



Words in EIN European Ideas Network Fair Dinner

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Colaboraciones n° 1945

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Dear Harmut Nassauer;
dear Joseph Daul;
Dear Wilfred Martens
ladies and gentleman;

Good evening to you all.

I am glad to be here today with friends from all over Europe. I am extremely grateful to the European Ideas Network for giving us the opportunity to debate upon the challenges we are facing today as Europeans. And I am especially pleased that this gathering is taking place in Warsaw.

Not too long ago, communism started to collapse; not too far away from here, people were struggling under a totalitarian regime.

They decided to stand on their feet and fight for democracy and freedom. It was the strength of their ideas and their example what gave courage to many others to stand and defeat tyranny and oppression.

The longing for freedom, the strength of ideas and the will to make them real ended with communism and allowed the reunification of Europe.

The brave example provided by the Polish people in their fight against communism should encourage us today in our fight for our freedom and values. These are currently threatened by the terrorists.

If I may now, I would like to make a special mention to a friend. She was

with us at the last European Ideas Network meeting in Lisbon. Loyola de Palacio, a hard working woman was one of the best examples of coherence in politics. Throughout her career her motto was that politics should always be based on moral values. We shall never forget her.

Dear friends,

We have gathered here to analyse the role of Europe nowadays and how we envisage our future. But analysis is not enough. Action is needed.

Europe is composed of Nation States. Our common values, those of freedom, human dignity, equality before the law and democracy are embedded in Nation States. Europe has historical roots, it is not a project of social engineers. Without full respect for the values posed by Nation States, nationalism may grow up and could destroy Europe as we know it.

I want to be really frank with you. I am really concerned with Kosovo. Milosevic was not removed from power to make Kosovo independent. I do not think that the future of Europe should be based on ethnically clean societies.

Drawing up new borders in Europe recognising *de facto*, the self determination of territories is the shortest way to disaster.

Europe can not be expanded *ad infinitum*. There are limits to be respected. I think we should start an open debate to set this limits.

Definitely, Europe has been a story of success for the last 50 years. The question is how we can continue this way until 2025 and beyond.

We have achieved many things. Our struggles and hard work have driven us to the reunification of Europe.

Our capacity to build a society based on shared values, respect of knowledge and debate has produced some of the most fruitful and prosperous societies.

But the world does not freeze at our will; changes will come, so as new threats and new ways. And we wouldn't be honest to ourselves if we deny Europe's weaknesses and challenges.

Maybe the time has come for Europe to remember the motto of Jean Paul the second: "Non avete paura". "Do not be afraid".

If we want to continue to be successful, we must recognise what makes us strong. We must promote the values that have made us strong. Those values are hard work, merit, individual responsibility, and capacity. Personal merit and initiative must be rewarded.

On the contrary, through collectivism the individuals expect the rest of the community to solve the problems for them.

We must turn risks into challenges; we can achieve this by turning short time politics into long term strate-

gies. Here it is where this meeting can really help future policies.

First, I think we have to face the excess of welfare and lack of competition. A society that provides with everything has produced a society in which it is not important to fight for the future.

We are becoming weaker. To avoid it, we have to recover the Lisbon agenda. For that I welcome Barroso's initiative to reform the European Union's budget. It is the only way to achieve this goal. This must be based on three pillars

The first pillar is the Euro. To have a common currency makes us strong.

The second pillar is the independence of the European Central Bank. I do believe that we should be extremely respectful with its independence. It warrants our prosperity and future stability.

The third pillar must be a real internal market. The new national protectionism we have seen recently is a dangerous trend.

What is really needed is more flexible markets, including labour markets.

We need lower taxes.

We need less public expenditure.

We need less public intervention in the market.

We need less public enterprises.

We need deeper reforms in the welfare state.

We need more openness to the world and free trade. Europe can

not be again the main responsible for the failure of the Doha round.

We need to promote competitiveness and productivity.

We have to face the excess of welfare and lack of competition. We must promote excellence on education and research. Excellence must come from work, intellectual debate and the uncertainty in the quest for new ideas and fight against old ignorance.

Immigration and integration is a real challenge for Europe. Europe has a demographic problem. It has been clearly expressed in the draft document *Europe 2025* that this European Ideas Network has produced. We receive flows of immigrants, and we are not succeeding completely in their integration.

Real integration is crucial. Real integration will come with job opportunities. Law must always be respected.

One of the most important rights of a citizen in a democratic country is equality before the law. It is one of the core values of our democracies: equality before the law without any discrimination based on race, colour or sex. There can not be separate rules depending on the origin of the citizen.

Freedom of speech is at the core of our democracy. We, Europeans, cannot accept any threat from those who do want us to shut up. Governments apologizing for cartoons are a first step for the surrender of democracy to totalitarians.

Dear friends,

Europe needs to find its place in the world. And I believe the only way is an Atlantic Europe. That is why I believe we need to reinforce our institutional links.

An Atlantic Europe demands closer economic links with America. We need an open Atlantic Prosperity Area. The last Summit between my friends Angela Merkel and George Bush was a very important milestone. But we need more courage and political commitment.

I also believe that Europe can not be understood without America. And I mean the whole continent. Europe should pay more attention to Latin America.

The future of Latin America can not leave us indifferent. Latin America is a substantial part of the western world. We should support those who work for democracy, freedom and open markets as the best means to achieve prosperity and development. We should face the real danger of the "communism of the twenty first century".

Security should be a top priority in the Atlantic agenda.

NATO should be renewed to confront and defeat terrorism. That is the only way to secure our freedom and liberty, and also the stability and security of the world.

NATO should be open to new democracies. The challenge to our

freedom is global and so should be our response.

Europe should assume more responsibilities in security. Freedom is not for free.

The Middle East is also our responsibility. I believe that the best possible policy is to promote freedom and democracy in the region. Horrible crimes like the one in Lebanon yesterday are simply not acceptable.

We should not lie to ourselves. The defeat of terrorism in Iraq is vital for our interest and for the stability of the region. I know the huge difficulties Iraqi democracy faces, but success must happen in Iraq.

I would like to say something to all those do-gooders, who criticise leaders that fight terrorism: you should not criticise those that assume their responsibilities. You'd better criticise those that do not assume theirs, those that do not recognise terrorism as a global threat and do not respond accordingly.

Responsibility is what we need to face the future. And I will say this very quietly: a nuclear Iran is simply not acceptable.

Dear friends,

That is the way I see Europe today. And those are my ideas to meet today's challenges and make Europe a success story in 2025.

There are many challenges that we will have to face, but there is only

one spirit if we want to win. Willingness to win and to acknowledge that there is no second best. Just look at it in the eyes and go for it.

I thank James for the idea of meeting here in Warsaw today.

I thank you all for your attention.