

Governance Committee meeting, 23 March 2021

Speech by Jelena DRENJANIN, Sweden (L, EPP/CCE)

Dear members,

I am very grateful to be elected the Chair of this Committee and I thank you for entrusting me with your confidence in holding this very important position. Your continued support will be essential for me in carrying out the tasks of the Chair and, of course, throughout the rest of my mandate. I am certain that we will maintain the dynamic environment of this Committee together with the involvement of as many members as possible.

I would also like to express my thanks to the outgoing Chair Robert GRUMAN, who is unfortunately not with us today but to whom we owe much for the good work he has done over the time of his chairmanship. I intend to continue in the same spirit.

Since we will have our “thematic” meeting in May, I will not go in too much detail here regarding the priorities of my mandate. At this moment, I can only assure you that I will closely follow our reports in preparation, dealing with such important topics as territorial solidarity and the role regions can play, the future role of the municipal councillor, smart cities and regions, regional identities and deliberative democracy. I believe at least one or possibly two reports I mentioned will be ready for adoption at our upcoming Committee in May and I look forward to the interesting debates we will have regarding them.

Indeed, multiple challenges to multilevel governance are ahead of us. We are still coping with the immediate impacts of the pandemic on our municipalities and regions and, although we see some light at the end of the tunnel, we will keep doing so for some time to come. However, despite the current difficulties, we must not lose sight of the future when our role will be indispensable in post-pandemic recovery across

Europe. I am glad that this will be another discussion topic at our upcoming meeting in May.

Dear colleagues, I will end here, as there is still some work to be done today, namely electing the Vice-Chairs of our Committee. I will therefore proceed to the next item on our agenda.

Thank you very much for your attention.