

Opening Ceremony FIDE Corinna Wissels

Madame la Présidente de la Cour Suprême des Pays Bas,

Monsieur le Président de la Cour de Justice

Monsieur le Président du Tribunal

Chers collègues, chers amis mesdames et messieurs,

Nous sommes extrêmement heureux de vous accueillir ici à la Haye pour la XXIX édition de la FIDE. Lorsque nous nous sommes lancés dans cette aventure, nous étions loin d'imaginer ce qui allait se passer. Après les difficultés de la crise financière, de la crise des réfugiés et du Brexit, nous voulions aller de l'avant. La pandémie s'est avérée être le « cygne noir » légendaire.

Und dennoch, hier sind wir nun. Aus FIDE 2020 ist FIDE 2021 geworden. Eineinhalb Jahre später sind wir in der glücklichen Lage, uns persönlich treffen zu können, zu diskutieren und Kontakte zu knüpfen. Die Unterstützung und Ermutigungen auf diesen Weg haben wir sehr zu schätzen gewusst. Unsere Berichterstatterinnen und Berichterstatter, unsere Rednerinnen und Redner, unsere Young FIDE - Europarechtlerinnen und Europarechtler, unser Medienteam bei EU Law Live, unsere Sponsoren und vor allem Sie: Sie haben uns treu zur Seite gestanden.

Dear colleagues and friends, on behalf of FIDE and the Dutch Association for European law, I finally have the great privilege and joy to declare open the XXIX FIDE Congress in The Hague.

Twice before did FIDE convene in The Hague, in 1963 and 1984. The impact of FIDE on the development of European law has been well-documented. From the outset FIDE formed a unique transnational network bringing together key actors, who stood at the basis of the new legal order and shaped European law as a discipline in its own right. The Court's "constitutional" understanding of European law was discussed and found broad support at FIDE's early conferences in The Hague in 1963 and Paris in 1965. In the early 1960s European law had yet to achieve its full potential. In 1984, FIDE discussed Europe and the media and the principle of equal treatment in Economic law. Few of the participants then would have been able to predict the way in which the European legal order has matured. The degree of integration between the peoples of Europe. Or the fact that today virtually no aspect of our daily lives remains untouched by EU law. Just to mention one: the digital economy that will also be on our agenda the coming days.

The continuous development of EU law entails that our work is never finished. As new questions arise that need to be discussed and answered. The challenges the European Union face are huge and imminent. It therefore remains important to bring together European lawyers from all Member States to listen, discuss and understand EU law.

European cooperation is not just an option, it is a necessity. Yet this cooperation can only function on the basis of mutual trust, on the understanding that all members of the Union adhere to the same core values. And we all know that these concepts are not just of academic interest. Recent challenges to the rule of law, mutual trust and the primacy of EU law have a significant impact on the actual functioning of our cooperation within the Union. Primacy of EU law does not only concern the relationship between the EU and a specific Member State. It is three-dimensional, affecting a Member State, the EU and the other Member States. The lack of primacy of EU law, which is common to all Member States, may compromise the principle of equality of the Member States before the law.

At the same time, we also witness that the EU is a system that functions remarkably well. Every day, so many representatives of the member states and of the EU Institutions come together to decide upon a great variety of issues, searching for and agreeing to compromises, We all know: these compromises are never perfect, yet essential. I firmly believe that the European Union can and should be the framework to flourish and enhance cooperation between the European citizens and Member States, strengthen free trade, free movement of persons, solidarity and mutual trust and provide for a sustainable healthy environment.

And these past one and a half year, the pandemic has shown us that we Europeans are connected to the world, as well as to each other. The initial reaction to the pandemic may have been a turn to national measures and national solutions. We all recall the attempts to close internal borders. And yet the Union also proved to have its value, with a common approach to the approval of the vaccines, and the EU coronavirus recovery plan. Once more a crises has given a new impetus to European integration.

Ladies and gentlemen, our initial programme has proven resilient and topical. Fresh challenges to the primacy of EU law, the importance of personal data for security and health, and new legislation regulating Big Tech. These are just a few development that will take centre stage in the coming days. Our panel discussions on the future of Europe and the safeguarding of European values remain equally relevant.

My hope for present and future members of FIDE is to continue the debate and inspire new generations to actively participate in the debate on the future of the EU and the role of its legal framework. I am grateful that today we have in our midst all generations. Let me specifically mention a well-respected representative of the very first generation of European lawyers and FIDE participants, Laurens Jan Binkhorst. He was there in 1962, in 1984 and today. Present as well are many young European lawyers. We are proud to continue and expand on the recent tradition of organizing a Young FIDE programme in cooperation with the Europa Institute of Leiden Law School. After a first event in Estoril, the Young European Lawyers will organise their second FIDE event later this evening, where they can meet in an informal setting. Let me also mention that the students in the blue sweaters with FIDE logo, assisting the FIDE team the coming days, are all student European law from Leiden Law School.

Before passing the floor to the next speakers, I would like to thank and congratulate all those who have contributed to the organization of the Congress. In particular, I should like to express our special gratitude to the Court of Justice of the European Union, the city of The Hague, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate policy, Leiden Law School and its Europa institute.

Finally, I should thank the FIDE 2021 team. Let me mention Marlies Noort, Herman van Harten, Jorrit Rijpma, Marleen Botman and Clara van Dam. And I should also mention Carina van Os, student assistant from Leiden Law School who joined the team recently. Without their work and support we would not be here today. I also want to thank FIDE's Secretary General Charlotte Schillemans and treasurer Armin Cuyvers for their excellent work for FIDE. There are many other members from the Dutch Association for European Law, who have put in valuable effort and work, and inspired the FIDE 2021 team to make this Congress happen.

Ich freue mich auf interessante und produktive Debatten und bin mir sicher dass dieser XXIXe FIDE-Kongress erfolgreich wird sein .

Le fait que nous puissions discuter de l'état de l'Union et de son ordre juridique ici et aujourd'hui, en présence des uns et des autres, plutôt que derrière nos écrans d'ordinateur, fait déjà de ce congrès un succès.

I thank you for your attention and wish you all excellent, fruitful and inspiring days,