Opening remarks from the President of the Conference of European Constitutional Courts, Mrs. Holta Zaçaj, at the Preparatory Meeting of the Circle of Presidents

Tirana, 28 February 2025

Distinguished Presidents, esteemed colleagues, honored guests,

It is with profound honor and genuine joy that I welcome you to Albania for this gathering of the Circle of Presidents of the Conference of the European Constitutional Courts. The beauty of Tirana provides a fitting backdrop for the important dialogue we will share today. As we convene here, we do so not merely as representatives of our respective institutions, but as guardians of a shared constitutional heritage that transcends our borders and unites us in common purpose.

Today, we meet at a moment of remarkable opportunity for democracy and human rights across our continent and indeed, throughout the world. While we face shared challenges, we also stand before unprecedented possibilities to strengthen and renew our constitutional traditions. This era invites us to innovate, to reaffirm our commitment to judicial independence, and to elevate fundamental rights in ways that can inspire generations to come.

In this dynamic era, our courts stand not only as guardians but as visionaries, strengthening the foundations upon which our societies are built. Human dignity, the rule of law, and democratic values are not merely abstract concepts– they are living principles that guide our jurisprudence and shape the everyday lives of our citizens. They represent the promise of a fair and just society for all.

When we examine the evolution of constitutional justice across Europe, we see a remarkable story of progress and resilience. From the ashes of authoritarianism, many of our courts emerged as symbols of a new commitment to rights and freedoms. Others evolved from long-standing traditions, adapting ancient principles to modern challenges. Together, we form a tapestry of constitutional wisdom that draws strength from both our commonalities and our diverse experiences.

The constitutional jurisprudence we craft reverberates beyond our courtrooms. It shapes the lives of our citizens and the future of our democracies. This privilege and responsibility demands not only our unwavering commitment to constitutional principles but also our willingness to learn from one another's experiences and insights. When one constitutional court advances the protection of rights or strengthens democratic processes, all of our systems become enriched.

No constitutional court exists in isolation, especially in our interconnected world. The opportunities before us – from harnessing technological innovation to bridging political divides, from addressing environmental challenges to advancing the protection of all people – invite a collaborative approach. It is through forums like this that we strengthen our collective wisdom and reaffirm our shared commitment to justice.

In Albania, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of constitutional principles. Our journey toward a more perfect union of rights and responsibilities continues, as it does in all our nations. Our constitutional court, like yours, serves as both mirror and beacon – reflecting the values of our society while illuminating the path toward their fuller realization.

The exchange of ideas that will take place during this Circle of Presidents represents more than an academic exercise. It is a practical demonstration of how constitutional dialogue strengthens all our systems. When we share our successes and our struggles, when we debate interpretive approaches and institutional designs, we engage in a form of collective constitutional craftsmanship that benefits all Europeans.

As technology reshapes our societies at an unprecedented pace, constitutional courts have the opportunity to ensure that innovation serves human flourishing rather than diminishing fundamental rights. As economic systems evolve, we can help ensure that prosperity is paired with dignity and fairness. As our societies become more diverse, we can demonstrate how constitutional principles provide a framework for unity amid plurality.

As we engage in dialogue, let us remember that our diversity of perspectives is our greatest strength. Let us exchange not only our legal reasoning but also our visions for how constitutional justice can better serve our societies in these promising times. Let us be bold in our thinking and collaborative in our approach.

Together, we can ensure that the constitutional values we hold dear – human dignity, equality, freedom, and democratic participation – continue to flourish and evolve to meet the needs of our changing world. Our gathering here marks not just a meeting of minds, but a renewal of our shared commitment to these enduring principles.

I look forward to our deliberations and to the lasting bonds of cooperation that will emerge from our time together. May our work here strengthen not only our individual courts but the broader tapestry of European constitutional justice that we collectively weave.

Thank you, and once again, welcome to Albania!