Speech by Prof. Ioannis Androulakis
President of the Conference of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism (CETS 198)

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF MONEYVAL

25 April 2023 – Warsaw, Poland

Distinguished Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am truly grateful for this opportunity to address you today.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Poland for its leadership in organising this first MONEYVAL High level meeting which provides momentum and will remain as an important step in strengthening co-operation at the highest level against money laundering, financing of terrorism and proliferation.

I was very pleased to hear several speakers mentioning earlier the Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism, commonly known as the Warsaw Convention, for which I have the honour to preside its Conference of the Parties.

This important treaty is the result of discussions and priorities defined at the Third Summit of Heads of States of the Council of Europe held in Warsaw in 2005. It is indeed very symbolic that we are gathered today in Warsaw and given an opportunity to re-affirm a strong commitment to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, building on current achievements, lessons learnt, but also opportunities that we should seize.

I very much welcome that both the high-level declaration and the MONEYVAL Strategy call for further engagement and synergies with the Conference of the Parties to the Warsaw Convention.

With 39 ratifications since its adoption in 2005, the Warsaw Convention has crystallized the commitment of 37 Council of Europe member states and 2 non-member states in this field, including, since 2022, Morocco.

To date, the Warsaw Convention remains the only comprehensive treaty covering prevention and repression of money laundering and the financing of terrorism as well as international co-operation.

It is also the only international treaty that gives national authorities the power to halt suspicious transactions at the earliest stage to prevent their movement through the financial system. In addition, specialised Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of member-states must halt such transactions whenever requested by a foreign partner FIU.

We all know that setting binding standards would be of little use if there was no mechanism for seeing whether they were adhered to. This is the role of the Conference of the Parties, which I should say from the outset works in close complementarity with MONEYVAL, without duplication, as it focuses on those parts of the Convention that strengthen global standards and bring added value.

The progress driven by the Convention to date has been broad, swift, and tangible. We see it also reflected through the manner in which it has further inspired the revisions of the FATF and EU standards, and still has the potential to do so.

This is why I would like to take the opportunity of your presence today, to call on those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention, to consider doing so in the nearest future.

We very much hope also to be able to count the European Union among our Parties.

One of the priority areas of the Conference is an area which is to some extent neglected by other monitoring processes, namely the achievement of an equitable balance between the overarching task of combating money laundering and terrorism financing and the parallel obligation of respecting the rights of the accused and of third parties.

The principles stemming from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in the area of confiscation, and in particular on issues of the reversal of the burden of proof in confiscation proceedings, feature prominently in our work. **I hope that these will also inform the FATF's on-going discussions and inspire the future revision of standards in the area of confiscation.**

Another stream of work where our synergies could be enhanced includes the possible preparation of an additional protocol to the

Warsaw convention to foster countries' cooperation in sharing confiscated assets and their management. FATF and MONEYVAL's expertise and analysis from the current evaluation round are indispensable in ensuring that the future protocol would set the basis for effective international cooperation.

Your excellencies,

The Warsaw Convention represents a powerful tool to protect our societies from crime.

As countries around the world continue to face financial volatility, the Warsaw Convention can be leveraged for stronger cooperation in this area and for effectively tracing, freezing, and confiscating proceeds of crime.

The Conference of the Parties looks forward to working closely with you to advance our common agenda.

Thank you for your attention.