

ADDRESS BY
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF
ASTURIAS
AT THE CLOSING DINNER OF THE
XXIII GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS OF STATE
AND SUPREME ADMINISTRATIVE
JURISDICTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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thank you for your invitation to this event that brings an end to the meetings of the Association in Madrid, under the Presidency of the Spanish Supreme Court.

A few days ago, on occasion of the Bicentennial anniversary of the establishment of the Spanish Supreme Court, we recalled, in this very Palace, the importance of the principle of the separation of powers, inherent to the concept of rule of law. The search for a balance between them to safeguard individual rights has led to constant legal developments, which are best reflected in the various forms of exercising executive power in dealing with citizens, the control of which is entrusted to the jurisdiction of the administrative courts.

Coupled with the evolution of the national legal systems, we are witnessing in Europe a supranational integration process. The European Union, designed as a community of law, thrives on its own legislation and on the legal traditions of its Member States, in particular, where the protection of rights and fundamental safeguards are concerned.

Herein lies the "raison d'être" of this Association, which brings together the highest administrative courts of EU Member States. Through the pooling of your experiences and knowledge, you debate, in a calm and orderly fashion, the most important challenges that must be tackled, thus contributing to the search for solutions, whilst providing reliable and authoritative points of reference to the legal community.

By placing the individual at the heart of its activities, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights is a key element in the European legal system. Despite the limited time elapsed since its entry into force, national courts have referred numerous rulings and consultations to the Court of Luxembourg, not only to clarify interpretation

issues in relation to the rights recognised and protected by the Court, but also other more general issues, including the scope of application and its relationship with other similar rules.

I am convinced that the outcome of the Madrid conference, dedicated to the study of the Charter, will contribute to dispel the doubts concerning its application in law, bearing in mind that, as stated in its Preamble, the peoples of Europe, "in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values". This aim should be remembered, especially in difficult times like these, when gains achieved in this process, which have enhanced the well-being of the European society as a whole, are put to the test.

In this Palace of Justice, seat of the Spanish Supreme Court, I encourage you to continue and intensify your important co-operative work between Judicial and Administrative Institutions, well aware that this is in the interest of justice in the European Union.

Thank you.