

*Symposium*

# THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020 2 pm - 6.30 pm Medicis Room

#ReunificationEurope



Symposium organized by the European Affairs Committee, under the high patronage of Mr Gérard LARCHER, president of the French Senate.



Commission des  
**AFFAIRES EUROPÉENNES**

## CONTENTS

<b>SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I. MR GÉRARD LARCHER, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE (VIDEO MESSAGE) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>II. MR JEAN BIZET, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ROUND TABLE NO. 1 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>1989 : THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, ORIGINS AND DYNAMICS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>I. MR JEAN-YVES LECONTE.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>II. MR GEORGES MINK .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>III. MR ANDREĀ GRATCHEV .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>IV. MR ZYGIMANTAS PAVILIONIS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>V. MR ALEXANDRU HERLEA .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ROUND TABLE NO. 2 .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>1989-2019 : REFLECTIONS ON THE ENLARGEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>I. MS ANNE-CATHERINE LOISIER .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>II. MR LUKAS MACEK.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>III. MR JOACHIM BITTERLICH .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>IV. MR GYORGY KAROLYI .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>V. MR CLAUDE MARTIN .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>VI. MR GEORGI PIRINSKI.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>VII. QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>ROUND TABLE NO. 3 .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2020: WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE EUROPEAN PROJECT ? .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>I. MR JEAN BIZET .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>II. MR ANDI MUSTAJAJ .....</b>	<b>53</b>

III. MR CHRISTOPHE PARISOT .....	56
IV. MS RUDINA HAJDARI.....	59
V. MR RALF GJONI.....	60
VI. MR OLEH SHAMSHUR .....	62
VII. MR NIKOLA POPOSKI.....	63
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>67</b>
I. MR ALEXIS TSIPRAS .....	67
II. MR JEAN-LOUIS BOURLANGES .....	71

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# OPENING

*2 pm*



Mr Gérard LARCHER  
President of the French Senate



Mr Jean BIZET  
President of the European  
Affairs Committee of the  
French Senate

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# 1989, THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE: ITS ORIGINS AND ITS DYNAMICS

2.15 pm  
3 pm



**Mr Jean-Yves LECONTE**  
Senator representing French people living outside France, member of the European Affairs Committee of the French Senate



**Mr Georges MINK**  
Professor, European Interdisciplinary Studies Department (College of Europe, Natolin Campus, Warsaw), Emeritus Director of Research in the Institut des Sciences Sociales du Politique (CNRS-U. Paris Ouest la Défense, Nanterre)



**M. Zygmantas PAVILIONIS**  
Ambassador, Deputy Chairman of European Affairs Committee, International Secretary of Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats



**Mr Alexandre HERLEA**  
Professor Emeritus, former Minister for European Integration of Romania, former Romanian Ambassador to European Union, President of the Association La Maison roumaine



**Mr Andrei GRACHEV**  
Historian, political scientist, former adviser and spokesman of the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev

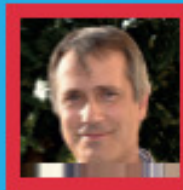
THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# FEEDBACKS FROM THE FORMER ENLARGEMENTS, FROM 1989 TO 2019

3 pm  
4:30 pm



Ms Anne-Catherine LOISIER  
Senator of Côte-d'Or,  
member of the European  
Affairs Committee of  
the French Senate



Mr Lukáš MACEK  
Director of  
the European campus  
of Sciences Po (Dijon)



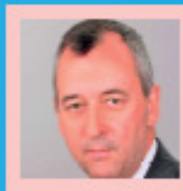
Mr Joachim BITTERLICH  
Former German  
Ambassador



Mr Georges KÁROLYI  
Hungarian Ambassador  
to France and  
Monaco



Mr Claude MARTIN  
Ambassador of France



Mr Georgi PIRINSKI  
Former Member of  
the European Parliament

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# WHAT PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT IN 2020?

