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Building a new Democratic Pact
Concept note

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, **democratic backsliding** has become a defining trend in European and global politics, though its **root causes** remain the subject of ongoing debate. A broad consensus points to a growing sense of insecurity and uncertainty, driven by conflicts, the rapid unchecked advancement and misuse of technology, widespread socio-economic inequalities, and escalating environmental threats. These vulnerabilities are increasingly exploited by authoritarian and anti-democratic forces, who manipulate public frustrations through **social media stigmatisation, disinformation and hate speech**.

The traditional **concept of Liberal Democracy**[1] is facing multiple **challenges both internally and externally**. Within our own societies, democratic and social cohesion are threatened by the public loss of trust in democratic institutions and in elected officials, as well as the growing polarisation among large parts of the population, with groups divided along political and sometimes religious/ethnic lines. These groups sometimes deny one another's legitimacy, and even dignity. The challenge therefore also lies in **managing these divisions constructively**, ensuring that democratic discourse remains inclusive, respectful and rooted in shared fundamental values. The European family of 46 'equal and proud member States,' each with a unique history, culture and identity, is striving to strengthen cohesion around shared values and to redefine the European project as a renewed 'peace project,' rooted in its founding principles, at a time when it is coming under external pressure from actors seeking to challenge the democratic foundations of Europe.

Recent political developments in Europe and the wider world have shown that developing a **new narrative on democracy is now a necessity**. The Council of Europe (CoE), conceived as a "peace project" after the Second World War, was founded on the commitment to safeguard ideals such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law[2]. Today, these principles face huge threats, and there is an urgent need for collective action among the 46 member States. What we observe now should serve as a **wake-up call** - a reminder of the fragility of something we as Europeans may have taken for granted and failed to safeguard with the vigilance it deserves. This moment also presents a crucial opportunity for the Council of Europe (CoE) to reaffirm its leadership in upholding these values.

Reaching a consensus on the **definition of democracy** is also essential in addressing the complex challenges of today's world. Democracy is more than just electoral processes; it is deeply intertwined with human rights and the rule of law. A common understanding of these

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[1] Understood as a form of democracy in which the power of government is limited, and the freedom and rights of individuals are protected, by constitutionally established norms and institutions (source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/liberal-democracy) .

[2] See the October 2022 report of the high-level reflection group of the Council of Europe, set up by the former Secretary General of the Council of Europe in June 2022 after being invited to do so by the Committee of Ministers at its 132nd Session in Turin (Italy) on 20 May 2022.

principles is critical to countering threats such as authoritarianism and democratic backsliding. By uniting around a clear and inclusive vision, States can ensure that democracy remains a unifying ideal capable of being adapted to the evolving societies in Europe and beyond.

There is a need to have a **broader human rights perspective that underlines collective responsibility**. **Democracy works fully when** everyone's human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the ECHR are protected and the rule of law is upheld. Parliamentary and governing majorities have a duty to stand by these principles, failing which democracies risk mutating into autocracies. Identifying means to reinforce the well-being of society will ensure that the rights of individuals are upheld within a context of shared values and mutual respect. Today's reality shows that living in bubbles, avoiding exchanges with people holding diverging opinions, fosters **echo chambers fuelled by biases and social media algorithms, ultimately suppressing critical thinking and mutual understanding** in a diverse society.

Democracy thrives when it nurtures dialogue, including among those with profoundly diverging views. The fragmentation of societies threatens democratic stability. To counter these trends, we must create spaces for meaningful engagement and robust debate, encouraging mutual understanding, reducing divisions and finding points of convergence. Ensuring that dialogue is sustained, even in the face of disagreement, is critical to preserving the pluralism that underpins democratic systems.

A common approach might demand a recalibration of priorities: moving from self-interest to shared interest, from isolation to collaboration. By **focusing on what unites** us rather than what divides us, and by **building bridges across ideological divides**, we can safeguard democracy and reinvigorate the societal cohesion necessary for its vitality.

