

President of the Supreme Court of Iceland,

Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights, *dear Marialena,*

Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe and members of the permanent Representations,

Members of the Superior Courts Network and Government Agents before the ECtHR,

Honourable guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all at this Conference. My warm welcome extends not only to the participants being here in this room but also to the hundreds of people following the conference online.

This Conference, kindly championed by the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, aims to provide an overview of the CoE's work to support its member states in the implementation of the Convention at national level and to secure the long-term effectiveness of the European human rights protection system in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

We are hoping for the event to also provide an opportunity for experience exchange between representatives of different member States with whom we have been cooperating. Given the limited time available in this, as in any other, Conference, instead of covering all our actions, the aim is to give you a glimpse of a representative example of what has already been done in cooperation with some member States.

In this respect, I would like to highlight the importance of such initiatives in enhancing the member States' capacity to ensure that everyone within their jurisdiction enjoys the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention while giving full effect to the subsidiarity principle¹.

Ultimately, the conference will illustrate the important interlinkage between the work of the different Convention actors and their essential role to maintain the viability, impact and relevance of the Convention system.

The expertise of the Registry of the ECtHR and the CoE's Execution Department, the intergovernmental work of the CDDH in standards setting, the HELP programme and the cooperation programmes - all constitute instrumental contributors to this ongoing effort. It is thus crucial to strengthen this comprehensive cooperation and take advantage of all opportunities and synergies available to provide further support the member States.

It is rewarding to observe the high interest already shown by the member States and the relevant domestic authorities in participating in different initiatives, some of which will be talked about today, and their strong commitment in spreading the spirit of the Convention nationally. As indicated by the Director General Mr Christos Giakoumopoulos at the public launch of the ECHR knowledge-sharing platform, "the convention system only works effectively if all

¹ CM decision "Securing the long-term effectiveness of the system of the European Convention on Human Rights", adopted in Athens on 4 November 2020.

the players in the system share a common vision and work together to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention”.

To this end, among other examples of cooperation programmes and tools, the Conference will specifically focus and present two important multilateral projects:

The first project with the title *“Enhancing Subsidiarity: Support to the ECHR Knowledge-sharing and Superior Courts Dialogue”* constitutes a collaboration between the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law and the ongoing and envisaged activities aim to strengthen the principle of subsidiarity by further developing, raising awareness on and promoting the ECHR-Knowledge Sharing platform, and by supporting the functioning of the Superior Courts Network. The project started last summer and has been able to achieve some progress already. I believe that the permanent representatives present here would be very much interested to learn about this project’s progress. Having said that, I would like to remind you that the Project, while launched and progressing thanks to contributions from France, Ireland and the HRTF, remains not fully funded.

The Conference is also giving us a great opportunity to officially launch another multilateral project financed by the HRTF - *“Support to efficient domestic capacity for the execution of ECtHR judgments (Phase 1)”*. This project managed by DGI is a joint effort of the Department for the Implementation of Human Rights, Justice and Legal Co-operation standards and of the Department for the Execution of Judgments. The project aims to reinforce the national capacity of member states for full, effective and prompt execution of judgments of the

European Court of Human Rights, as well as to establish additional instruments to support member States in sharing practices and approaches to effective execution of judgments.

Examples of action under a series of other, bilateral projects will be discussed over the day.

Dear participants, what these projects show it that in line with the organisation's strategic priorities, it remains ardently committed to supporting its member States in fulfilling their primary responsibility to secure the rights and freedoms set out in the Convention. And I trust the Fourth Summit in two weeks' time can only reinforce this, because the Convention and its effective implementation is our Organisation's cornerstone.

Allow me to thank the organisers, the Icelandic Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and colleagues from the Directorate General of Human Rights and the Rule of Law for making this event possible. I hope that it will generate even greater interest in what we have to offer our States through our cooperation projects, including, crucially, in assisting States in their efforts to execute the Court's judgments.

Thank you for your attention!