*4 30 pm  
6 pm*



**Mr Jean BIZET**  
Senator of Manche,  
President of the European  
Affairs Committee of  
the French Senate



**Mr Andi MUSTAJ**  
Adviser to the Robert Schuman  
Foundation



**Mr Christophe PARISOT**  
Adviser for European Affairs  
in the cabinet of Mr Jean-Yves  
Le Drian, Minister for Europe  
and Foreign Affairs and  
Deputy Director of the cabinet  
of Ms Amélie de Montchalin,  
Secretary of State for  
European Affairs



**Ms Rudina HAJDARI**  
President of European  
Integration Committee of the  
Albanian Parliament

*Following speakers* →

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# WHAT PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT IN 2020?

4 30 pm  
6 pm



Mr Ralf GJONI  
Vice-Chair of the Foreign Affairs  
Committee of the Albanian  
Parliament



M. Oleh SHAMSHUR  
Ambassador of Ukraine  
to France, permanent delegate  
of Ukraine to UNESCO



Mr Nikola POPOSKI  
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Deputy Prime Minister of the  
Republic of North Macedonia,  
President of the National Council for  
European Integration of  
the Republic of North Macedonia



Mr Ryszard CZARNECKI  
Member of the  
European Parliament



THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

**CLOSING**

*6 pm*



**Mr Alexis TSIPRAS**  
Former Prime Minister of Greece and  
leader of the Opposition



**Mr Jean-Louis BOURLANGES**  
Member of National Assembly for the  
Hauts-de-Seine department,  
vice-president of the European Affairs  
Committee of the French National  
Assembly

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## *Georges Mink*

Georges Mink is a Sociologist and Political Scientist, specialising in Central and Eastern Europe. His research and publications are dedicated to political systems, the sociopolitical evolution of these regimes, the conversion of ex-communist elites in central and Eastern Europe and the Europeanisation of national political systems. His current research focuses on the question of transitional justice in EU countries and memory games. He has been member of several professional executive bodies, including the Administration Council of Radio France Internationale (1989-1994), President of the International Council for Central and Eastern European Studies (since 2015). His last books: 'History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe, Memory Games', 2013; 'La Pologne au coeur de l'Europe, 1914 à nos jours, Histoire politique et conflits de mémoire', 2015. A Polish updated version was published in 2017.

## *Andrei Grachev*

Andrei Grachev, doctor of history and graduated in international relations, is a Russian journalist and political scientist. He spent most of his career in the central apparatus of the Soviet Communist Party, before becoming the political adviser of the last President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, and his last spokesman. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, he has established himself as an internationally renowned specialist in the history of East-West relations during the Cold War. He has been a lecturer and researcher at Russian, French, Japanese and British universities (including the University of Oxford). He is chairman of the scientific committee of the New Policy Forum, and the author of several works on the former USSR and post-Soviet Russia.

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## Alexandre Herlea

Born October 11, 1942, in Brasov (Romania), naturalized French in 1977. Mechanical engineer, historian of science and technology, Professor Emeritus of Universities, member of the scientific council of CIFE (International Center for European Training, Nice), president of the association La Maison Roumaine (Paris). He has taught at UTBM (University of Technology of Belfort Montbéliard), at CNAM (National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts) as well as at the Central School of Arts and Manufactures, at Michigan Technological University (USA), at the University of Bucharest, etc.

He is a member of the IAHS (International Academy of the History of Science), the CTHS ("Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques") and the ICOHTEC (International Committee for the History of Technology), of which he was president from 2001 to 2005.

Former Minister of European Integration of the Government of Romania (1996-1999) and former Ambassador of Romania to the European Union in Brussels (2000-2001), he is a member of the executive committee of the CDI (Christian Democratic International), of which he was vice-president (1998-2002) and responsible for the countries of central and Eastern Europe (2002-2008).

He is Commander of the Legion of Honor.

## Žygimantas Pavilionis

Ambassador Žygimantas Pavilionis is a career Lithuanian diplomat. He attended Vilnius University (degree in philosophy and PhD in political science). He worked in Brussels at the Lithuanian Permanent Mission to the EC from 1999 to 2002, as Co-Secretary of Association Council, Accession Conference to the EU, Deputy Chief Negotiator. Pavilionis was then promoted to lead the European Union Department from 2002 to 2004, became Political Director and Deputy Foreign Minister from 2005 to 2009. He served as Lithuanian Ambassador to the US and Mexico (2010-2015) and Ambassador-at-Large for Europe's East (2015-2016). In 2016, he was elected to the Lithuanian Parliament by the votes of global Lithuanian diaspora and currently is Deputy Chairman of the European Committee and Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Parliament. Ambassador Pavilionis is also International Secretary of the main Lithuanian center-right party Homeland Union (Lithuanian Christian Democrats).

