

Activity Brief

April - June, 2021

Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies

Recent Activities

The 33rd Session of the Governing Council | April 20-21, 2021

This virtual, two-day meeting, chaired by CoD Presidency Romania, covered current and future activities of the Community of Democracies such as the upcoming Tenth Ministerial Conference while also discussing democracy in a world still struggling with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The session featured a guest speaker, Mr. Robert Oliphant (M.P.), Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, who presented Canada's initiative on "Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations".

Member States adopted an Outcome Statement affirming that promoting representation of women and girls is crucial for human rights and fundamental freedoms and urging the integration of a gender perspective across all sectors of government and society. Read the full statement [here](#).



« Democratic institutions flourish when all groups of society are represented. **The full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of all women and girls**, including those from traditionally marginalized and non-elite groups, **is crucial for democracy**; their leadership and inclusion in decision-making at all levels contributes to strengthening government accountability and transparency. »

Outcome Statement of the 33rd Governing Council Meeting
of the Community of Democracies

Community of Democracies

CoD Women

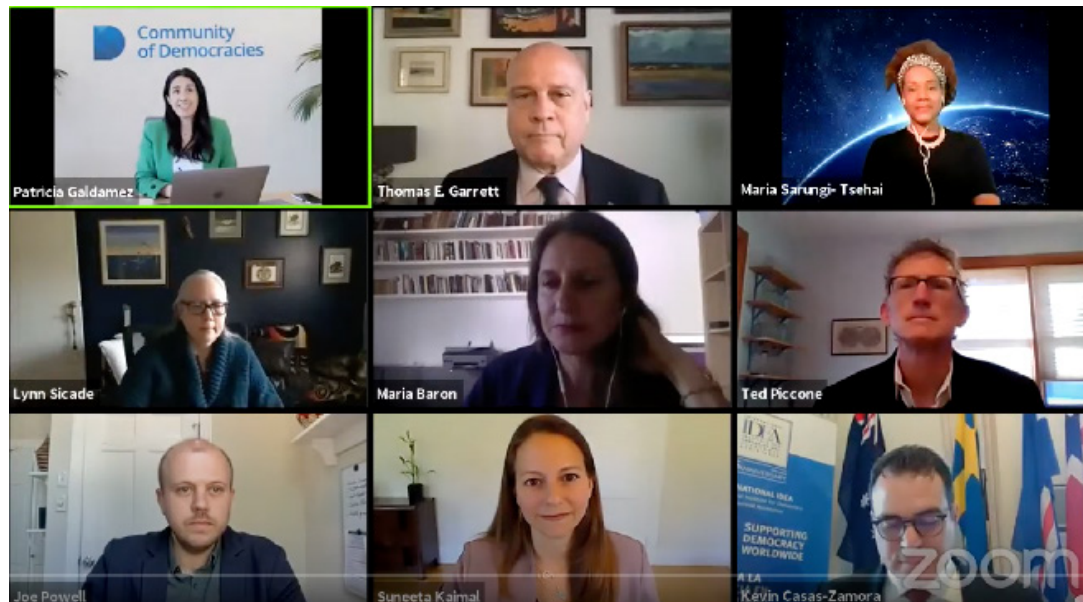
[Statement](#) by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on World Press Freedom Day | May 3, 2021

The statement discussed the role media plays in a democracy, especially in times of global crisis. Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett said that media freedom is "the key to support transparent, accountable democratic governance, highlight vital issues of public concern, and protect people's rights and freedoms" and noted that "press freedom and freedom of opinion and expression are among the 19 democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration."

CoD Event "Towards a Summit for Democracy" | April 23, 2021

By bringing together high-level representatives of democracy groups and civil society, this event discussed potential goals and implications of the U.S.-proposed Summit for Democracy. Chief Engagement Officer of the World Justice Project Ted Piccone, who was a member of the U.S. State Department policy staff under Madeleine Albright which planned the original CoD June 27, 2000 gathering, spoke from a historical and current context, and mentioned that the "Covid-19 crisis is an opportunity not only to repair but truly to build forward by addressing the root cause of problems that existed long before the pandemic." Watch the full event [here](#).

The event was organized in cooperation with International IDEA and the Open Government Partnership.



Secretary General's Visit to Romania | May 24-26, 2021

Meetings in Bucharest touched upon the recently extended mandate of the Romanian Presidency as well as the upcoming Tenth Ministerial Conference, planned for September 2021 during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly in New York. Discussions with civil society and Romanian CoD Youth Lead touched upon the current situation in Belarus and detention of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega. Read the press release [here](#).



CoD activities following the second military coup in Mali on May 24, 2021:

- In his [statement](#) on May 26, CoD Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett condemned the detention of the President, Prime Minister, and other transitional government officials by the military and called for their immediate, safe, and unconditional release. He also called for the democratic transition process to resume and reiterated continued CoD support towards the rebuilding of democratic norms and institutions in Mali.
- On June 11, CoD Presidency Romania convened an Extraordinary Governing Council session to discuss the situation in Mali.
- On June 22, following a week-long virtual voting process, the Community of Democracies [suspended](#) the Republic of Mali's membership in its Governing Council due to violations of the core democratic principles outlined in the Warsaw Declaration and subsequent Ministerial Declarations. In announcing the suspension, the Secretary General pledged renewed efforts by the Community of Democracies to support the return to democracy in Mali.

