

Summit of mayors – City Hall, Barcelona, Spain, 15 November 2017

Speech by Gunn Marit HELGESEN (Norway, EPP-CCE), Vice-President of the Congress

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Closing session

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for today's summit of mayors and your participation. I hope that we can all agree that the discussion that took place today has been a beneficial one and I hope that you as mayors and locally elected representatives have found this exchange of views not only helpful and interesting, but also inspirational.

Events such as these are of great importance for raising international awareness of the issue of radicalization leading to violent extremism. They are also important opportunities for the various members of local and regional authorities, to meet, share information and best practices and to network on specific topics of concern for local and regional authorities. I hope that we all have learned something from this conference and that we will go back to our communities, our regions and municipalities, with concrete ideas to implement.

As we can see there is no easy, or one way to protect our society against violent extremism, but there are certain ways in which we can manage to a certain extent the scope as well as root causes of it. In order to lead people away from radicalization, we need to first understand what led them there, and conferences like this and exchange of knowledge and experiences can move us closer to our aim. We need to constantly alternate tools and approaches we use, depending on changing circumstances. As we have seen today we must not only focus on prevention policies, but also strengthen them and give more importance to protection measures that would guarantee safety in our cities and for our citizens.

We all share the same values and goals. By working together and recognizing importance of cooperation with other regions and countries, our efforts in combating violent extremism can be much more effective and lasting.

In order to finish this event, I would now like to come back to the Declaration of Barcelona, that Ms Ada COLAU read out earlier. This Declaration has been composed based on what we have done during two past conferences in Aarhus and Rotterdam as well as today. I would like to raise your hands in order to endorse this declaration by acclamation.

(Adoption of the Declaration)

I will now ask you to raise your hands in order to endorse this declaration by acclamation.

This declaration will constitute basis for our work over the next year.

We will now proceed to the Efus' international conference after which study visits will be conducted.

To conclude I would like to thank our partners and all participants for their contributions and the organization of this event and I hope to see all of you in 'insert city' next year!