



## **14<sup>th</sup> Bali Democracy Forum**

*Democracy for Humanity: Advancing Economic and Social Justice during the pandemic*

9 December 2021

**The Delegation of the European Union issues the following statement together with the diplomatic missions of Member States in Indonesia, namely:**

**Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden**

We congratulate Indonesia on organising this Forum's 14<sup>th</sup> edition. This is a testament to fourteen years of unwavering commitment to advance democracy in the Asia-Pacific region.

The pandemic has made a strong case for more economic and social justice. It has revealed the true cost of inequality, with major implications for people's health, livelihoods and dignity. Its impact on children's educational attainment is expected to be long-lasting, while gender inequality has been exacerbated in public and private life, involving higher levels of sexual and gender-based violence. The wealth divide has deepened, and a vaccine divide has emerged. As a global community, we need to counter the risk of missing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Over the past few years, and particularly during the pandemic, democratic values have come under pressure around the world. We have seen a rise in populism at the expense of moderatism, and political discourse has shown a trend towards polarisation to the detriment of the search for consensus and compromise. The rule of law is being questioned, diminishing citizens' access to justice and fundamental freedoms. The free and independent press is struggling due to the economic downturn and its un-level playing field with the social media, resulting in a weakened media ecosystem marked by disinformation and "alternative facts".

In that challenging context, the European Union remains a steadfast supporter of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This work starts at home, which is why the European Union launched the Conference on the Future of Europe this year, providing a unique opportunity for European citizens to let their voices be heard, in the spirit of inclusion and equality. At the national and local levels, we continue to foster dialogue through direct consultations with our citizens. To emerge stronger from the pandemic and ensure that no one is left behind, the European Union has also adopted an unprecedented financial package to help bolster economic and social justice, while investing in a green and digital future.

Our commitment is also reflected internationally. Across the world, we are scaling up financial and political support for those who promote democratic participation and inclusion. This is why we have strengthened our existing alliances with democratic countries, including Indonesia, as the world's third largest democracy. The European Union continues to put women and girls' rights at the heart of the global recovery. Earlier this year our new multiannual budget came into force, designed to help eradicate poverty, alleviate migration crises and promote human rights through our sustained dialogue with civil society.

In order to mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic, the European Union, working together with its Member States as "Team Europe", provides more than €200 million to Indonesia, financing public health programmes, amplifying civil society's assistance to vulnerable communities, and strengthening the health sector's preparedness in the longer run. In addition, Team Europe provides more than €800 million to assist ASEAN and its Member States in their response to the coronavirus.

The European Union reiterates its view that no one will be safe until the entire world is safe. Respect for all human rights – for everyone's human rights – must remain at the heart of fighting the pandemic and supporting the global recovery.