

## **The Bucharest Declaration on Modern Direct Democracy**

2024 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy 15 - 18 May 2024, Bucharest, Romania

We, the participants of the 2024 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, convened in Bucharest, Romania, from 15-18 May 2024, under the overarching theme of "Trust: Rebuilding Foundations for Democratic Resilience," we hereby declare the following:

**Trust is Fundamental:** We recognise trust as the bedrock upon which democracies stand. Trust in institutions, in the media, and in each other is essential for the functioning of vibrant democracies. It is incumbent upon us to nurture and reinforce this trust through active citizenship, transparent governance, and robust participatory procedures and practices.

**The Role of Democracy in Peace and Conflict Resolution:** Democracy, with its participatory mechanisms and inclusive governance structures, plays a crucial role in preventing conflicts and fostering enduring peace. As we deliberate on the challenges facing the world today, including violent conflicts and regimes, populism, climate change, and pandemics, we reaffirm our commitment to leveraging democratic tools to address these global crises and promote stability and prosperity for all.

**European Democracy and Transnational Participation:** In light of the challenges we face, transnational institutions are more important than ever, but they need to invest in inclusiveness and citizen participation. As we approach the 2024 European Union elections, we underscore the importance of more democratic participation on the European stage and commit to fostering greater collaboration and cooperation across borders. Initiatives and tools such as the Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Citizens' Initiative, the European Union are a good start enhance citizen engagement and ownership in shaping the future of Europe but need deepening.

**Media, Technology, and Democracy:** In an era of rapid technological advancement and evolving media landscapes, we recognise the critical role of media in preserving and extending democracy. We commit to supporting independent and public media, debunking disinformation, and harnessing technological innovations, while remaining vigilant, to strengthen democratic processes and enhance citizen engagement.

**The Vitality of Local Democracy:** At a time of democratic recession among nation-states, we find hope and inspiration in the flourishing of local democracies worldwide. We celebrate the diverse forms of local democracy, from direct to participatory, and commit to amplifying their impact on national and transnational levels. By empowering local governments and civil society organizations, we can build resilient democracies that prioritise the needs and voices of all citizens.

**Empowering Youth Participation:** Recognising the importance of engaging the next generation in democratic processes, we pledge to prioritise youth participation in decision-making and governance. By providing platforms for young voices to be heard and empowering youth-led initiatives, we can cultivate a culture of civic engagement and ensure a more inclusive and representative democracy for future generations.