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**Speech by Ms Anne Brasseur,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly
of the Council of Europe**

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I represent the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, an Organisation that brings together parliamentarians from 47 European states, myself coming from Luxembourg. Today I want to speak about three 'extraordinary' challenges that are not exclusively European, challenges that need 'extraordinary efforts'.

The first extraordinary challenge is the migration drama. The inflow of refugees and migrants to Europe reminds us that we do not live isolated from each other; it reminds us that state borders, and frontiers between continents cannot, and should not, prevent people from escaping violence and persecution. Numerous statements and reactions show the need for a co-ordinated international response. At the same time, in practice, political will for more international solidarity and more responsibility-sharing seems to be dangerously lacking.

But we are sleepwalking into disaster if we do not work together. Parliamentarians must show more initiative, they must lead. Too hot to handle is not an option. We, parliamentarians, must tell our governments to stop defending our own corners and show greater solidarity.

The second extraordinary challenge I wanted to mention is the rise of intolerance, hatred and extremism. They represent one of the gravest dangers for democratic institutions and living-together.

Last January, PACE launched the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance. This initiative should be extended beyond the European continent with all parliaments joining a network – for instance, in the framework of the IPU – to create one large movement, linking up with civil society, religious bodies and others to say “no” to hate and intolerance.

The third extraordinary challenge I would like to highlight is tackling terrorism.

Within the Council of Europe there is a Convention on the Prevention of terrorism. Like some of the other Council of Europe treaties, such as the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, this Convention is open to non-member states.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by reminding you, that as Speakers of parliament, you have a real power to change the world for better. You can contribute to bringing solidarity back in the international arena, you can combat hatred and intolerance, you can make use of international instruments to tackle terrorism while at the same time guarantee the respect of human rights at home.