



**3rd Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice
'Constitutional Justice and Social Integration'
28 September – 1 October 2014
Seoul, Republic of Korea**

Closing speech

Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission

Mr President of the Constitutional Court of Korea,
Court Presidents and Judges,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure that I will receive your approval when I say that the past three days of the 3rd Congress have been an important success for the World Conference on Constitutional Justice and for all of its members. Let me thank the Constitutional Court of Korea, once again, for its outstanding performance in the organisation of this major event.

Thank you also for your kindness and your very warm hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We had some passionate discussions on the main topic of the Congress: Constitutional Justice and Social Integration. We have looked at this topic from various angles and we have seen that whatever the type of constitutional justice, concentrated and specialised or diffuse, each Constitutional Court or Council or Chamber, each Supreme Court has an essential role for the furthering of social integration.

Social integration is much more than social rights; the very idea of a Constitution, which unites the people of a country, is the best example of social integration. Your Courts are called upon to safeguard this web of institutional and personal relations.

You are also called upon to defend the Constitution and the values that bind the strata of society together. We have intensely discussed the dangers the Courts have to avert, which international standards they can apply and how these international standards tie into the framework of the Constitution.

Depending on your Constitution, you have different tools at your disposal to fulfil your tasks. We have seen that values such as equality, social justice and human dignity directly relate to social integration, but we have also seen that more abstract principles such as proportionality or reasonableness have the same importance in this respect.

Like democracy, social integration can never be achieved but should be seen as a process; a process that you, as constitutional judges, steer towards its constitutional goal.

Judges,

We have also spoken about your independence. We have seen that it is under threat in some countries.

You have a constitutional mandate – more accurately - you have a mission to act independently; you have the duty of ingratitude towards those who have appointed or elected you. And you fulfil this role.

This can be difficult, you may face obstacles, you may be threatened and we have even seen such threats implemented.

Judges sometimes stand alone against other State powers and this can be very difficult, but you are called upon to fulfil your constitutional task.

This is your noble duty, to defend the Constitution not only when this is easy – but also when it is difficult to do so.

You should know that you are not alone; there are other judges elsewhere, who may have a similar experience. If they cannot come to the rescue, you should know that they support you morally. This is not little. This may be just what is required to be able to fulfil your role as independent constitutional judges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come here for two purposes: we had useful and rich discussions on an important topic, which relates to your daily work. And we have come here to show that constitutional justice is too important to be seen from only the angle of a single country.

The World Conference gives us the opportunity to share information, to discuss situations that are important to constitutional justice and the courts that seek to uphold it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Conference on Constitutional Justice is here to assist you. It is a forum that is there for you, to share ideas with other judges and to provide support where it is needed.

Thank you very much for your attention.