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## Lukáš Macek

Lukáš Macek, born in Prague in 1976, is the director of the European campus - Central and Eastern Europe of Sciences Po in Dijon since 2004. After his studies in France (Carnot high school in Dijon, Sciences Po), he worked in the Czech Republic as parliamentary assistant and political advisor specializing in European affairs. As secretary of the Czech Senate delegation, he followed the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe. He taught or currently teaches at New York University in Prague, Charles University in Prague and "Sciences Po". Author or co-author of numerous articles and studies on European issues, he published «Does enlargement jeopardize the European project?» (2011).

## Joachim Bitterlich

Joachim Bitterlich was born on July 10, 1948, in Saarbrücken (Saarland). Former student of the French National School of Administration (ENA) (1974-1975), he worked at the Permanent Representation to the European Communities in Brussels, in charge of the accession negotiations with Portugal and Spain, as well as the coordination of the work of the Council of Ministers and the European Council (1981-1985). Counselor for European Affairs to Chancellor Helmut Kohl from 1993 to 1998, he was then appointed Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO (1998-1999), then Ambassador of Germany to the United Kingdom and the Principality of Andorra (1999-2002).

## Georges Károlyi

Georges Károlyi was born in 1946 in Budapest. His family left Hungary one year later and settled in France, where he studied: he graduated from the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (1968), and holds a Diploma of Higher Studies in Public Law (1969). Mr Károlyi led his professional career in France, first at Aerospace (1971-1974), then at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (1974-1978), finally at Fiat France (1978-2005) where he exercised responsibility in the Group's investment policy and financial management. Back in Hungary in 1990 following the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the democratic transition, he created there a Foundation of public interest, focused on the promotion of the European opening of Hungary. Georges Károlyi has both the Hungarian and the French nationalities and he has been the Hungarian Ambassador to France since January 2015. He is a Knight of the French National Order of Merit and an Officer of the Hungarian Order of Merit.

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## *claude martin*

Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 24, 1944. Graduated of the Paris Institute of Political Studies and the National School of Oriental Languages, former student of the ENA, Claude Martin joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1968. He was an adviser for European affairs to the Minister (1973-1978). Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the European Communities (1984) then Ambassador to Beijing (1990), he was appointed Director General of European Affairs, then Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-1998), before becoming Ambassador to Berlin (1999-2007). He was then appointed Counsellor at the "Cour des Comptes" (Court of Auditors)(2008-2012). He is the author of "La diplomatie n'est pas un dîner de gala" ("Diplomacy is not a gala dinner", 2018).

## *Georgi Pirinski*

Georgi Pirinski was last a Member of the European Parliament (2014-2019). Previously, he was President of the National Assembly of Bulgaria (2005-2009) and MP (1990-2013), having been first elected to the 7th Grand National Assembly that adopted the new Bulgarian Constitution in 1991. He has also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1995-1996). He is at present a Member of the National Council of the Bulgaria Socialist Party.

## *Andi mustafaj*

Graduated in public law at Panthéon-Assas Paris 2 University in 2011, Andi Mustafaj began his career as a civil servant at the Ministry of Justice in Albania, where he soon became an adviser to the Albanian Minister of Justice. He joined the 2014-2015 promotion "Winston Churchill" of the French National School of Administration (ENA) as a foreign student. Currently Deputy to the Director M&A and Strategic Development at Saint-Gobain, Andi Mustafaj is involved in various European think tanks such as the Belles Feuilles Group or the Robert Schuman Foundation, for which he was rapporteur for a WG on Brexit and co-author of the essay "Sketch of future Europe".

