



**4th Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice
"The Rule of Law and Constitutional Justice in the Modern World"**

**11-14 September 2017
Vilnius, Republic of Lithuania**

**Opening statement
by**

Mr Dainius ŽALIMAS, President, Constitutional Court, Republic of Lithuania

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Lithuania,
Mr Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,
Mr Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania,
Honourable Vice-president of the European Court of Human Rights,
Honourable President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe,
Presidents and Representatives of institutions exercising constitutional jurisdiction from
around the world,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be able to welcome you in Lithuania, here in Vilnius – the city that has this week become the capital of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice.

I would like to greet and extend a sincere welcome to the assembled representatives of constitutional courts from around 90 countries, representatives of international courts, and members of the Lithuanian legal community. Indeed, the topic of the Congress – “The Rule of Law and Constitutional Justice in the Modern World” – is a topic on which we all need to speak in a common, mutually understood, language. We have the unique chance not only to exchange our experience and deal with the past, present, or future challenges. We also have the opportunity to remind the societies of our countries that constitutional courts, while ensuring the rule of law, protect human dignity and guarantee inherent human rights.

We also have a perfect ground for dialogue with the participating representatives of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union based on respect for international law, respect for decisions of these courts, and mutual understanding.

It is especially gratifying that the 4th Congress is taking place in Lithuania this year, when we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, which is the symbol of our freedom, democracy, independence, human rights, and, definitely, the rule of law. The Constitution gives us the basis for opening Lithuania to the world and building a state that fosters its identity and is governed by the rule of law.

Let me extend my gratitude to everyone who made it possible for this Congress to take place in Vilnius. It is obvious that this event would not have been achievable without the strong support of the Lithuanian state and the cooperation of all three branches of government – the legislative, executive, and judiciary. I wish to thank the Bureau of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice and the Venice Commission for this special honour and their assistance in organising the 4th Congress in Lithuania.

I express my separate respect and thanks to the secretaries general of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania and the World Conference, Ms Ingrida Danėlienė and Mr. Schnutz Dürr, and their professional teams who carried out the huge task and the excellent work in order for us to be able to meet here today.

Once again, I thank all of you and wish the participants of the 4th Congress interesting discussions and productive work!
