



TO FIGHT OR NOT TO FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY?

Democracy doesn't happen by accident.

We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it.

Joe Biden, Summit for Democracy, Feb 2021

The time to fight for democracy is not over. On the contrary, it must resume because democracy and democratic systems are under attack all over the world.

It was in June 2019 when Vladimir Putin declared, in an interview with the *Financial Times*, that “the liberal idea has become obsolete”, and after a little less than three years we have seen on the borders of Europe what he planned to do against a democratic country. It has been years since the major daily and weekly newspapers, schools of thought and universities asked questions if democracy can survive the interference and polarisation of the internet and social media. It is a matter of weeks until someone will finally ask whether democracy can survive artificial intelligence: no, in fact, *The New York Times* has already asked that question.

However, it is the same question that many around the world have asked themselves since the assault of Capitol Hill in January 2021; after the events in Hungary, where some fundamental rights were called into question; after the events in Brasilia a few months ago; after the discovery of foreign interference in Europe and in the United States; and it is the same question that an heir of the Gandhi family is asking in the world's largest democracy, India.

We have an answer and it is called Europe. Strengthening democracy must be put back at the top of Europe's agenda as we said in the Frankfurt Declaration of December 2021. On the continent where democracy was born and developed, where there were those who called it “the worst form of government, except for all the other forms that have been tried from time to time”. In Europe there are the keys and the conditions to save democracy: by fortifying that process of European integration born, not by chance, after the darkest and most violent season that the Old Continent has experienced; by giving more strength to the European institutions; by protecting it from foreign influences; by strengthening rule of law; by investing in education, because in culture are the antibiotics to protect democracy; by declining freedom as only Europe knows how; by respecting and protecting human rights, which are the foundations of democracy; and by developing stronger democratic processes at all levels: local,



regional, national and European. Protecting democracy comes also via consolidation or foundation of transnational political movements and political parties, such as EDP.

The European Democratic Party must inspire a new political constellation to transform the EU and strengthen our European democracy. It is a major challenge and a matter of urgency. So, from this day onwards and right up to June 2024, we will be relentless flag-bearers for reform. We will rebuild Europe. We will drive our priorities forward with more resolve than ever before.