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Discours S.E. Mme Anne EASTWOOD, Ambassadeur de Monaco en Italie

NO JUSTICE WITHOUT LIFE

13th International Congress of Justice Ministers

Sant' Egidio – 1st March 2023

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Welcome Greeting by Amb. Anne EASTWOOD, Principality of Monaco

Excellency,  
Ministers,  
Representatives of the guest authorities and organisations,  
Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased to be speaking to you this morning after my Swiss colleague, to wish all of the delegations present a warm welcome to this 13th International Congress of Justice Ministers on the theme “No Justice Without Life”.

For several decades now, in line with the Christian values that underpin its action, the community of Sant' Egidio has been working to promote the abolition of the death penalty on the international stage. The Principality of Monaco is proud to support this initiative, and I want to thank President Marco IMPAGLIAZZO and Cesare ZUCCONI for inviting us to be present at the opening of your discussions.

Capital punishment is a subject that has constantly dogged criminal justice worldwide. Much has been written about the practice, from the legal, political, philosophical, or religious perspectives. Although its abolition always meets with strong cultural or political resistance in certain regions, significant progress has been made in this area which is essential to the defence of human rights. A large number of countries now agree to recognise that the death penalty is incompatible with the right to life and represents a cruel form of punishment that does not work as a deterrent, and is all the more reprehensible in that it may lead to irreversible judicial errors. Of the 193 Member States at the United Nations, almost three-quarters have now banned such executions in law or in fact.

This trend has emerged only gradually. In 1962, when Monaco became the 10<sup>th</sup> country in the world to completely abolish capital punishment in its Constitution, it remained on the statute book or was still practised in more than two-thirds of countries. It is a step towards universal abolition that is moving closer every year, as reflected by rising support for the UN Resolution calling for a “*moratorium on the use of the death penalty*”, co-sponsored by 72 States including Monaco when it was first presented in 2007, and which was supported by 125 States last December.

The Principality of Monaco remains committed to this fight, which necessarily requires listening and dialogue to convince those countries which retain capital punishment that it is possible to protect society from crime without recourse to this damaging form of state violence, and that abolishing the death penalty is an act of justice, compassion, and responsibility.

In this respect, this Congress - like other civil society initiatives such as the World Congress against the Death Penalty, have shown that they genuinely had the power to bring about change.

With rising feelings of insecurity and fear, but faced with the temptation among some countries to use capital punishment as a means of control or retaliation for political ends, we must avoid the threat of going backwards, which would mean a loss of conscience and would cause us to lose sight of the moral imperative that cannot fight evil with evil, but must retain our humanity even when faced with the most inhuman of acts.

I have no doubt that your discussions will serve to encourage the initiatives that continue to emerge in many countries to eliminate the death penalty in law or in practice, and allow the criminal law to be practised in a way that is compatible with both human dignity and the essential need to ensure effective prevention and suppression of crime.

I wish you a productive meeting.

Thank you.