**Saluto ai Presidenti delle Corti Supreme UE**

(Consiglio di Stato, 8 novembre 2019)

**di Filippo Patroni Griffi**

Dear Colleagues,

I’ m really delighted to welcome you all, and especially pleased to welcome Giovanni Mammone, first President of the Supreme Court of Italy, to Palazzo Spada, one of the most famous monuments of the Roman Renaissance and Baroque.

As I am sure you are aware, the Council of State is one of the oldest Italian public institutions, established in 1831: 30 years before the unification of Italy and 115 years before the Republican Constitution of 1948.

From its creation until 1889, the Council of State performed only advisory functions. An 1889 law recognized the judicial functions of the Council of State, thus creating a dual system of jurisdiction that has never been modified.

Since 1889, the seat of the Council of State has been this magnificent building that you will soon be able to visit, accompanied by a very skillful guide.

As I said, it is a pleasure to welcome your network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the European Union, whose Constituent Assembly dates back to March 2004.

I know that your network provides an opportunity to debate on matters of common interest, fostering the development of a common legal and judicial pattern.

The Italian Council of State similarly carries out a wide-ranging international activity both on a bilateral and multilateral level. We have bilateral cooperation with several countries, mainly in the Mediterranean area. For the time being, for example, we are training Tunisian judges on the basis of a twinning programme financed by the EU Commission. More recently, we signed a Memorandum with Panama, a Central America country strongly interested in modernizing and improving its public administration. We believe that with that Continent it is more important than elsewhere to share experience and to enhance the rule of the law.

At the multilateral level, we are part of two organizations: a European one (the Aca-Europe), and the other at a world level (AIHJA), representing the highest Administrative Courts.

Actually, many sectors of public administration activity are almost completely regulated by EU law or national laws implementing EU directives, such as public procurements, environment, immigration, etc…

Consequently, administrative judges’ first task is to give implementation to EU regulations. Preliminary ruling to the European Court of Justice and the Charter of Fundamental Rights create a sort of “multilevel legal order”, with reference to which a dialogue among European judges could greatly enrich all of us.

This is important not only in order to better apply the EU legislation, but also in order to create a common language to allow a fruitful dialogue among the European judges.

These exchanges are a fundamental part of European consolidation to ensure effective remedies and develop an efficient justice system.

Horizontal dialogue, even more than vertical dialogue, emphasizes the examination and the comparison of the model of judicial decision-making, as well as aspects of our judicial conduct, deliberation and reasoning.

In this form of dialogue the different European judges associations play a fundamental role.

This is the reason why the forthcoming Italian Council of State’s 2-year Presidency of Aca Europe, will focus on the value and the experience of horizontal dialogue between the highest national Courts. This is the best way to achieve a European citizenship, in the meaning of a common standard of legal protection for citizens and companies living and operating in Europe.

The confidence of European citizens and national authorities in the legal system of all Member States is vital for the functioning of all Europe as “an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers” and is the backbone of any modern constitutional democracy.

To quote Frans Timmermans, now we can with conviction say “every national judge is also a European judge”.

I wish you all a very nice stay in Rome and a pleasant tour of Palazzo Spada, after a brief presentation of the Italian Council of State carried out by my colleague the President of Section Claudio Contessa.

Thank you.

**Filippo Patroni Griffi**

Presidente del Consiglio di Stato

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