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## Christophe Parisot

Graduated of the Institute of Political Studies in Strasbourg and holder of a master degree in International Relations from the University of Geneva, Christophe Parisot was Second and then First Counsellor at the French Embassy in Budapest between 2003 and 2007, then Counsellor at the External Policies Department at the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union in Brussels until 2010. He then joined the cabinet of Laurent Wauquiez, Minister for European Affairs, as Counsellor and then became the Director of Cabinet of Jean Léonetli, the successor of Laurent Wauquiez. He is currently Adviser for European Affairs in the cabinet of Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and Deputy Director of the cabinet of Amélie de Montchalin, Secretary of State for European Affairs.

## Rudina Hajdari

Rudina Hajdari is a Member of the Albanian Parliament since 2017. Since February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019, when the Democratic Party decided to give up their mandates en bloc, Ms. Hajdari decided to remain in Parliament, and created her own parliamentary group of 14 MP-s in the opposition group. Ever since she has been chairing the European Integration Committee. She is also Co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for Electoral Reform. Ms. Hajdari holds an MA in Human Rights from Columbia University and BA in Political Science from Fordham University.

## Ralf Gjoni

Ralf Gjoni is a Member of the Albanian Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Member of the European Integration Committee. His international experience in public relations and strategic communications as well as various government positions stems from two decades in the UK, USA, France and Albania. In his previous capacities, Mr. Gjoni served as Spokesperson and General Director of Communications at the Albanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and prior to that, he worked for Weber Shandwick Public Affairs in London, UK.

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## Oleh Shamshur

Born in Kyiv in 1956, Oleh Shamshur is graduated with distinction in International relations (1978) from the University of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko, from which he also holds a Doctorate in History (1982).

He began his professional career at the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. In 1993 he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was assigned to Geneva as Advisor to the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN, and then Minister-Advisor to the Ukrainian Embassy for the countries of the Benelux.

From 2003 to 2005, he was Head of the European Union (EU) Directorate and Ukrainian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

From January 2006 to May 2010, he assumed the responsibilities of Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States.

H.E. Oleh Shamshur was appointed Ambassador of Ukraine to France (in October 2014) and Permanent Delegate of Ukraine to UNESCO (January 2015).

## Nikola Poposki

Nikola Poposki was born in 1977 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. He received his bachelor's degree in economics from the Universities of Skopje and Nice in 2002. In 2004 he completed his master's degree in languages and international trade in the EU from the Universities of Rennes and Skopje, before adding a Master of Arts in European Economic Studies at the College of Europe in Bruges, in 2005. Mr. Poposki started his career as Secretary at the Embassy of the French Republic to the Republic of Macedonia. He later worked at a joint research center of the European Commission and subsequently assumed the position of Ambassador at the Mission of the Republic of Macedonia to the EU. From 2011 to 2017 he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Poposki was Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia from 2016 to 2017, has since been a member of parliament and presides the National Council for European Integration.

THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, 30 YEARS AFTER THE BERLIN WALL FELL

# GET TO KNOW THE SPEAKERS

*Biographies*

## Ryszard Czarnecki

Ryszard Czarnecki was born in 1963. After a master's degree in history, he became a journalist for the written press in the United Kingdom and Poland, and worked for Polish television (1988-1997). Former Member of the Polish Parliament (1993, then 1997-2001), he was Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration (1997-1998), and Minister of the Government of Poland (1997 to 1999). He was president of the Institute for European Studies and Law from 2001 to 2004, he was then elected MEP in 2004. He was re-elected in 2009, 2014 and 2019. He is currently Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. Ryszard Czarnecki is a member of the Law and Justice Party (PiS).

## Alexis Tsipras

Alexis Tsipras studied Civil Engineering at the National Technical University of Athens, from which he later received a graduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning.

He served as Prime Minister of Greece from 2015 to 2019, first elected in January 2015 and then re-elected in September 2015. Since the elections of July 2019 he is Leader of the Opposition.

## Jean-Louis Bourlanges

Former MEP, honorary Counsellor at the 'Cour des Comptes' (Court of Auditors), Jean-Louis Bourlanges has been a MP for the department of the Hauts-de-Seine since 2017. He is Vice-Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly.

MEP from 1989 to 2007, he was Chairman of the Committee on Budgetary Control in 1993 and 1994, Vice-Chairman of the Institutional Committee, rapporteur for the general budget of the Union for 2000, rapporteur on the hierarchy of standards and typology of Union acts in 2002, and Chairman of the EU-Poland joint parliamentary committee since 2002. In 2004, he was elected Chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament.

