Monitoring Committee meeting, 23 March 2021

Speech by Gudrun MOSLER-TOERNSTROEM, Austria (L, SOC/G/PD)

Dear members,

I should like to thank you all. I am indeed very grateful to be elected the Chair of the Monitoring 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 I rely on your longstanding and tireless commitment to assist me in this important duty. I am certain that we will maintain the dynamic environment of this Committee ensuring the involvement of as many members as possible.

I should also like to express my thanks to the outgoing Chair Leen VERBEEK, to whom we owe much for the good work he has done during his chairmanship and the numerous achievements we welcome as regards the development of monitoring activities and the work on human rights.

I have been a committed active member of the Monitoring Committee for many years now, acting often as rapporteur on assessing the application of the Charter, or in local election observation missions. During my mandate as President of the Congress, I continued to follow and actively support the work of this Committee. My motivation and my commitment are even stronger in the difficult times we are living. I intend to continue to develop monitoring activities despite the current health conditions and I am confident that we will follow the same path initiated by Leen Verbeek in order to innovate further and continue to be as efficient and constructive as we can be in our political dialogue with Member States.

I know that today is not the right moment to exchange with you on the priorities and work programme of the Monitoring Committee as we have no time today, this meeting being dedicated to elections.

Nevertheless, I would like to invite you already to think about the forthcoming work of this committee, its priorities in the framework of our mandate and how we could develop it to cope with the current challenges that our countries are facing with, and I

don’t mean only the pandemic. I would like to have an exchange of views on the Committee activities at our next meeting in April.

I believe that we should take into account the different challenges we are facing and see how our work can contribute to improve the implementation of the European Charter on Local Self-government. We should also think out of the box, so to say, and consider how we could make better use of the Charter and its Protocol to tackle current challenges such as the status of local elected representatives in Europe, the role of citizens in local public life (especially on current challenges at local and regional level) or environmental issues and climate change to quote a few. The Charter and its additional Protocol are Treaties which serve the cause of local and regional elected representatives, and their citizens. We should make use of it to our benefits.
I trust we will have very fruitful discussions in April.

Should you have any question at this stage, I will be very happy to take them rapidly.

Thank you very much for your attention.