson Ms Jette Sandahl who is present with us today, and its judging team for their longstanding partnership and remarkable ability to put the spotlight on cultural institutions which not only fulfill the highest professional standards but also excel in their efforts to serve society and to promote democratic values.

I also wish to pay tribute to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of our Parliamentary Assembly that takes the final decision to select the winner each year. I wish to thank Mr Roberto Rampi for his dedication and enthusiasm as former committee representative for the Council of Europe Museum Prize and I warmly welcome Mr Constantinos Efstathiou, who has taken over this task for the next cycle of the Museum Prize this year.

Let me now stress the importance of the Council of Europe Museum Prize which has been awarded annually since 1977. Since then, the criteria for the Prize have evolved. Today, given the political and societal challenges, it is awarded to museums that strongly advocate human rights and democracy, that promote diversity and dialogue to cultivate a sense of identity, collective memory and mutual understanding within and between numerous communities in Europe.

The important feature that the Parliamentary Assembly looks for, is that all candidates for the Council of Europe Museum Prize deliver a strong message connected to respect for human rights and democracy and that they have the capacity to broaden visitors' knowledge and understanding of contemporary societal issues and to explore with them the ideas of democratic citizenship.

The Workers Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark – the winner of the **2023** Council of Europe Museum Prize – has been collecting, researching, and communicating the development of living and working conditions of Danish wage workers during the past 150 years and the development of the Danish labour movement.

After the renovation of the Workers Assembly Hall in 2021, the museum board and staff have made a new choice of direction to combine the history of this symbolic building and the history of the Danish Labour movement with present day concerns about how workers' culture could be more relevant to society. The museum raises the themes of dialogue, the future development of democracy, climate change, equal society, the labour market and political activism.

In the Council of Europe, we believe that workers' movements and social justice remain crucial to preserve democratic stability in Europe and we **congratulate** you for your stimulating work!

Together with the European Museum Forum, we wish to encourage the winners to continue to play an active role in the future, to support and exchange experience with other museums across Europe in a common quest to advance innovation and excellence.

Let me conclude that with this award, the winning museum plays an important role in promoting the core values in 46 member countries of the Council of Europe - the values that we cannot take for granted and that we need to keep defending continuously.