



THE SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
on the occasion of farewell
to judges emeritus

BRATISLAVA, November 21, 2024

Dear Minister of Justice,
President of the Judicial Council of the Slovak Republic,
President of the Supreme Court,
President of the Supreme Administrative Court,
distinguished guests,
ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to welcome you to the Presidential Palace for a meeting that, I firmly believe, will be the beginning of a new tradition. I believe it is right that when the President of the Slovak Republic meets with the judges he appoints to office, he should also bid them an equally dignified farewell. This is an excellent opportunity to thank you for your long-term work and express our appreciation for it. You have worked in courts of various levels, municipal, district, and regional, as well as the Supreme Administrative Court. You have certainly worked in conditions that have not always been easy. You have had to cope with many legislative and organizational changes, not all of which have been beneficial or happy. You have worked in various branches of law, but I am convinced that you are all united by high moral and professional qualities. Everyone naturally faces doubts in their work as to whether they have made the right decision. But I am convinced that all your decisions were united by the effort to reach a fair verdict that will do justice.

Regardless of whether it is a criminal case, a commercial dispute or a divorce - behind each case, there are specific human destinies and stories. And every wrongdoing and injustice indeed hurts. But it is also true that justice is important not only for the actors of individual cases but also from a principled point of view. The decisions of the courts contribute to the extent to which citizens consider our society to be fair - whether they trust not only the judiciary but also the whole democratic system because independent courts are one of its pillars.

If a negative and joyless social climate marked by anger or frustration weighs on us today, then we must realize that the source of this frustration can be, among other things, doubts as to whether all citizens are truly equal before the

law, or dissatisfaction with the fact that justice is not being applied consistently and swiftly enough.

As Aristotle used to say, justice is the highest virtue, because it represents the good for others. Even after your mandate is over, you remain bearers of these values, authorities with a significant impact on society and public opinion. I trust that you will continue to keep this in mind, even though you will no longer wear the judge's robe.

I also assume that your successors will meet all the moral and professional requirements and criteria associated with the judicial profession - and that they will do honor to your profession, which is not only a job but above all a noble and demanding mission with a big societal impact.

I wish you many successes in the years to come, as well as a well-deserved rest and the most pleasant moments with your loved ones.

Once again, I thank you all.