From 2002 to 2015, he was an associate professor at the Institute of Political Studies ('Sciences Po') in Paris, giving the course 'Political system and life in the European Union'. Jean-Louis Bourlanges is a member of the Board of Directors of the Jacques Delors Institute.





## INTRODUCTION

### I. MR GÉRARD LARCHER, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE (VIDEO MESSAGE)<sup>1</sup>

Mr Chairman of the Senate European Affairs Committee, fellow Members of Parliament, Senators and Members of the European Parliament, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to say a few words to you today at the opening of this conference dedicated to the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is also the fifteenth anniversary of the accession of eight Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union. I cannot be there with you today because I am currently attending the first forum of the recently established Senate of Côte d'Ivoire in Yamoussoukro.

This conference comes at an appropriate moment, because, all symbolism of dates and birthdays aside, the European family is at a turning point right now. After fifteen years of living together with our friends from Central and Eastern Europe, we are only too keenly aware that European integration could not be all plain sailing. Now, after 47 years, the UK has decided to leave our family. This just goes to show that nothing is certain. The European Union is a living and dynamic organism, and we are its life force. In these times, when we need a Europe that is strong, free and true to its principles as never before, some of the hopes raised by the fall of the Berlin Wall seem to be fading.

Please permit me, now, in anticipation of the topics that will be discussed here today, to introduce some of my concerns about the spirit of 1989. With the passage of time, a certain disillusionment has begun to creep into our hopes for the end of a divided Europe, the rediscovery of sovereignty, and the peoples of Europe learning to be free once more. Today it is clear that there are significant, and sometimes even fundamental differences in attitude amongst us in certain matters, such as the Rule of Law, societal freedoms, defence, security, or migration. Nevertheless, we must not fail to acknowledge the significant efforts to adapt that have been made by the countries that have joined us. And indeed, beyond the institutional enlargement of the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union, have we Western European nations made an equivalent effort toward achieving the reunification we called for so emphatically during the decades of cold war? I have no

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<sup>1</sup> [http://videos.senat.fr/video.1529170\\_5e4bd4768f582.colloque-la-reunification-de-l-europe-30-ans-apres-la-chute-du-mur-du-berlin](http://videos.senat.fr/video.1529170_5e4bd4768f582.colloque-la-reunification-de-l-europe-30-ans-apres-la-chute-du-mur-du-berlin)

certitudes to offer on the matter, but it certainly needs to be part of the discussion.

A recent poll, indeed, has revealed some disenchantment among Eastern Europeans. The survey helped cast light on their concerns, and on their crisis of confidence in liberal values and national democratic institutions. Fortunately, an ever-dynamic kind of grassroots mobilization has arisen in response to this disenchantment, particularly amongst young people. Nevertheless, this raises questions for us, and shows us that Europe needs to spearhead a motivational project, something that can stir our dreams again.

So, I hope this afternoon will be rich with discussions about what our shared European project, one that is imbued with meaning and value for all European citizens, could become in the context of future accessions. It is my sense that, faced with the excesses of globalization, the challenges of international competition, and the territorial ruptures we are experiencing today, even in the founding countries of the European Union, it is our responsibility to carry forth a project of humanism intended to preserve not only our values, but also our social and economic convergence within the Union. I feel that the current European Commission has understood this, and it is my hope that the vast majority of Member States share this point of view as well.

Our fellow citizens also expect Europe to protect them from uncontrolled migration and from unfair competition; they want Europe to be a strong player on the international stage, an end to the disintegration of multilateralism, and an end to the perceived negative effects of globalization. While we must respect the hard-regained sovereignty of the countries that achieved accession to the Union after so many years striving and suffering under the yoke of communism, I believe that the strengthening of European sovereignty is nonetheless essential for the future of Europe. Multiple fields of inquiry must be addressed, the latest of which is digital technology, and our common independence in terms of information technologies. But above all, we need to assert our economic sovereignty, and, ultimately, we need to think about building up our sovereignty in matters of security and defence. It is a vast ambition, and it will take time. In the aftermath of 1989, when Europe came together around democratic principles, the idea arose that we would need to start thinking about collective security in Europe; that was followed, the very next year, by the adoption of the Paris Charter. That was in 1990. Now, there is no question that we must fulfil this ambition, while respecting the sovereignty, history, and memory of the peoples of Europe. Because, as Jean Monnet used to say, we are not forming coalitions of governments - we are uniting people : men and women. We need to unite them around sovereignty, but also around a sustainable development project, and a " green deal. "

I hope your work proves very fruitful.

