



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

**NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR**

**Speech of the President of the Republic of Slovenia  
Nataša Pirc Musar  
at the Leader's Panel of the Summit for Democracy 2023**

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*I am very pleased to be part of this year's Summit for Democracy, and let me thank President Biden for this timely initiative. As a first-time politician, I came to the world of politics with no political baggage. As a human rights lawyer, I lived a life in which the power of argument was the order of the day. I am terrified to see how in international politics the power of argument loses the battle against the argument of power.*

*We in Europe have war. This war is different: it is a straightforward global challenge to democracy and the rule of law. The Charter of the United Nations, the constitution of the world, was blatantly violated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine.*

*But in order to understand how much democracy is under threat, we need to, we must look beyond Ukraine. War is costly everywhere: while it lasts, and when it ends. Efforts to rebuild war-torn societies are costly. Efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change are costly, too.*

*Those who flee areas destroyed by war and lost due to climate change need to find a place to live in dignity. The first concern among people who are victims of our wrongdoing is how to secure food, water, and shelter. Their priority may not*

*necessarily be to fight for democracy, but to fight for survival. If we, democracies, will not deliver it to them – someone else will.*

*This being said, there are other things that demand our full attention. We must think about the future and what progress in science and technology brings us. We put our trust in bright and skilled people. But let us not miss the big picture here. Bright men and women seek their fortunes in rich parts of the world. Yet we do not need them only in capitals and global financial hubs. We need to attract them to less developed states and rural areas – that is where democracy is most vulnerable.*

*We know that ignored and neglected people living on the periphery can be dangerous to democracy. Even the world's most powerful countries are not immune to this threat.*

*Democracy requires leadership that pushes those policies aiming to survive the present and be ready for the future: solidarity, globally accessible finance, science and technology, and respect for human rights.*

*Freedom and democracy are not free of charge. Implementing these policies is not cheap. But it is the only way forward if democracy is to survive.*