

Club de Madrid takes stock of COVID-19 to make democracies more resilient against future emergencies

The largest forum of former Presidents and Prime Ministers convened a high-level group of political leaders and policy experts to formulate recommendations to enhance the ability of democracy to function, to deliver and to be trusted in the face of emergencies such as COVID-19. Convened as the 'Global Commission on Democracy and Emergencies', the group launches its final report.

COVID-19 hit at a time of unease for democracy – a crisis of trust, a crisis of representation, populism, polarization, and mounting questions on democracy's ability to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The pandemic galvanized those trends and brought the weaknesses of democratic institutions, administrations and leadership into the spotlight. With democracy indicators at historical lows, it is imperative for democracies to draw lessons from their COVID-19 experience to face future emergencies with a more effective and more democratic approach.

"Leaders have to trust citizens' capacity to understand complex situations, and be transparent about the objectives and reasons of policy measures", said Yves Leterme, former Prime Minister of Belgium and Club de Madrid Member in one of the Commission's meetings.

The Global Commission's report presents a series of [20 recommendations](#), directed at government leaders, public institutions and civil society in all democratic countries. It puts forward concrete, feasible suggestions to strengthen democracies' ability to keep their democratic institutions working in emergencies; to protect fundamental rights and the rule of law during emergency response; to deliver services, including emergency support services, inclusively to all citizens; and to respond to crises with the kind of leadership that preserves trust and gathers all of society around a shared commitment to democratic values and principles.

Every democracy is different, and every emergency is different. But strengthening democratic resilience to safeguard our shared values through this and future emergencies is a matter of shared responsibility.

To impulse such learning, [Club de Madrid](#) convened the Global Commission on Democracy and Emergencies, Chaired by former Prime Minister of Belgium Yves Leterme, with former Prime Minister of Senegal Aminata Touré and Secretary-General of International IDEA Kevin Casas-Zamora as vice-chairs, the effort brought together 16 commissioners for nine months of work sessions, consultations and deliberations. Three knowledge partners – International IDEA, Oxfam International, and Edelman – provided data, analysis and basic frameworks for their reflections.

Club de Madrid is the world's largest forum of democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers, who leverage their unique leadership experience and global reach to strengthen inclusive democratic practice and improve the well-being of people around the world. As a non-partisan and international non-profit organisation, it counts with the hands-on governance expertise of more than 100 Members from over 70 countries, along with a global network of advisers and partners across all sectors of society. This alliance stimulates dialogue, builds bridges and engages in advocacy efforts to strengthen public policies and effective leadership

through recommendations that tackle challenges such as, inclusion, sustainable development and peace at the national and multilateral level.

For further information, request media interviews and/or commentary:

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