



- Mr. Prime Minister
- Mr. Chief of Cabinet of HSH
- Mr. Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Representatives of Monaco's highest authorities
- Mr. President of the FICAC
- Deans and Member of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps
- Your Excellencies ,

In 2010, when my friend the Honorable Panayotis TOULIATOS, who is the Consul General of Greece in Monaco, Secretary General of the ACHM as well as an active board member of the FICAC, brought me the idea that WE, the Monegasque Consular Corps Association, should host the next FICAC World Congress in 2012, I looked at him and said “ Takis, my friend are you Crazy, are you out of your mind!!! Why do we want to take this big responsibility on our shoulders???” I guess you can all appreciate the reservations and uncertainties I had about our ability to successfully fulfill such ambitious but challenging mission. Today,

- 2 years after such initial discussions,
- after being entrusted by the FICAC's board to host such congress,



- after obtaining the unconditional support of Monaco's highest authorities,
- after the absolute mobilization of all of our consular corps members,
- after the inexhaustible months of benevolent work,
- after the absolute support and indefectible trust invested in us by our sponsors,

I am proud to see that today, with all of you here present, the dream has become a reality.

Your Excellencies, Honorable Consuls, Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the ACHM, the Monaco's Consular Corps Association, It gives me great honor and immense pleasure to welcome all of you to the FICAC's 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress, here in the principality of Monaco.

This congress, have gathered more than 200 official delegates, representing more than 90 countries from across the 4 corners of the globe. Such rich and mature attendance testifies the importance of the consular function and consolidates a new form of collaboration within the continuously growing role of the FICAC.



The pleasure and honor are all the greatest, because his Serene Highness Prince Albert the II of Monaco, have, wholeheartedly, bestowed upon this event his distinguished Patronage and have exceptionally accepted to personally be present among us this afternoon.

The presence this morning of his Excellency the Prime Minister Mr. Michel Roger, as well as numerous eminent officials, demonstrates the Principality's strong and unconditional commitment towards the consular function and more precisely towards the many participating representatives of friendly countries here today.

This moment is my opportunity to personally thank the FICAC and its vibrant President, Mr. Arnold Foote, as well as FICAC's executive committee members, for this choice and the faith they have shown us by entrusting the ACHM with the challenging task of planning and holding this long-awaited event in the Principality of Monaco.

Please know that this task was made possible by the priceless assistance of the Monegasque government and the unequalled availability and extraordinary support of its administration and institutions. But also through the unrelenting work of the *ACHM*



*organizing committee*, which was specifically formed for the occasion and Presided by my friend Panayotis Touliatos whom was closely accompanied directly on the terrain by the honorable Sylvain Cohen, Rodolphe Berlin and the persistent and determined coordinator-of-all Colonel Thierry Jouan.

Standing here before this impressive assembly of officials and honorable consuls, I note, with satisfaction and pride, the magnitude of the task and efforts that has been carried out by all concerned parties towards the success of this Congress. To all these authorities, entities, individuals, sponsors and all the delegates, many of whom traveled great distance to be here, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and warmest appreciation.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The timing of our gathering falls within a very crucial and sensitive moment in our modern history. The world is actually undergoing major political, social, environmental and economic challenges. The

- Euro crisis,
- the Arabs spring,
- the economic crisis,
- the nuclear proliferation,



- the global warming,
- the fiscal policies changes,
- the human rights implementation,
- the protection of the environment,
- the world's peace,
- the famine and poverty situation,

and many other fundamental topics are in the heart of the 21<sup>st</sup> century future.

Our world is facing today its biggest policy changes and, therefore, challenges. Those are the guiding principles that are now shaking the entire planet to its foundation. It is our duty to contribute towards instating a peaceful world, a viable free society, a sound economic model and, most importantly, a sustainable environment.

It is for this reason, we have wisely selected three very pressing topical themes; “Peace”, “economic crisis” and “Biodiversity” shall pave the way to an excellent presentations and dialogue during this FICAC 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Monaco.

I seek this opportunity to thank our 5 renowned speakers, who, despite their very busy schedule, kindly accepted to come and share with us their wisdom and vision on such three vital topics. Gentlemen, we are delighted to have you with us.



I would like to conclude by wishing this congress tremendous success, enjoyable stay to all the participants and their companion in the principality of Monaco and, most importantly, a lively and rewarding dialogue which ultimately shall all converge towards a shared objective, that of a reconciled and peaceful world, one in which MAN lives in harmony with his environment and neighbor.

Thank you for your kind attention!