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Speech by Mathieu Mori

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Election of the Congress Secretary General

Date 25 October 2022

Dear President,

Dear Members of the Congress,

After months of campaigning, today marks a special moment: my opponent and I get to meet and address you, altogether.

In 3 minutes I will not present my programme to you. But I tried to do this during the campaign as well as to share my vision for the Congress and on the role of SG.

I spoke to almost all delegations, and kept you informed of my campaign activities via my social media.

I had an exchange of views with the political groups because their role is essential in a political assembly.

I have met bilaterally almost all ambassadors to the Council of Europe because the next SG will need their trust.

And I have met many of the partners of the Congress in order to be as ready as possible, because the next SG will need to be operational immediately.

This campaign took place in an unusual context. Our continent witnessed, on the 24th of February, the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Europe has been through many conflicts since WWII but none of this nature and scale. The return of an aggressive imperialism to Europe, poses an existential threat to Ukraine and to the many countries near the front lines. Furthermore, the hybrid nature of the conflict means it poses a threat to each and every one of our democracies.

I would like to quote President Zelensky who addressed the Parliamentary Assembly in this very hemicycle a few days ago. He said : “we have seen the power of a real dialogue between us. Europe is much stronger now than anyone could have ever thought”.

The Congress will work to further that dialogue. Huge expectations by many countries lie on the Congress and for that matter we will need an ever more creative and effective administration to face up to the historic challenges ahead of us. And all that, likely, with limited financial means.

We need an experienced Secretary General to navigate through the storm. I had to face this kind of challenges before as SG of the Assembly of European Regions and as director at Interreg.

I would now like to put this experience to the service of the Congress.

J'ai souhaité m'adresser à vous en EN pour faciliter le régime d'interprétation mais ma langue maternelle est le FR et je souhaite conclure mon intervention en FR comme j'aimerais que vous puissiez aussi vous exprimez dans votre langue maternelle. C'est un défi auquel il nous faudra réfléchir ensemble avec ambition et réalisme.

Je vous remercie, thank you very much.