Democracy is about people. The role of the CoE as a guardian of democracy is essential in this context[3]. **The CoE is uniquely positioned** to lead the effort to renew our democracy in a fast-changing world: "genuine democracy" is after all a statutory requirement of the Council of Europe. One of its constituent bodies is a parliamentary assembly representing national parliamentarians who bring the **voice of their voters** to Strasbourg. The Organisation also has experience in involving **young people** in order to embed their voice in its policy making. Moreover, the Council of Europe's engagement with **civil society** organisations enable it to take their interests into account in its work. Through these mechanisms, the diverse but equal voice of the *demos* pervades the Council of Europe's action and makes it **a democracy-lab of ideas and policies** often, in turn, translated into legal texts largely resulting from the Organisation's intergovernmental co-operation. Additionally, the **European Court of Human Rights**, as the judiciary body of the Council of Europe, reinforces this democratic framework by ensuring the protection of individual rights. Its case-law shapes legal standards across member States, safeguarding freedoms and promoting accountability. The Court's work ensures that democracy is not only a mechanism of majority rule but also a robust system

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[3] See preamble of the Statute of the Council of Europe: "[…] Convinced that the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is vital for the preservation of human society and civilisation; Reaffirming their devotion to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy; Believing that, for the maintenance and further realisation of these ideals and in the interests of economic and social progress, there is a need of a closer unity between all like-minded countries of Europe;"[…] – see also preamble of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: "[…] Reaffirming their profound belief in those fundamental freedoms which are the foundation of justice and peace in the world and are best maintained on the one hand by an effective political democracy and on the other by a common understanding and observance of the Human Rights upon which they depend; […]"

backed by enforceable decisions that upholds and respects the fundamental rights of all individuals.

A **new European Pact on Democracy** is a logical step after the commitment made in Reykjavík at the highest level of the CoE's 46 member States:

"We consider democracy as the only means to ensure that everyone can live in a peaceful, prosperous and free society. We will meet our obligations under international law. We will prevent and resist democratic backsliding on our continent, including in situations of emergency, crisis and armed conflicts, and we will stand firm against authoritarian tendencies by enhancing our shared commitments as member States of the Council of Europe."

2. Proposed process

Following the SG's initial consultations with member and observer States, this concept note **outlines a dynamic process leading to a new commitment to revitalise Democracy as a follow-up to the Reykjavík Declaration**. The 10 Principles of Democracy adopted in Reykjavík will of course be reflected throughout the process (democratic participation, free and fair elections and referenda, independent effective democratic institutions, separation of powers, judicial independence, anti-corruption, freedom of expression/assembly/association, investing in a democratic future ensuring youth engagement, civil society support, full equal meaningful participation in political and public life for all, in particular for women and girls). The process will require in-depth analysis of the root causes of democratic backsliding and be geared to clear innovative solutions.

It is important that **the CoE acts (and is seen) as the catalyst for deep, innovative and exhaustive political, philosophical and legal thinking around the dynamics of the current democratic model and the necessity of adapting that model via a process**. Finally, the process will be the means to explore innovative approaches for member States to undertake self-assessments of their democracies' health, ensuring a better sense of ownership and accountability.

The **process will involve** high-level thematic **conferences** (in 2025-2026), a broad and **inclusive consultation process**, and the production of a **publication**/interactive guide compiling reflections of diverse intellectuals, policymakers, historians, philosophers and others. This would serve as a reference publication **reflecting innovative ways of tackling democratic backsliding and offering a transformative blueprint for the reinvigoration of democratic values in an increasingly complex world**. A Council of Europe **hackathon on democracy ("24 hours of Democracy")** will be a key input for the whole process – this will involve: CoE Secretariat in Headquarters and in the field; CM Permanent Representations; representatives from PACE, Congress, etc.

Conferences/events (see Appendix I) will address **topics** such as: role of the (**social) media, mis- and dis-information, media freedom, freedom of expression, media integrity, literacy and transparency, social rights, trust in democratic institutions, independence of the judiciary, free and fair elections, anti-corruption, equal representation in democratic processes, critical thinking, remembrance work, civic participation in the digital age, gender equality and inclusion, culture and heritage for democracy** (using cultural policies to stimulate democratic dialogue and participation).

In parallel to consultations of member/observer States through Ambassadors to the CoE, internal consultations will also be organised within the Organisation on relevant themes regarding how to address the key causes associated with democratic backsliding.