## II. MR JEAN BIZET, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Ladies and gentlemen,

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 opened a new chapter in the turbulent history of our old continent. It was an event that marked the triumph of freedom over dictatorship, oppression and lies. Many believed that History had come to an end. Everyone felt the stirring of an immense hope, the hope of a reunified Europe, fully restored to democracy and Enlightenment principles.

Before we go any further, I would like us to turn our thoughts to those who died in this fight for freedom, for all those who, with their political action, their writings, or their simple, courageous resistance, made the fall of the Berlin Wall possible. Let us remember, then, though in no particular order of precedence, the names of Willy Brandt, Helmut Kohl, John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Jerzy Giedroyc, Vaclav Havel, Czeslaw Milosz, and perhaps the most moving of those dissidents, the Romanian Doina Cornea, who, in 1985, wrote and read the following message on *Radio Free Europe* :

" It is the system we live under and those who are in power that are to blame above all. But we too must share the blame - we who consent to living in the pollution of lies and alienation, we who consent to our own dehumanization, we who place having before being. "

That says it all. Now let us get back to the subject at hand - but let us keep in mind the example of humanity given by all these strong-willed people who fought to uphold the freedoms we enjoy today in Europe. Even without naming them all, it is to them that I wish today to dedicate this conference on the reunification of Europe.

Because we need a solid structure for the discussions held here today, we have agreed to divide this conference into three round tables.

For the first of these, we will start in 1989, with an examination of the origins and dynamics at work in our long-awaited reunification. We must not forget that the partition of our continent was so drastic and so lengthy that like Czeslaw Milosz, we had come to refer to the " other Europe ", when in fact there was only ever one.

At the second round table, we will seek to take stock of all the work that has been done to reconnect the threads of history, and mend the torn fabric of our continent. We will need, then, to focus on the work done by the European Union, and discuss its enlargement policy. We lived through a historic time, and worked with great enthusiasm, but there were two schools of thought in Brussels. On the one hand, there were those who wanted to

reunite Europe quickly in the name of the pressing, historic need to set things right. Then on the other, there were those who sought a less political, more technical approach. They thought it more prudent to wait for the transformation underway in those countries that had recently reclaimed their sovereignty to advance a little further first.

It may be up to us to decide who was right - but either way, Helmut Kohl's decision to decree that an East German Mark would be worth the same as a West German Mark, was certainly a powerful political gesture. It was an act that would soon eclipse all the others. This act - which was highly political, and not at all economic - ultimately paved the way for a faster reunification. But now, thirty years on, there are some who believe that perhaps that transition must still be considered incomplete.

Lastly, at the third round table, we will examine the prospects for the project of European integration, with the Western Balkan nations seeking accession, and enlargement likely to continue eastward. What is known as the "Eastern Partnership" has already been enshrined as a pillar of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Through this Eastern Partnership, the Union has shown its willingness to strengthen its political relations and economic ties with its immediate neighbours to the East. The underlying idea is indeed one of continuous progress towards the East, progress which, it is hoped, may succeed in erasing, bit by bit, and over the long term, the glaring differences that still exist today between Western and Eastern Europe in the institutional and economic fields.

In this sense, the Eastern Partnership is an act of faith in the advent of a fully reunified and prosperous Europe. It is certainly a generous and optimistic idea - but what form might our Union and our European project then take? Should we reopen the forgotten debates about a Europe of concentric circles, or might there be other perspectives? The other approach we might consider for the East is based in the hope that setting forth a dedicated policy for Eastern Europe would not only clearly demonstrate our interest in that region, but would ultimately help strengthen its normalization after 70 years of ideological antagonism with the West and constant impoverishment in the area.

