

**CABINET OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NORTH MACEDONIA**



Address of the President Xhaferi at the General Debate of the 143rd Assembly of IPU
“Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community”

Madrid, 27 November 2021

Distinguished President of the Inter Parliamentary Union, Mr. Duarte Pacheco,

Distinguished colleagues, Presidents of Parliament

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my personal pleasure at being here today, in person, after the long period of virtual meetings and holding the Assemblies of the IPU virtually, and to be able to personally greet you on my own behalf and on behalf of the Members of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia and to contribute in the Debate on the Contemporary Challenges to Democracy and Overcoming Division and Building Community, on behalf of our legislative house, which like all legislatures, homes of democracy, where the voice of people is heard and is translated into the legitimacy of the elected representatives, faces all modern challenges in the attempt for democratic functioning. Starting from the manner of functioning imposed by the COVID-19 pandemics and how much it decreases the trust of the citizens in an institution. How close the institution becomes to the citizens with its, at times improvised activities in such conditions of restrictions and protocol, and whether the Parliaments are prepared to handle the burden brought by the present times. Are we sufficiently representative? Here I certainly do not refer to the political palate. I refer to the representation of all marginalized groups, the insufficiently represented groups in society, women, youth, apolitical citizens whose single aim is to have functional society, institutions at the service of the citizens, institutions that can strengthen the trust between people and be closer to the citizens, thus building culture of dialog

among the polarized sides and promote curative political discourse which brings hope and encourages constructive and inter party cooperation. Above all, with sincere intentions, since this is the only way to surpass the division among the stakeholders, to unite about the priorities in the decision making process based on evidence, since, as much as the competitiveness between the political parties is significant for a healthy democracy, the polarization brings risks into today's times of pandemic crisis, which, as much as I would like to be an optimist and say that it is behind us, unfortunately, we cannot speak thereof. On the contrary, the situation on the field, with the constant spread of the virus demands new restrictive measures, returning the protocols, while the reaction of the citizens to the returned measures they believed were long due and belong to the past, arouses their discontent and inflames their frustration. The reactions are of different shapes and dimensions, but the feeling of being overwhelmed with the new rules, new obligations and limitations prevails. And this is the area for all disinformation and all destructive forces. Always considering the particularly significant role of the parliaments in the protection of the freedom of expression on the Internet and the promotion of the difference in opinion, it is of similar importance to stand against the disinformation and hate speech, to prevent the perception that as political establishment, we are losing the connection with the citizens. In order to change this, we have to provide personal example, promoting culture of tolerance, culture of inclusion and cooperation for the essential affairs. The globalization, with all its flaws needs to be promoted, initially with all its virtues, availability and speed, to turn it into benefit for bringing back the trust of the citizens in the institutions and prevent destructive potentials waiting for their chance to shine. Hence, we have to be awake, to closely cooperate, and be sincere and direct in our activities and operations, to be true home and guardian of democracy and peace in our states.

Dear friends,

Being part of the IPU means being part of the common efforts to resolve and address the modern challenges on national and international level, through political leadership and solidarity in finding new approach for protection of the democracy, and I am convinced that this approach will provide the needed results.

Dear colleagues, I wish you successful and fruitful work during this Assembly.

Thank you for your attention!