It will also create open dialogue, giving space to diverging and creative views involving civil society and youth through **global democratic dialogues** (including with Global South). **The work will have to be linked to other important fora such as the European Political Community (EPC) and other international Summits on Democracy.**

Rooted in the CoE's unique mandate, expertise and ongoing work in the area of democracy, the Action Plan will align **three core pillars** to reflect the new dynamic initiated in Reykjavík:

1/ **Learning and Practising Democracy**: This pillar emphasises (formal and non-formal) education (including human rights education) as a tool for fostering informed and active citizenship. It is also about civic engagement and critical thinking. Moreover, ensuring inclusive and equitable participation is essential to rebuilding trust in democratic institutions. This pillar focuses on fostering opportunities for engagement in democratic processes, including for marginalised groups/minorities, using culture and heritage for democracy.

2/ **Protecting Democracy**: Countering threats to democracy is critical for its survival. This pillar addresses challenges such as constitutional safeguards (rule of law), disinformation and media freedom, election integrity, corruption, and restrictions on freedoms (expression, association, religion).

3/ **Innovating Democracy**: Adapting democratic models to contemporary challenges is essential for their sustainability. This pillar explores participatory governance/deliberative democracy, AI and digital transformation, and emerging technologies, as well as the role of local and regional authorities in building democracy.

The process will unfold through the reinforcement of the Organisation's work, complemented by active engagement with all relevant bodies of the Council of Europe. This collaborative effort might then culminate in a new Democratic Pact for the 21st century, endorsed by Heads of State and Government by the end of 2026. The democratic pact could then lead to the adoption of an Action Plan, which could subsequently be reflected in the next Programme and Budget of the Organisation.

3. Horizontal aspects and advocacy

Inclusivity, youth perspective and gender equality: the process will engage diverse stakeholders, including those critical of democracy, to identify points of convergence. Gender mainstreaming and youth perspective should be ensured throughout the whole process.

Flexibility: while the starting point is clear, the path and outcomes will evolve through consultation and reflection. **The process itself is as important as the final outcome**.

Communication and advocacy: the SG will head up a communication strategy, including engaging in a **"democracy tour"** to exchange with member States on these issues at the highest level. Media allies and voices from various parts of the world will amplify the initiative. The SG will also keep the CM regularly updated.

Appendix I - Key milestones

i. Brainstorming with Ambassadors of the member and observer States

Early in the process (21-22 October 2024), the SG invited Ambassadors to exchange on the symptoms and causes of democratic backsliding and to discuss potential actions in the framework of the Action Plan on Democracy, as well as the added value of the Council of Europe (See Appendix II).

ii. Internal consultations within Council of Europe's Secretariat (Nov. 2024-March 2025)

Inter-secretariat exchanges on topics such as democracy and media (13/12/2024), social rights (10/02/2025); gender equality and inclusion/respect for diversity (04/02/2025); elections and trust in democratic institutions; independence of the judiciary; anti-corruption: culture and democracy; the role of local and regional authorities in building democracy, etc.

iii. Hackathon on democracy/ "24 hours of democracy" (Spring 2025)

A **large-scale collective intelligence exercise** aimed at defining democracy and democratic backsliding will be organised in the buildings of the CoE, ideally before the May ministerial meeting. This event would bring together policymakers, academics, civil society leaders, CoE Secretariat, diplomats (Permanent Representatives), representatives of PACE and Congress, and people (including youth) from diverse cultural and political contexts. Its primary goals would include articulating a shared, inclusive definition of democracy that emphasises human rights, the rule of law and pluralism, while also framing democratic backsliding as the erosion of these foundational principles. By fostering dialogue, sharing best and innovative practices and reflecting on potential solutions, such a forum could help bridge ideological divides and build a new narrative to counter authoritarian narratives. Cultural events will be organised to show the key role of culture in the democratic process.

iv. Ad hoc thematic exchanges of views in various formats

Example: event on media and democracy with Gilles Marchand (14/01/2025)

v. Thematic conferences

Key conferences/events organised in 2025-2026 by the CoE could be seen as potential inputs to the reflection leading to the endorsement of the democratic pact.

<u>Disinformation, media freedom, freedom of expression, social media</u>: addressing the impact of digital platforms on public debate, political participation, democratic discourse/building new and positive narratives/digital literacy/critical thinking, balance between freedom of expression and content moderation. **An international conference could be organised in September 2025 on this specific theme as one of the major inputs to the process.**

On 14 January 2025, an **initial exchange of views** (in the presence of Secretariat and Permanent Representations) took place on media independence (and financing of media), the significance of pluralistic and respectful democratic debate, and the pressing challenges of disinformation, polarisation, and the impact of digital technology in 2025. It highlighted that the media, both public and private, are under strong economic and political pressure, which is dangerously weakening their ability to contribute to the effective functioning of democratic societies.