CoD Series of Interviews - Women Leading in Crises

Launched in May 2021, the initiative presents stories of women leaders working at the frontlines of crisis, including in the pandemic, political and economic crisis, and conflict. The first interview featured former Mongolian Foreign Minister and M.P. [Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren](#), currently Director of External Affairs at the Green Climate Fund. The discussion was facilitated by Ms. [Stephenie Foster](#). Watch the interview [here](#).

The second interview was conducted with the Leader of Democratic Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, on the day of her husband's conviction facing clearly political charges including "inciting social hatred" and "organizing mass disorder." Among other topics, she talked about the recent hijacking of the flight to Vilnius, as well as her decision to run for President and experiences as a fledgling political advocate. Watch the interview [here](#).



Anniversary of the CoD – reception at the Romanian Embassy | June 25, 2021

The Embassy of Romania in Poland hosted a [reception](#) on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration, the founding document of the Community of Democracies. The reception was attended by the Warsaw-based Governing Council diplomatic representatives.



"Global Crises and the Community of Democracies" - Article by Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett

In his article for *the Cambridge Journal of Law, Politics, and Art*, Secretary General noted "Moving forward, the new or transformed democratic blocs should work together on equal footing, bound together by the principles and aspirations of the Warsaw Declaration." Read the full [article](#).

Secretary General's visit to Governing Council Members Georgia and North Macedonia

Georgia | June 21-24, 2021

During his visit, SG met with high-level officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgian Parliament, and Central Election Commission. The meetings discussed current opportunities and challenges for democracy, the role of digital technology in election management, and youth involvement in Georgian democracy. Read the press release [here](#).



The SG also travelled to Odzisi, where he observed Russian military positions in the area of Georgia under occupation. "I am grateful for the opportunity to visit the Occupation Line and witness for myself the ongoing, decades-long Russian aggression against Georgia, even though the accounts I heard about the abduction of Georgian citizens and the harsh repression of Georgian villages in the occupied areas were painful. I wish for their day of liberation and a return to the sovereign and territorial integrity of this democratic nation"- he said.

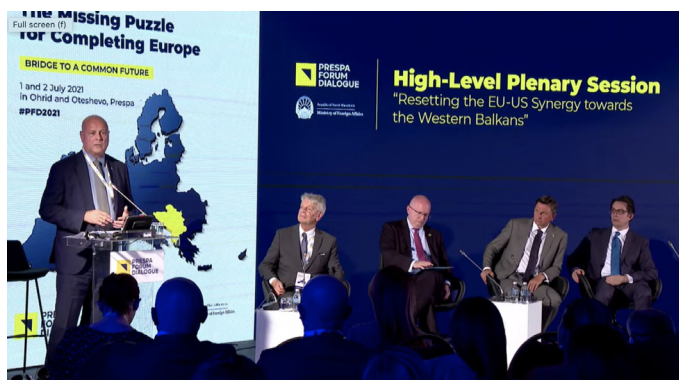


North Macedonia | June 29-July 2, 2021

In Skopje, the Secretary General met with civil society organizations active in youth engagement, education and the rights of marginalized groups. Topics discussed included the digital divide which had emerged over the last year for children in marginalized communities and the need for increased financial and capacity building support to civil society.

The SG then participated in the Prespa Forum Dialogue, speaking to the session, "Resetting the EU-US Synergy Towards the Western Balkans." Explore SG [full remarks here](#).

The travel also provided an opportunity for the SG to meet H.E. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs.



CoD YouthLeads

Virtual event: Youth Participation, Voice and Active Citizenship: Navigating the New Normal | May 6, 2021

During this event, Generation Democracy Members and the CoD YouthLeads from Guatemala, Nigeria, Morocco and Portugal discussed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on youth participation and leadership in public life, as well as how youth are using innovative solutions to manage the risks of the pandemic as active community members and global citizens.



Rita Saias



Walter Corzo



Timi Olagunju



Khadija
Amihal

Participatory exercise with answers from the audience as part of the event.

How should young leaders prepare to address the future impact of COVID-19 on youth participation and leadership in public life?

Mentimeter

Develop tech (digital skills) that align with policymaking because many government are now forced by COVID to embrace digitalization

I believe we should appreciate and maintain our international cooperation and learn from the best international experience.

We need to learn more about what is happening in our communities and to design initiatives that support these communities. We also need to collaborate in making the impact we seek to have on our societies

Youth would have to be more flexible and dynamic.

increase digital literacy and find alternative solutions to adapt new normal situation

It is a great chance to redefine social activism & widen our scope of the act.

As leaders we should highlight and put more value to youth efforts and achievements during the pandemic to gain reliability and credibility. The public sphere when proceeding to gain more rights

New Additions to #CoDYOUTHLeads | May 11, 2021



Tomas currently serves as the Deputy Mayor of the Akmene District Municipality in Lithuania. He completed studies in Political Science and International Relations.



Bold has an academic background in Political Science, Business Administration, and International Relations. He also has an impressive list of publications on governance and youth.



Nidal holds a Bachelor and Master's Degree in Public Law and is studying International Relations and Diplomacy. Nidal has been the President of Asilah's city Local Youth Council in Morocco since 2013.

Campaign in Solidarity with Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega | May 25, 2021

Following the criminal hijacking to Minsk of the plane traveling from Athens to Vilnius and the seizure of opposition blogger Raman Pratasevich and his traveling companion Sofia Sapega, many world leaders – including CoD Governing Council states – condemned the action and referred to it as an “act of piracy”. The CoD YouthLeads joined in condemning this action and expressing their support of Raman, Sofia, and the Belarusian pro-democracy movement. Watch the video [here](#).

