

Remarks by His Majesty the King at the closing ceremony of the 6th Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice

IFEMA- Madrid, 30.10.2025

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for inviting me to address you and formally close this 6th Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice, it certainly is a great honor.

The highest authorities on constitutional law have gathered these days in Madrid from all corners of the globe to reflect on the matter of Human Rights, one that certainly concerns all citizens around the World and unfortunately never in ends facing serious challenges. However, here you have focused further into the future on how the next generations will try to succeed in the cause of preserving and enhancing the respect for HR.

To be both strong and convincing, we must build every narrative about the present and the future upon memory, on the foundations of the past. This is why, before you leave Madrid - if you still have a few hours left- I would encourage you to visit our monument to the Constitution, on the Paseo de la Castellana. Close by you will also find a building of great symbolic meaning for all Spaniards: “la Residencia de Estudiantes”, a very special and particular student residence with a fascinating history and a relevant and prestigious activity in our days.

The monument pays tribute to our present Constitution, approved in 1978; and to the very idea of what a constitution represents. It is a cube of white marble, open on all sides, with steps leading up to the smaller cube-shaped hollow at its center. A superficial assessment or appraisal of the monument could lead us to conclude that it houses an empty space... Not quite the whole truth. Rather, it is a space full of ideas: the ideas that underpin our free will to live together, to live as part of a cohesive society, a nation under a democratic rule of law.

This core essence of our constitutions, expressed in their values and principles, is something we must always keep in mind. This is what determines everything else they may -or may not- contain. If they exclude extremism, radicalism, hatred and intolerance, it is because the very content of democratic constitutions is incompatible with such positions. In a turbulent world such as today's, the fundamental norms provide a vital ethical bedrock from which all other aspects of life in society and democratic co-existence are naturally organized.

Constitutional justice has the invaluable mission of safeguarding these principles and values. This is why for Spain to host this conference formed by 124 Constitutional Courts, Councils and Supreme Courts, after a unanimous vote, seems to me an important recognition of our democratic history. Thank you for that and thank you all for such a high number of attendants, which brings to mind the ancient Greek aphorism, "the constitution is the soul of the city (polis)".

"...our country-settled on the idea of common ground and reconciliation, on an entire people's aspiration to freedom- is proud to have hosted this 6th congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice..."

In democratic States, constitutional justice -carried out independently, as this Congress has highlighted- is inseparable from the modern concept of sovereignty. This idea, prized by

generation after generation, has become the backbone of an increasingly interconnected and interdependent international community. So allow me to use a global perspective in discussing some of the major challenges that will in no doubt shape the lives of future generations.

The 1st challenge is to preserve the multilateral order that emerged from the ashes of the II WW. This order is still important today, in responding to the challenges of our time through dialogue and cooperation, rather than rivalry power politics and competition. This world order is essentially rules-based; and democratic States with their Constitutional courts play a crucial role in its defence. Ours now is 45 years of age.

The 2nd challenge is to manage the digital world and new tech like AI, in a way that compounds or multiplies human beings' potential rather than curbing it. AI is radically transforming the way we understand the world. Now is the time to start a virtuous cycle and to make sure we avoid or minimize the risks which we all have very present in our minds. To do this, it is essential that the development of AI is respectful and adequately considers the rights and freedoms enshrined in our fundamental norms, international treaties and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A 3rd and ever more pressing global challenge is the environment. Extreme weather events, recurring all across the planet, are a wake-up call for the international community as a whole. They compel us to manage properly public goods that are truly global, including air quality, water resources and biodiversity. We must not stray away from the path of sustainable development, the only one that can give us hope in humanity's quest to guarantee a better future for future generations. If we let them down, we will have failed as a society.

Lastly, I would like to speak about heritage. Culture, and its tangible and intangible products, is the mirror in which we recognize ourselves as a country, and a window onto the world. We must know our culture and preserve it in all its richness and diversity, sharing it, making it accessible to others. Impossible not to mention here our Spanish language that gives us access to a fertile cultural space made up of 630 million Spanish speakers (520 native, 3rd as mother tongue and 2nd as int'l language). Especially relevant here today is that it is also one of the great languages of law. Spanish, alongside Portuguese, unites the Ibero-American community of nations, and next year, Madrid will host the 30th Ibero-American Summit, a meeting of sister nations which we are preparing with great enthusiasm.

I will finish by quoting Cervantes' Don Quijote, our great fictional character and archetype. As you well know, he transcends the literary world and is often present in our daily lives, in our collective imagination. In Don Quijote's words: "La libertad, Sancho, es uno de los más preciosos dones que a los hombres dieron los cielos." "Freedom, Sancho, is one of the most precious gifts that heaven has bestowed upon men".

Constitutional justice guarantees our freedom, our freedoms: it is the last bulwark in the defence of the rule of law. That is why our country -settled on the idea of common ground and reconciliation, on an entire people's aspiration to freedom- is proud to have hosted this 6th congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice. I wish you, delegates, a safe trip home, and that you may look back on the days you have spent in Madrid with affection and the feeling that you have all together made an important contribution to a

world in which rules, rights and freedoms may prevail. Days in which you discussed together about that future.

Allow me to thank and congratulate our Constitutional Court 45 years and the Venice Commission for their great work in organizing and hosting this 6th Congress, which I hereby proceed to formally close.

Thank you all very much.