

**10th Anniversary of the High Commissioner**

Your Serene Highness,  
Your Excellency the Minister of State,  
Your Excellency the Archbishop,  
Madam President of the National Council,  
Madam Secretary of Justice,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
High Representatives of the authorities and civil society,  
Partners and friends,

Your Serene Highness' presence at this celebration marking the 10th anniversary of the High Commissioner is a sign of the interest and goodwill You have demonstrated towards this institution since its creation, for which my team and I are immeasurably grateful to You.

I would also like to thank the High Representatives of the institutions and authorities, and all of our partners here today.

Their presence illustrates more than words could say, the place that the High Commissioner now occupies in the Principality despite being a recent creation, and its effective role as a facilitator and mediator in protecting the rights of all those living and working in the Principality, or who have ties to Monaco. I want to pay tribute to the work done by my predecessor, H.E. Ms Anne EASTWOOD, who gave the institution the solid foundations and initial impetus that made everything possible.

Since it was set up, the High Commissioner has received formal complaints from around 800 people, and has issued some forty recommendations and almost thirty legislative opinions. But there is not time enough here to list everything the High Commissioner has done over these past ten years. Instead, I prefer to begin by drawing on our experience to highlight four principles that guide us, and which I believe could also inspire Monaco's institutions, organisations, and stakeholders to do even more to uphold rights and fight discrimination.

Those principles are transparency, proportionality, privacy, and alertness to vulnerability.

- Transparency: this is a fundamental requirement, not only for improving access to law and justice and the ability to assert one's rights, but also for ensuring that decisions are properly grounded in law, based on clearly defined criteria that all citizens are aware of.

- Proportionality: the consequences of certain decisions must be proportionate to their intended aim, and their effects over time must also be justified.

- Privacy: This right, enshrined in both Article 8 of the ECHR and the Monegasque Constitution under the heading of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, is central to the issues of access to social rights, personal data protection, and digital government. Respect for privacy is therefore essential at every stage, from the drafting of standards to their implementation and enforcement.

- Alertness to vulnerability: standards should be systematically adapted and vulnerable citizens informed about them even before they come into force, to make the Principality a benchmark for inclusion.

I have every confidence that these principles will be positively received, particularly given the constructive progress being made towards amending the High Commissioner's statutes. The Institution could be granted new powers, including the ability to act *proprio motu*, and to actively promote rights, such as children's rights. These advances could enable the High Commissioner not only to work more effectively in the Principality, but also to enjoy full international status as a National Human Rights Institution.

Today's celebration is therefore an opportunity to broaden our horizons, and I thought that hearing from our European institutional partners and colleagues might help to show you how the work of ombudsmen and rights protection bodies is not limited to the local or national sphere.

So I am very honoured to welcome three eminent speakers, who have kindly agreed to share their knowledge, expertise, and experience with us:

- Mr Peter SVETINA, Ombudsman of Slovenia, Vice-President of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen, and co-director of the International Ombudsman Institute's European Region, will discuss the challenges and responsibilities facing ombudsmen;
- Mr Patrice DAVOST, member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for the Principality of Monaco, will talk about the fight against discrimination from a European perspective;
- Ms Stéphanie MOUROU-VIKSTROM, Judge at the European Court of Human Rights, will explain how the work done by ombudsmen is seen by the Court.

I will now hand over to my colleague, Mr Peter SVETINA. Thank you.