Democracy and social rights/justice: taking into account the prism of equality and inclusion as cornerstones of democratic societies. Linking **socio-economic inequalities** to lack of trust in democratic processes. Youth need an **agenda for hope**. (potential inputs: **Youth Ministerial meeting in October 2025, Social Charter conference in July 2026**).

Democratic resilience and public confidence in electoral process: exploring mechanisms to rebuild **trust in democratic institutions**, including safeguarding the **independence of the judiciary** to ensure impartiality and accountability, combating political **interference** in legal processes, and promoting **free and fair elections** as a cornerstone of legitimate governance. Equally crucial is addressing the **role of media** in shaping public perception. Strengthening **media integrity, literacy and transparency** serves to protect the electorate's access to unbiased information. Concurrently, comprehensive **anti-corruption strategies** must tackle systemic abuses of power that undermine fair competition and **equal representation** in democratic processes.

Education, civic engagement and digital literacy: promoting **critical thinking**, **remembrance** work, **civic participation** in the digital age, with **civil society** playing a central role.

Addressing gender equality and combating discrimination: promoting **gender equality** and inclusion strengthens the rule of law and enhances the overall legitimacy and resilience of democratic systems. **The Annual Conference of the CoE's Gender Equality Commission in September 2025 (Maltese Presidency) could be a major input to the process.**

vi. Conference of Speakers of Parliaments (March 2025)

Speakers and presidents of parliament from the 46 member States of the Council of Europe and many partner, observer and neighbouring countries, as well as the heads of several interparliamentary assemblies, will gather in Strasbourg from 20 to 21 March 2025 for a major European parliamentary summit. One of the themes addressed will be: Safeguarding democracy. This event could be one of the major contributions to the reflection on democracy.

vii. Ministerial Meeting (May 2025)

At the Ministerial Meeting, the results of the initial consultations will be presented, and member States will commit to support the setting up of the Action Plan. This meeting will underscore the CoE's role in shaping democratic renewal and link to the ongoing work of the CoE in the area of democracy.

An outline of an innovative publication, compiling contributions from internal and external consultations, and input from conference participants and global intellectuals, could be presented at the Ministerial meeting in May 2025. This publication will serve as a key intellectual product, providing insights on renewing democracy in today's context. The publication could then be exploited in various interactive tools to target various types of audience/youth.

viii. World Forum on Democracy 2025/2026

The World Forum on Democracy should be used as a main input to the process by diverse contributors (heads of state and government, intellectuals, civil society, youth – coming from various continents). The 2025 World Forum for Democracy could be one of the conferences contributing to driving and enriching the reflection (global democratic dialogues and alliances with partners from different backgrounds and viewpoints, contributing innovative democratic

principles and approaches). The World Forum on Democracy 2026 should be used as one of the last key inputs to the preparation of the Action Plan.

ix.   Ministerial Meeting (May 2026)

Presentation of the final publication compiling contributions from internal and external consultations, and input from conference participants and global intellectuals, listing a series of innovative practices to renew democracy and ensure Europeans' adherence to democracy.

x.   Summit of Heads of States and Government (if there is willing on the part of member States)

The whole process will build momentum towards a potential **CoE Summit end of 2026**. The Heads of State and Government could then adopt a _new democratic pact_ defining our living together and reaffirming their commitment to democratic principles and concrete innovative actions (including through intergovernmental work) on democracy, marking a decisive step in combating democratic backsliding. This step will be crucial to give clear orientations, give impetus to dynamic reflection on democracy in Europe and reinforce work on democracy within the CoE.

Appendix II – Internal Note for the file (only in English)

Main ideas from the first consultations with Ambassadors
*(Meetings at the Secretary General's Residence
on 21-22 October 2024)*

Participants: *Ambassadors, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Stefano Piedimonte Bodini, Irène Kitsou-Milonas, Natacha De Roeck*

1. Symptoms and causes of democratic backsliding

Agreement on key symptoms of democratic backsliding: increasing disinformation, extremism, polarisation, and public distrust in institutions are pervasive across Europe. Rising inequalities, loss of faith in electoral processes, and decreased participation in political life further weaken democratic engagement. The perception of "double standards" and normalisation of harmful rhetoric (e.g., racist statements) contribute to disillusionment.

