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Conference of European Prosecutors General

3rd Session

**organised by the
Council of Europe
in co-operation with the
Principal State Prosecutor of Slovenia**

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Address by Mr Candido Cunha,
member of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe
at the opening session

- Distinguished public figures of Slovenia
- Madam Prosecutor General of Slovenia
- Ladies and Gentlemen
- Dear friends

It is a great honour for me today, on behalf of the CoE, to address this high assembly of prosecutors general and other high level prosecutors of Europe.

I am the only (with you ...) not to be a prosecutor and therefore beg your indulgence in listening to my address.

My quality here – as I mentioned – is that of representing the CoE, i.e. the organisation that has taken the initiative of bringing you together in the present shape. And – I hope – the organisation that will take upon itself in the future the mission of assisting you in the accomplishment of your own designs.

And I hope so because in fact your designs entirely match those of the CoE. How and why?

- because in each of your respective countries, you are one of the pillars of the rule of law, as much as you are the protectors of human rights; and your position rests in the very heart of democracy.
- At the same time, the rule of law, human rights and democracy are equally the three values for the protection and promotion of which the CoE was founded 53 years ago.

I must add that the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is also a statutory aim of the CoE. And again in this respect the CoE's aim matches yours. Because indeed in this evermore “globalised” world your action may no longer be confined within the limits of your own constituencies. Whether you like it or not, reality imposes on you to pursue justice and other fundamental values beyond the borders of your respective countries.

We all know how crime has become more and more international and more and more organised. You will not be able effectively to deal with crime without engaging yourself in international relations.

However, we also know how much the internationalisation of the reactions against crime may bring down the level of guarantees afforded to the individuals. Many across Europe - and beyond Europe - have sworn to engage in fights and combats, even wars, against the evils known as organised crime to some, corruption to others, terrorism to the remaining. It is again upon your shoulders that falls the burden of ensuring that all such fights and combats and wars, do not entail any violation of human rights. In that frantic war against sin, wickedness, evil and other recurrent myths and realities, you must see to it that our liberties are not jeopardised.

In the globalisation of the response to crime, you are – using Alessandro Baricco's language in his marvellous little book NEXT - at the same time the “testimonials” and the “rebels”, i.e. you are amongst those who remind the world that today is global and tomorrow will be even more global; and you are amongst those that raise their voices against the misuse of global response to crime. You are indeed one of the most reliable shields that Europeans have against all kinds of extremes.

So, on both counts of prosecuting crime and safeguarding rights and liberties, your action is doomed to be more and more international.

Most instruments to that effect remain undisclosed. It very much belongs to you to invent ways and means to pursue your designs in that direction. Only together can you do that. And your Conference is the right framework to do it at European level. And I submit to you that in this respect the European level is the most workable level: on the one hand, a world-wide level is not really practical; on the other hand, action at a the level of part only of the European area would not take into account the geography of crime.

Justice, as much as the rule of law, human rights and democracy require that public prosecutors across Europe join their forces, assert their common values, harmonise their views in order to pursue in common what there is for them to pursue in common. It all lies on your hands.

You share with the CoE a key role in safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are the common heritage of our European countries.

May the wisdom of all contribute to seal a pact between you and the CoE: a pact that will allow both, together, to play the role that they share.

The session that is now starting constitutes an opportunity to give a step forward in that direction.

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