

Honorable Mrs. Minister, Mr. Deputy Ambassador, Mr. Deputy Attorney General, Mrs. Vice President!
Honorable Conference!
Dear Colleagues!

Let me welcome you and tell you what a pleasure it is for me to stand here today, as this conference is another building stone of the good relationship between France and Hungary. First of all, I would like to pass on the greetings of Tünde Handó, the president of the National Office for the Judiciary, who unfortunately was unable to attend today.

France's lively intellectual life has always shaped European thinking and has greatly influenced the development of Europe and Hungary. Francophone law has played a decisive and indisputable role in continental - including Hungarian - law, from the creation of the Code Civile, during the development of European integration, even to this day.

It is well known that the history of the French state is very closely intertwined with Hungarian history at many points. The two countries are linked by diverse cultural, economic, social relationships, international friendship and mutual respect. An eloquent proof of this is that in the study of French President Emmanuel Macron, hangs a periodical work by Simon Hantai – one of the most renowned Hungarian painters abroad today – called *Écriture rose*. According to some sources, Hantai has been working for almost two years only on this one imposing 3 x 4-meter piece, often referred to as a highlight of his oeuvre.

The painter was born in Bia, that today is a part of Biatorbágy. In 1948, he was on his way to Italy as a scholar with his wife, on one of the last trains to cross the border before the Iron Curtain closed. The couple started a new life in Paris, all over again. He began working on his piece "Pink Writing" on a Sunday in Advent 1958, copying prayers, philosophical essays, creeds as a spiritual exercise on a huge canvas every day. He wrote the texts in different red, green, purple and black ink, corresponding to the colors of the Christian liturgy, resulting in an overall pink effect.

Our common historical roots with the French people date back to the 13th century, when relations between Hungary and France increased in every area. Not only more artisans and merchants from France came to Hungary, but also knights settled here, as a direct consequence of marriages between the two kingdoms. For example, the city of Zsámbék, near Budapest, is named after such a knight, Sambuccus of Champagne. Many of our newcomer words of French origin also come from these times (bagázs, címer, tárgy, tabló, etc.).

Or think of the period of the great French Revolution, when everyone in Europe, including Hungary, was watching the French people and what was happening there. János Batsányi put it this way in his famous poem titled "On the Changes in France" from 1789: "Come! if the lineaments of fate you'd have bared for you / Feast your eyes on Paris and what is prepared for you!"

Over the centuries, many Hungarian artists have been inspired by the cultural radiance of France. For many of us, when it comes to the French capital, it is perhaps the first time I think of the verses of an Ady poem: "Autumn slipped into Paris yesterday".

This autumn for us is about the joyful encounters. As a result of an exemplary co-operation between our partner organizations, we have been able to bring to life an international conference where it is possible to point out the European legal context that links the practice of French and Hungarian judges.

We can get to know each other's legal systems, law enforcement and institutional solutions. I believe cross-border exchange of experiences is essential in our age. Thinking together, sharing good practices can give us new inspiration. By learning from each other and on one another, we can acquire mutually valuable knowledge that can be the key to progress and development.

Since its foundation, the National Office for the Judiciary (NOJ) has been working on strengthening the openness of 21st century Hungarian courts. This kind of opening – in addition to devoting a separate national program to opening the courtroom door to paying attention to the spreading of legal knowledge and raising legal awareness - is also reflected in our international relations. The NOJ maintains regular contact with a number of international organizations, for example through active cooperation with European training institutes, including the French Academy of Judicial Training, through the Hungarian Academy of Justice (MIA). Thanks to this partnership, many of our staff have been to the French Education Center in recent years, and we have also welcomed French judges and trainers to the MIA.

It is extremely important to us that the French connections of the judiciary advanced to a higher level in recent years. We are pleased that as a result of our close cooperation with the French Embassy and the French Institute, the Ambassador and the staff of the Institute regularly attend our international conferences and other professional meetings; as well as we are also guests at professional and cultural events at the French Embassy and the French Institute. And in our programs we can welcome more Francophone colleagues year after year, not only as participants but also as speakers.

I say thanks to everyone who has worked on, or in any way contributed to the fruitful cooperation between the French and Hungarian courts in the recent years. I would also like to thank our partner organizations for the wide-ranging cooperation that has enabled today's conference to take place. I trust that we can continue to maintain our good relationship and further strengthen it.

I hope that, by continuing the success of today's event, we will have numerous opportunities for professional collaboration in the future.

Thank you very much for your kind attention!