Underlying causes: democratic decline is often tied to **socio-economic disparities, digital isolation, and cultural shifts. Economic insecurity, social inequality, migration pressures, and the lack of opportunities** leave citizens feeling disconnected and vulnerable. Factors like the climate crisis, job scarcity, and global digital influence create a **feeling of hopelessness that undermines faith in democracy**. Additionally, social media algorithms contribute to **ideological bubbles**, intensifying isolation and limiting critical debate.

External pressures vs transparency: external influence is seen as a threat in many contexts but at the same time transparency is one of the key objectives of the EU when it comes to democracy (EC President launched the idea of "a legislative proposal to set up common transparency and accountability standards for interest representation activities seeking to influence the decision-making process in the Union that is carried out on behalf of third countries"). The **global dimension**, with lessons from democratic practices beyond Europe, may offer insights on **alternative approaches**. Learning from other continents (e.g., Africa) could help rethink assumptions and **potentially reverse the trend of enforcing a single democratic model.**

On the approach: Ambassadors highly valued being **consulted early** in the process and recognised the **Secretary General's (SG) leadership in prioritising the "democracy" pillar from the outset of his mandate**. This approach reflects a strong commitment to democratic revitalisation, following the conclusions of the Reykjavík Summit. **Reykjavík Principles should be the basis of the work** (in coordination with relevant entities such as CDDEM and GR-DEM and others). SG-led political briefings for the Committee of Ministers (CM) could foster innovative ideas and spark debates on democratic revitalisation. Should we try **to (re-)define "Democracy"?**

2. Crucial aspect: engaging youth, civil society, and citizens

Youth engagement and civic participation: with young people **increasingly disengaged and skeptical of democracy's benefits**, CoE needs a new strategy to reconnect with this demographic. Addressing the **"bubble" effect** created by digital spaces and the **spread of disinformation** is crucial. Addressing youth disillusionment by increasing democratic

engagement opportunities and listening to their specific concerns, particularly their perceptions of democracy's limitations and potential. Expanding youth-centered programmes (already implemented in CoE) that emphasise democratic values and access to reliable information will help counter populism and extremism. Involve young people in the design of the Action Plan.

Reinforcing civil society involvement: civil society organisations (CSOs) should play a key role in democratic renewal, amplifying diverse voices and fostering dialogue with marginalised groups. Supporting CSOs will help foster **transparency, accountability, and public trust in democratic processes**, including among citizens without voting rights for instance.

Promoting democratic values through education: promoting civic education, media and digital literacy. Critical thinking can empower youth to participate meaningfully in democratic processes.

3. Enhancing democratic resilience/confidence and alliances

Election integrity and trustworthiness: reinforce election observation and election integrity initiatives, ensuring transparency and **public confidence in electoral processes**.

Balancing freedom of speech vs hate speech: promote responsible use of freedom of expression while addressing hate speech (online and offline) to maintain a respectful democratic dialogue.

Positive use of social media: encourage democratic forces to u**se social media effectively to engage citizens and counteract algorithm-driven polarisation**. CoE should be a leader in positive digital engagement, enhancing the influence of democratic narratives. Important to encourage the positive use of social media, counteract algorithm-driven polarisation, and improve digital literacy. Why shouldn't we be the influential ones on social media? Why do undemocratic forces use them more powerfully?

4. Added value of the Council of Europe: unique platform for dialogue and Innovation

75 years of experience and expertise in the field of democracy: increase **transversal cooperation** and strengthen synergy within CoE by promoting collaboration across democracy, human rights, rule of law, and education sectors, **reducing work in silos**.

Leveraging CoE Conventions: use existing treaties and conventions as a foundation for cohesive and accountable democratic initiatives.

Platform for inclusive debate, including when diverging views: the CoE is uniquely positioned as **Europe's forum for democratic dialogue, particularly on complex issues where divergent perspectives need respectful exchange**. Reinforcing the role of the World Forum on Democracy and regularly holding democracy-themed ministerial meetings/Summits can elevate discussions on backsliding and provide space for cross-national dialogue on evolving challenges. Ensure democratic engagement for groups with limited representation, such as minorities, women, and youth, using CoE's platform to reflect a broad range of perspectives.

