

Cristiano CORAZZARI
Minister for Culture of the Regione Veneto

European Commission for Democracy through Law
of the Council of Europe
(Venice Commission)
130th Plenary Session

Venice, 18 March 2022

I am pleased to bring the greetings of the President of the Regione Veneto Council to the President of the Venice Commission, Claire Bazy Malaurie, and to all the authorities and experts present from the Venice Commission.

The Venice Commission was established in 1990, an important moment in European and world history, a time of healing old wounds and extending the key principles of Europe's constitutional heritage: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

These principles are embodied in the four key areas of the Commission's work, which are constitutional assistance, elections and referenda, co-operation with constitutional courts and other transnational studies, reports and seminars.

The Regione Veneto immediately welcomed the establishment of the Commission with enthusiasm, deeply sharing the values of democracy and legality that inspire its action and is proud to have hosted such a noble initiative for all these years.

Over these decades, the Venice Commission has worked tirelessly to draft texts, documents and opinions, for the strengthening of constitutional democracy in many countries and the consolidation of effective and transparent electoral systems, the rule of law and mechanisms to protect human rights.

After two years conditioned by the pandemic emergency, we thought we could resume the work of supporting the Commission in a normal way, but it turned out differently.

We share the shock and dismay generated by the aggression against Ukraine and also expressed by the President of the Commission, Claire Bazy Malaurie, on 1 March.

We know that the Bureau of the Commission has had to postpone the discussion of items concerning Ukraine, originally scheduled for today's agenda, in the light of the current international situation.

We are also aware that the prevailing use of force clashes irreparably with the Council of Europe's own democratic values of respect for the law and protection of human rights, values in whose interests the Venice Commission has always worked.

At the moment, the Regione Veneto is working with the Civil Protection to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the reception of refugees from Ukraine. It has also opened a special account to collect the numerous offers of help and solidarity made by Veneto citizens.

The extremely serious events taking place just over 1600 kilometres from here remind us that democracy and peace itself are never definitive achievements but require constant attention and care.

We therefore believe that the best response to the unfortunate attempt to rewind the course of history is to continue to pursue the path of dialogue and confrontation between all countries and that, now more than ever, the role played by this Commission in strengthening and fully realising democratic institutions is crucial.

In the hope that the reflections produced by today's session will also have a positive impact on the current international scenario, I would like to wish all participants a fruitful day's work.