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2018 Address to the Press - 15 January 2018 - Yacht Club of Monaco

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- At the start of the year 2018, it is a great pleasure for me and for the members of the Government to meet with you again to give you our best wishes.
- These wishes are of course addressed to you, but also to those close to you.
- They also concern the press institutions that you represent, which contribute to the richness and interest of the life of our country.
- The past year was full, complex and sometimes difficult, and without being too pessimistic, I do not believe that the coming year will be any easier ...
- Our world is ever more complex with regard to its mechanisms and its representation:
 - American power and the international order it has induced are undergoing unprecedented political erosion.
 - In general, States are losing much of their power in competition with gigantic companies - the so-called GAFAs. Today, these are as powerful as States. Facebook has two billion active users, who will soon represent one third of the world's population. In three years' time, Amazon will probably employ more than a million people ...
 - However, these companies are themselves subject to an uncertain context - the development of the blockchain could accelerate the decline of many institutions in the future ...
- In addition to this global context, we are heading, here in Monaco, towards a distinctive political time:
 - Distinctive, first of all, as the elections at the National Council will be held in February: as everywhere else, the election campaign will occupy a large part of the news and will influence its perception.
 - This is an important event in the life of the country; for the running of our institutions, which, needless to say, form the basis of Monaco's stability and prosperity. Of course, the Government and I are carefully reading your accounts of this. Nevertheless, as is proper, the Government will continue to adopt the utmost neutrality in the debate that has begun. Similarly, it will stick to a clear line of conduct with regard to institutional relations with the National Council and its newly elected representatives, regardless of its composition. This approach was set out by the Sovereign Prince Himself in 2006. It consists of reaching a consensus via rapprochement with others. That is what we did with the current National Council. That is what we shall do with the next one.

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We will work in a determined and non-dogmatic way to find solutions.

We have often achieved this – if not always.

However, when the conditions are not met or agreement is not possible, we will also draw the necessary conclusions.

That was unfortunately the case recently with the withdrawal of the bill on the publication of court decisions. We had discussions and tried to find solutions in the broadest possible spirit of openness until the last moment.

It was not possible to find a solution. The Government's positions and objectives were always clearly stated. There was no about-turn on our part, as I have read here and there. We only drew conclusions, as provided for in the Constitution.

- Distinctive political times because of the scale of the construction projects awaiting the Government, to which we already devoted a large part of our attention in 2017:

* The disturbances suffered by the residents of the Jardins d' Apolline, with regard to which we took exceptional measures. These measures were motivated by a desire to ensure the long-term sustainability of the building and, above all, the peace and quiet of the residents. We maintained a firm line on this case from the time when the full extent of this disaster was revealed last June. We will continue unswervingly in this way.

* The requirements of digital transition. This requires unprecedented efforts on our part. This has been a priority for us for the past two years, and we will devote very significant financial and human resources to this again this year.

All this should lead to administrative reorganisation to better meet our needs in terms of Digital Administration and the Smart City.

* Security challenges. This is one of the major world issues, whether it relates to creating jobs every year or passing important laws that make it possible to hold essential discussions with our neighbours. In doing so, we will continue to affirm the Principality's determination to respond to all types of threats, including digital threats that have never been seen before.

*Negotiations with the European Union. These aim to build relationships with this major partner that suit us and meet our interests, while reconciling respect for our identity and the achievement of our ambitions. We are pursuing, and will continue to pursue, a clear objective, and will make no compromises.

* Finally, energy transition, which involves us all, under the leadership of H.S.H. the Sovereign Prince. For Monaco, this is an identity issue, and is a necessity for all of our children, because the future of humanity is at stake.

* All these issues are managed in a transparent way, with the Monegasques and with you.



- Because the way our action is perceived often depends on your work of deciphering and investigating issues and putting them into perspective.
- You know that your articles and reports can sometimes seem insufficient, distorting and frustrating. Sometimes we can even be annoyed by them.
- However, you also know that these are normal reactions, and not serious, and I want to tell you today that I believe more than ever in the need for the press.
At a time when, like you, I know that the press is criticised everywhere, the need for it is contested, its role is called into question and its economic model is upset by the arrival of social networks, I want to tell you how convinced I am of the scale of your mission and the desire for excellence that guides you.
- You should know, therefore, that the differences I mentioned are valuable to us, since they oblige us to analyse, to be introspective and to reflect on our work.
- They oblige us to question ourselves on a notion that is central for everyone today - that of truth. The truth that both of us owe to the public, to the Monegasques, to the residents and to the world.
- We are, I believe, united by this duty of truth. A truth that is more demanding than ever, as it is more complex than ever, and therefore requires analysis, objectivity, deciphering and neutrality.
- In the context of the start of this election year, we will undoubtedly need this duty of truth, so that this context remains dignified and responsible, with a concern for the general interest.
- I would therefore like to extend my best wishes to you for 2018, hoping that it will enable us to move forward together to accomplish our respective missions, in the service of the Principality and the Sovereign Prince.