No need for new monitoring: there is a general agreement that the action plan should avoid creating new monitoring bodies or imposing sanctions (no naming-shaming). Instead, it should foster **self-assessment and introspection within member states**, encouraging them to reflect on their democratic health and work toward positive changes without fear of judgment. It is also worth proceeding to a stocktaking (what initiatives exist in the CoE and give them more visibility, build more links between them, use existing indicators on the health of democracy).

5. Next Steps for a New Action Plan on Democracy

Defining clear goals and practical measures: the CoE's action plan should aim for **realistic and impactful targets, focusing on reinforcing existing instruments and leveraging the work of bodies** like the Venice Commission, GRECO, and the European Court of Human Rights. It should emphasise the interconnectedness of democracy with peace, security, human rights and dignity.

Adopting holistic perspective with socio-economic linkages and tackling inequalities: understanding **democracy in relation to economic and social well-being** is essential, as citizens must see tangible benefits in their daily lives. The action plan should also address **how democratic governance promotes better socio-economic outcomes, from job opportunities to social equity and gender equality**. Address rising inequalities, which contribute to public mistrust, emphasizing democracy's role in fostering economic stability and social well-being.

Leveraging CoE's existing instruments: strengthen cooperation between bodies like the Venice Commission, GRECO, PACE, the Social Charter, media and youth departments, the Observatory of History Teaching and the European Court of Human Rights to tackle democratic backsliding comprehensively.

Integrating global initiatives and building alliances (multiplying effect): aligning CoE's efforts with UN initiatives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and work hand in hand with the EU (lessons learned from EU Action Plan on Democracy 2020's Democratic + Defence of Democracy package in December 2023) to ensure complementary action and avoid redundant efforts. CoE's role as a soft power advocate in democracy-related efforts can extend beyond Europe, reinforcing its influence. Building democratic alliances.

Learning from global democratic practices: acknowledge the value of insights from other regions, promoting diverse democratic approaches without imposing a uniform model. **Strengthening dialogue with the Global South**: enhance CoE's interaction with the Global South (including though the North-South Centre), integrating democratic practices and aligning with the UN Pact of the Future.

6. Longer-term vision: optimistic approach with increased visibility and new narrative

Backsliding is reversible: highlighting that democratic decline is not a foregone conclusion; the CoE should highlight successful reforms and "best practices" that restore democratic integrity ("catalogue of best democratic practices"). Also important to take into account that democracy is not to be taken for granted anymore (**change of paradigm** might be necessary).

Building resilience and transparency: early-warning systems for identifying democratic backsliding should be identified/developed, alongside **frameworks to bolster transparency and public trust**. A periodic exchange with scientists, historians, and media experts can foster continuous improvement and **adaptability** in CoE's initiatives.

Addressing Emerging Challenges: include modern challenges like **artificial intelligence, climate change, and cybercrime** in CoE's democracy work to maintain relevance and resilience.

Empowering the next generation: making **democracy relatable, appealing, and accessible** for younger generations is paramount. Publicising success stories, increasing CoE's visibility in public spaces, and using social media effectively will help cultivate a positive image of democracy. Social media should not be the tool of undemocratic forces only.

Long-term vision with clear milestones: establishing a long-term perspective with **regular key milestones** tied to CM presidencies, ministerial meetings, the World Forum on Democracy, and other high-level events, to ensure sustained commitment and progress tracking. The Action Plan could be organised around **political, societal, and technical dimensions**. Still too early to agree on a clear timeline.

Increasing visibility and public outreach: raise **awareness of CoE's democratic initiatives**, emphasising success stories and the unique role CoE plays in democracy building, distinct from other organisations.

Positive new narrative: CoE needs to create a **compelling, hopeful narrative on democracy, moving beyond technical jargon.** By emphasising **democracy's link to economic prosperity, social justice, and cultural relevance**, the organisation can counteract disenchantment and present democracy as resilient and adaptable and dynamic process.

Building public trust in democracy: **counteract democratic disillusionment** by clearly communicating democracy's tangible benefits, making it relevant and engaging to all societal groups, particularly youth.