

# **Speech by HRH The Duke of Castro On the occasion of the granting of the Gratitude of Tirana**

Monday 2nd December 2013

Mr Mayor, Deputy Mayors, Your Eminence, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to receive the 'Gratitude of Tirana' from the Municipality and I want Your Excellency to know that I receive this civic honour with pride and appreciation.

Thank you also for your kind and generous words. It is for me a great pleasure to return once more to your ever-changing capital city of Tirana and, of course, to the homeland of the Blessed Mother Teresa.

Mr Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The reforms undergone in Tirana and the transformation of your capital city and especially those under your leadership are far-reaching and impressive.

With the forthcoming announcement of Albania's much awaited candidate status of the European Union these efforts will naturally be strengthened and enhanced.

As the Grand Master of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, one of the oldest internationally recognised Catholic, charitable and humanitarian Orders of Knighthood, we are ready to play its part in this important journey.

The Constantinian Order's charitable, humanitarian and hospitaller mission is central to our existence today and in times of change such support can be of value.

This charitable mission is what brought the Duchess of Castro and I here in 2000 as part of a UNICEF-Constantinian Order joint initiative.

I very much look forward to our discussions later today and to identify appropriate projects in your city which our worldwide Order can support and partner with others on.

Thank you once again for this civic recognition and for inviting my delegation and me to your city.

I look to reciprocating your kindness in Rome and Naples where I hope we can find occasion to celebrate the strong and historic ties which exist between the citizens of our great cities.

Thank you.