



National intervention of the President of Romania, Mr. Klaus Iohannis, at the high-level segment of the 76th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This is our second general debate during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally changed our way of life.

While the pandemic affected almost all aspects of our lives, it also provided us with opportunities to learn, adapt and do things better.

Global challenges require common solutions, solidarity and cooperation. Romania strongly believes that democratic values and a rules-based international order, with the UN at its core, are fundamental to build a safer and better future. An effective and equitable multilateralism, directly benefiting our citizens, is essential.

The pandemic also showed us that we need to find ways to build back better and greener. We must recommit to achieving sustainable economies, as well as resilient, fair and inclusive societies where „no one is left behind”. Indeed, the special needs of the vulnerable ones should be granted particular attention.

In order to be effective in achieving this aim, solidarity in action is necessary.

We also need an integrated and innovative approach to respond simultaneously to a whole range of inter-related challenges, such as health, demographic changes, migration, scarce resources, climate change and biodiversity loss, extreme poverty and hunger.

We are indeed at an “inflection point” and Romania welcomes the newly issued report on Our Common Agenda, supports its main conclusions and encourages the Secretary General to continue efforts towards their implementation.

Romania remains committed to contribute to the collective efforts meant to limit and recover the delays in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The post-COVID recovery needs to place sustainability at its core and we must work together to protect our planet and ecosystems. The effects of climate change have no national borders and the responsibility to effectively address them rests on all of us.

Working with other States and international organizations to respond to climate change is a priority of my current mandate as President of Romania. 2021 should bring a leap forward in preventing climate change and protecting biodiversity.



Recently we have also witnessed the potential and the challenges of digital technologies. We must ensure meaningful and safe access to the Internet, strengthen cybersecurity and promote responsible behavior in the cyberspace, while addressing the digital spread of hatred and disinformation.

Bucharest brings its contribution by hosting the European Cybersecurity Centre, which will improve cyber-resilience and cybersecurity research across the European Union.

The pandemic has also prompted us to act together to consolidate our national health systems and make them more resilient. An urgent priority is to ensure equitable and affordable global access to vaccines and treatments for COVID-19. Romania reaffirms its support for the COVAX Facility and we have contributed to the “Team Europe” approach to help various countries to tackle the impact of the pandemic. Romania fully supports the adoption of an international legal instrument for pandemic preparedness and response.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The primary responsibility for the protection and promotion of human rights lies with our States. We must all ensure that restrictions related to COVID-19 do not exacerbate rights violations.

Romania remains strongly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

My country promotes the imperative of combating discrimination and hate-speech, including anti-Semitism.

We have adopted this year the first Romanian National Strategy for preventing and combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech.

Romania will continue to work towards these objectives, including by pursuing a mandate to the Human Rights Council for the term 2023 – 2025.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 pandemic has made humanitarian intervention even more difficult. Nevertheless, common international action to guarantee human security is needed, as no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Romania has included the refugees and persons at risk in the national public health coverage.

We have provided them with access to all necessary medical facilities and immunization campaigns, including against COVID-19.

Nowadays, we all look to Afghanistan and the most pressing issue is the safe passage for the Afghans who are willing to leave. We have recently welcomed vulnerable groups of Afghan citizens to Romania. Ensuring that human rights, especially the rights of women, children and minorities are respected is also essential. We also have to make sure that humanitarian assistance can be delivered.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Presidency of the Community of Democracies, Romania will continue to work towards upholding all democratic principles.



We thus encourage all States to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions, uphold respect for the rule of law and guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms.

Distinguished audience,

Armed conflicts, ethnic divide and inequalities are still harsh realities. It is the right time to turn the COVID-19 crisis and its security impact into an opportunity to revitalize the peace and security agenda, with renewed emphasis on conflict prevention and the consolidation of peace processes.

The protracted conflicts in Romania's vicinity continue to threaten Europe's security.

Romania supports the lasting peaceful resolution of these conflicts, through political negotiations, in the framework of their dedicated formats.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must step up and confront the global threat of terrorism, by acting in a coordinated manner. Romania maintains its full commitment to preventing and combating terrorism at the international level, building upon the newly reviewed Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The concept of resilience is an important component of our security, as well as a key factor in protecting democracy.

For Romania, ensuring strategic resilience, both at state and society level, is a priority and this is highlighted by the Euro-Atlantic Center for Resilience which we created in Romania.

The Center, which will be open to all partner countries, is meant to manage various programs and to advance resilience, be it societal or in the field of emerging and disruptive technologies, resilience of communication systems and technological ecosystems, resilience to complex crises and emergencies, ensuring the continuity of government and essential services and resilience of the transport infrastructure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Romania firmly believes in the potential of international law to contribute to international security.

We reaffirm our appreciation for the activity of the International Court of Justice.

Accepting the Court's jurisdiction serves the cause of international peace. It is in this spirit that Romania, together with a group of supporting States, is promoting a declaration on this topic and invites all interested delegations to endorse it and support this initiative.



Ladies and gentlemen,

Last, but not least, let me remind us that an international organization is as strong as the political willingness of its member States to make it relevant and fit for the times we are living in. Let us all join efforts to achieve the United Nations' noble goals!

Thank you!

