

Allow me a very first word to honour our hosts that invited the European Association of Judges for its annual meeting here in Moldova.

The association of judges of Moldova was admitted in our organization in the meeting of Recife, Brazil, in the year of 2000, already seventeen years ago, and for the first time EAJ has the privilege to have its meeting in this beautiful country.

Being proudly the biggest international association of judges in Europe with 44 national members representing practically all the countries of the Old Continent, EAJ has an historical commitment to Rule of Law and to promote an independent judiciary.

Since IAJ's foundation in 1953 in Salzburg, Austria, our association faces perhaps one of the most difficult and challenging moments in a Europe besieged, in some regions at least, by tenacious and robust attacks to basic pillars of our shared values.

Après un sondage récent parmi nos membres on a appris que pour une claire majorité d'environ soixante-dix pour cent la situation dans le respectif système judiciaire national a empiré au cours des cinq dernières années. Les attaques à l'indépendance des juges ont augmenté de une façon indéniable.

For that reason, having in mind the present circumstances, our common and devoted assignment, within the European Association, to protect and safeguard the independence of the judges, represents an even more vital and decisive role for the near future.

The situation in Turkey, for instance, but also the approval of indefensible laws and reforms in other countries putting in risk the mission of their national judiciaries, constitutes terrible examples of the problems judges are facing to act with independence and impartiality observing their duties with integrity, ethical commitment and self-sufficiency.

Pour nous, à l'association européenne, on travaille toujours pour assister chacun de nos membres nationaux à obtenir des conditions de travail dignes des hautes fonctions qu'ils exercent au plus haut niveau de l'État.

Justement pour ce raison être ici à Moldavie, un jeune pays avec tellement de défis pour achever un avenir plus proche des désirs de ses juges vis-à-vis l'accomplissement de un véritable État de Droit, représente un bienvenue défi et une joie particulier pour notre organisation.

An extraordinary poem by Alexander Mateevici written exactly one hundred years ago about the importance of the national language became the anthem of Moldova.

Taking undue advantage of the creative liberties conceded to artists let me quote the final words of this poem:

A treasure will spring up swiftly From deep shadows of the past, Chain of precious stones that scattered All over our ancient land.

For us judges the unbreakable commitment towards our independence, foreseen not as a privilege but as the most important guarantee to deliver justice to the People, represents our most precious treasure.

And let me very transparent – the judges united and engaged on an international level are prepared to struggle for our independence and to defend the values of democracy and rule of law regardless of the not at all original reappearance of populist and demagogic ideologies anchored in irrational fears and totalitarian nationalisms.

Mesdames et messieurs, qu'il reste clair : pour protéger notre trésor, notre indépendance, on continuera à travailler de une façon sereine mais déterminée, calme mais résolue.

Thank you very much for your attention and looking forward for the days to come and the important work ahead.

Merci beaucoup.

José Igreja Matos