Madam Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

Dear Minister Isabelle Berro-Amadeï;

Mr President of the European Court of Human Rights;

Your Excellencies;

Distinguished guests;

Dear students and journalists,

I've always had a passion for finding things out. That curiosity — which was quite annoying to my siblings when we were kids — came in handy when I became a journalist.

But I soon discovered that reporting a story well is **really hard**: it requires dedication, reliable sources, and the willingness to recognize your own biases. While so many journalists do their jobs with integrity, sometimes even with heroism, **we must also acknowledge our failures**.

By the time social media and artificial intelligence arrived, journalism had already done a great deal to undermine its own credibility, whether through partisanship or laziness. Into that vacuum came a new system, where **the pursuit of truth was increasingly replaced by the pursuit of attention, approval, and followers**.

We've come to believe that having a platform means having something to contribute — that if enough people listen to us, we must have something worth saying.

But online noise is where disinformation thrives. When facts, opinions and deliberate manipulation become harder to distinguish, **the very fabric of our democratic societies begins to unravel**. We see this in Western democracies and across the world.

Some governments have even made it their strategy to flood the internet with false information: take the pro-Kremlin Pravda network, for example. Despite attracting very little human traffic, in 2025 alone it published around **6.3 million articles** — that's roughly 17,000 articles a day — designed to contaminate the information available to AI systems.

And it worked: according to the organization NewsGuard, leading AI chatbots repeated Pravda's false claims 33% of the time when tested**.**

This matters because more and more people are turning to AI for information. A Reuters Institute study found that **38% of people surveyed in six countries now use AI to seek information every week**.

Which is why, right now, ChatGPT might be telling the least-informed person you know: **"You're absolutely right."**

And that's because there is a commercial incentive to keep people engaged**.**

For a remarkably small number of men shaping the technological revolution, this has become a **game**: a competition for power and money they couldn't possibly spend in several lifetimes, played while hiding behind noble-sounding principles such as freedom of expression.

As a result, they're shaping a world where accuracy comes second to engagement, and truth matters only when it attracts attention**.**

But there is **another vision of the world**: one held by those who believe that some things are worth defending.

That truth matters. That giving a voice to those who don't have one, and holding the powerful to account, matters.

We should all ask ourselves: **Is our work adding to the conversation or to the noise?** Can we bring an overlooked fact to light, challenge a false narrative, expose an injustice or help someone understand a complex reality?

And yes, that's harder than ever in an environment that rewards speed, certainty and outrage.

But if you're prepared to make truth your compass — even when it comes at a cost — then I believe **there has never been a more important time for you to be here**.

That is why I'm particularly proud to be the Godmother of the Journalists Matter youth grants. The four winning projects aim to promote media literacy and fight disinformation.

I'd like to thank everyone who applied, as well as the jury from the Council of Europe, the Youth Department, and the Monaco Presidency.

Please welcome the winners of the Youth Grants!