

European Capital of Democracy 2023 - 2024: Barcelona Launches Programme

A day prior of September 15, the International Day of Democracy, Barcelona has presented the year-long programme as European Capital of Democracy (ECoD). Starting in October the city will host a series of events and activities dedicated to foster democratic values, civic engagement, and political dialogue, positioning Barcelona as a central hub for democratic discourse and innovation.

Barcelona has been selected as the inaugural European Capital of Democracy, acknowledging its commitment to citizen participation and inclusivity. Mayor Jaume Collboni expressed great anticipation for the Programme Year, stating, "Cities are the places where democracy originated. They are also the places where we need to initiate a conversation on how to practice democracy in order to make it tangible, inclusive, and resilient. In the upcoming year, as the first-ever European Capital of Democracy, Barcelona aims to serve as an example for all European cities grappling with the challenge of defending democracy."

The European Capital of Democracy program presentation featured a significant address by Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the European Commission, who has been long-standing supporter of the initiative.

In her speech, Vice-President Šuica underscored the programme's importance and its alignment with democratic values, stating, "Cities like Barcelona are a hive of innovation. The European Capital of Democracy will create a vibrant stage for innovation in democracy and best practices in action."

As the international community is gearing up to mark the International Day of Democracy on September 15, Helfrid Carl, diplomat and founder of ECoD highlights: „Democracy is slow. Democracy can produce flawed outcomes. And democracy must always be renewed. But just because in our democracies we must be very critical of the system, we should not overlook a basic fact: In the end, it is democracy that delivers for the people. And here in Barcelona we will show the world that democracy - with all its flaws - delivers.“

In conclusion, Minister of Foreign Affairs José Manuel Albares congratulated ECoD and the City of Barcelona for the initiative on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Programme Year of the European Capital of Democracy provides a diverse range of events and activities, including the renowned Decidim Fest, the Festival "Art of Democracy", the fifth annual International Youth Conference and many more. Barcelona will also host the 7th edition of the Innovation in Politics Awards 2024 and the 10th ACT NOW Mayors' Conference, both initiated by the Vienna-based Innovation in Politics Institute, the founding organisation of the European Capital of Democracy. These events will bring together innovative political leaders,

renowned experts, and inspiring youth to exchange ideas, showcase best practices, and shape the future of democracy.

Detailed information about the Programme Year can be found at:

<https://capitalofdemocracy.eu/the-european-capital-of-democracy-programme/>.

About European Capital of Democracy

The European Capital of Democracy aims to inspire cities across Europe to cultivate democratic environments, promote citizen engagement, and work towards a more inclusive and transparent future. The Programme Year provides a unique opportunity for individuals, communities, and institutions to collaboratively shape the democratic landscape. The initiative was launched by ECoD gemeinnützige GmbH together with The Innovation in Politics Institute, with offices in Vienna and Berlin and partners in 16 European countries.

<https://capitalofdemocracy.eu>.

Citizens who want to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of democracy can apply to join the Citizens' Jury by visiting <https://capitalofdemocracy.eu/join-the-citizens-jury/>.

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