

*On the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Space Dedicated to Prof. Mykolas
Römeris*

Your Excellency, President of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Koen Lenaerts (Kon Lenaerts),

Your Excellency, President of the General Court, Marc van der Woude (Mark van der Vaard),

Your Excellency, Ambassador Dainius Kamaitis,

Honourable Members of the Court of Justice of the European Union,

Dear members of the Lithuanian community,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a profound honour and pleasure to welcome You in this distinguished institution — the Court of Justice of the European Union — on the occasion of the inauguration of a space dedicated to Professor Mykolas Römeris.

It is especially meaningful that we gather on the Day of the Restoration of Lithuanian Independence — a day that reminds us that freedom, democracy, and the rule of law are never given once and for all.

Lithuania, a nation with deep European roots, was twice erased from the map in the twentieth century — first by Tsarist Russia and later by Soviet imperialism. Professor Mykolas Römeris witnessed and helped to shape this turbulent era. His *Diaries*, nearly twenty thousand pages written daily from 1911 to 1945, form a unique chronicle of a continent in upheaval.

After Lithuania restored independence in 1918, Mykolas Römeris became the key architect of constitutional doctrine, drawing on advanced European legal thought and comparing models from France, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, Finland and the United States. Beyond scholarship, he served Lithuania as a judge and defender of judicial independence, including at the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague.

As professor and later Rector of the University of Lithuania, he championed academic freedom and university autonomy. His later work on the Sovietisation

of Lithuania became an intellectual inspiration for the Sajūdis movement that restored independence.

Our University is the first public university established following Lithuania's second born of independence. We are proud that in 2004 — the year Lithuania joined to the European Union as a full member — our University was honoured with the name of prof. Mykolas Römeris.

We regard that name as a noble obligation: to transmit his ideas to students and young researchers; to educate not only skilled lawyers, scholars, policymakers and public servants, but above all responsible citizens — men and women capable of defending law, democracy and human dignity.

We take particular pride in the enduring connections between our University and Court of Justice of the European Union. Our Honorary Doctors Pranas Kūris and Egidijus Jarašiūnas — a long-serving Chair of the University Council and a signatory of the Act of 11 March, 1990 — both served as judges of this Court. Professor Danutė Jočienė, a professor of our University, serves as a judge of the General Court. And Advocate General Rimvydas Norkus is both an alumni and a professor of Mykolas Römeris University.

The Court of Justice of the European Union, led by Honorary Doctor of our University Koen Lenaerts, stands today as one of the foremost guardians of the European legal order. By protecting democracy and the rule of law, this institution embodies the very essence of European integration: a shared trust in law as the foundation of peace, stability and justice.

These were precisely the values that guided Professor Mykolas Römeris. His vision of Europe was ahead of its time. He was sharply critical of narrow nationalism and insisted on the necessity of inter-state cooperation and solidarity for the continent's stability. Already in the interwar years, he reflected on the idea of *Pan-Europe* — a united Europe organised on federal principles, in which nations would preserve their identity while building a shared political and legal space. Those ideas resonate with particular force in today's European and global geopolitical context.

The space bearing Professor Mykolas Römeris' name within the Court of Justice of the European Union therefore carries a significance that is more than

symbolic. It connects the origins of Lithuanian constitutional thought with the living European legal space in which this Court safeguards the fundamental values that Römeris devoted his life to defending.

I trust that this space will become not only a tribute to a great personality, but an enduring source of inspiration for all, who labour in the cause of law and justice in Europe.

May the name of Professor Mykolas Römeris remind us always of our shared responsibility — to stand, without compromise, on the side of law, liberty and democracy. Thank you.