

(Draft) ADDRESS

**BY THE SPEAKER OF CROATIAN PARLIAMENT Mr. JOSIP LEKO
AT THE
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Honourable Speakers of Parliament,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, the topical subject of parliamentary democracy is being debated at global level. I wish to remind that democracy is something that we have willingly created, have long been building and upgrading and we still are and should be working on it every day in the political practices of our countries.

After all, democracy has proved to be a system in which people are most satisfied and in which they participate to the largest extent in decision-making and in shaping the way of life. This system, however, needs to be constantly further developed.

For a democracy or "the rule by the people" to be truly alive, sound and healthy, an effective mechanism for *enforcing* the "rule" by the people is needed.

The political responsibility of the executive power is centred around the issue of ministerial accountability to parliament. Not only is this a current problem in the functioning of the Croatian parliamentary system, it is also the key issue related to the functioning of parliamentary institutions in all parliamentary systems.

Control itself largely depends on the balance of political forces reflected in parliamentary elections, but also on the extent to which the political party forming the parliamentary majority internally uses democratic procedures.

In all probability, the democratic nature of the political party which begins to exercise power in a country is crucial. The party's internal democracy and the way important decisions are made within the party, will for a large part be reflected in how a country is governed. This will certainly be recognized by the citizens, who are, after all, the ones on whose behalf and for whom a country is governed.

The crisis of confidence in governmental institutions and political elite has now affected developed democracies.

It could be said that citizens are losing trust in politicians. Arguably, because they believe that politicians are unable to solve the biggest problems their political communities are facing, such as unemployment. In many countries, citizens' disappointment and dissatisfaction have turned into frustration.

The relations of political parties within a parliament and those between the parliament and the executive branch define the essential issues related to the so-called "political will" to ensure equal justice for all, i.e. equality of citizens before the law. The issue of democratic oversight over the executive is at the centre of establishing such political will.

Rendering account in elections remains the most important means of maintaining the system of accountability of the executive.

Continuous democratic dialogue and permanent democratic control over all branches of power by the public *are the best mechanisms for maintaining stability and preventing abuses of public power. At the same time, it is the strongest guarantee of the overall social and economic progress of every country.*

Thank you