So, as you can see, we have big ambitions in general, and big ambitions in particular for this conference, organized by the Senate European Affairs Committee on the initiative of our colleague Jean-Yves Leconte, a respected expert of this region of Europe that we have for too long left off the map, a lost part of Europe locked since Yalta into an immense bloc, unsuited to its true aspirations.

At a time when our Europe is under assault on all sides, we realize the importance of this unity. We are more than happy to find friends and allies. Nevertheless, we must all agree that the Europe's destiny is a difficult

one, since after two fratricidal wars and a cruel and unjust partition of our continent, it is still necessary today, in 2020, for us to work to heal the wounds left by mistakes made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century if we wish to remain a beacon for the world in the coming century, at a time when our planet's centre of gravity is shifting towards Asia.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all for being here at the Senate this afternoon, and I will hand the floor over to my colleague Jean-Yves Leconte, who, together with Georges Mink, will be hosting our first round table.



## ROUND TABLE NO. 1

### 1989 : THE REUNIFICATION OF EUROPE, ORIGINS AND DYNAMICS

Speakers at the first round table :

- **Mr Georges Mink**, Professor at the College of Europe and emeritus research director at the Institute for Political Social Sciences (CNRS-Université Paris Ouest La Défense, Nanterre);

- **Mr Andreï Gratchev**, historian, political scientist, former adviser and spokesperson for President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev;

- **Mr Žygimantas Pavilionis**, Ambassador, Vice-Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, International Secretary of the Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats party;

- **Mr Alexandru Herlea**, Professor Emeritus, former Romanian Minister of European Integration, former Romanian Ambassador to the European Union, and President of the association "La Maison Roumaine".

The round table was moderated by **Mr Jean-Yves Leconte**, senator representing French citizens living abroad, and member of the Senate European Affairs Committee.

#### I. MR JEAN-YVES LECONTE

Thank you Mr Chairman.

We have preferred not to devote this conference to the eastward enlargement of the European Union and dedicate it instead to the reunification of Europe, even if after Brexit European integration can no longer be seen as a project to be handled entirely by the Union. Nevertheless, that is indeed how it was seen, and events took place accordingly. When he first proposed the notion of confederation, François Mitterrand was thus able, in light of the prevailing political will to bring down the Iron Curtain, to send a shockwave through the scar tissue that had separated the European nations from each other. These nations had often been at war, but shared a common history - and for decades they had been unable to live together due to the division of Europe by the Yalta system.

The year 1989 marked a departure from that system to a new independence, affirming that the future of the peoples of Europe would not be negotiated with the great powers, but that on the contrary they would take charge of it themselves. Thirty years later, we are now witnessing some



unexpected developments in the European Union. A former French ambassador recently told me: "Where did we go so wrong to wind up here?" I am not sure whether this perception that we have failed is justified, but it is certainly felt. The debate around whether to continue to pursue or open new enlargement negotiations with some of the Balkan countries thus forces us to question ourselves.

But before we turn to thinking about the future, let us remember those moments of hope that we felt in 1956 and 1968. Those dates were marked by failed attempts to reform political systems in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. From the 1970s on, new approaches were taken by the social movement, or from an ethical perspective. I am thinking in particular here of the highly topical 1975 open letter from Václav Havel to Gustáv Husák, with its exposition of an ethics of citizenship, and its critique of the materialist world. I am also thinking here of the hopes that arose from Willy Brandt's "Ostpolitik", as well as of "Charter 77" and its ethical reflections on the notions of citizenship and respect for the human person. Both Karol Wojtyła's 1978 election as pope and the difficulties encountered by the USSR in Afghanistan profoundly changed the situation on the other side of the Iron Curtain. And of course we cannot fail to mention the Polish social movement of the 1980s with Lech Walesa, which, together with the reforms initiated following Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power, ultimately led to the events of 1989: the partly free elections in Poland, the Velvet revolution, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. I am also thinking here of the events of January 1991 in Vilnius.

We will return to these events, to see if the driving forces of 1989 are still alive. We will also examine their consequences. The first question I would like to ask our speakers today is this: were the origins and motivations that led to the events of 1989 correctly understood by other European countries? Should they continue to inspire our actions?

## II. MR GEORGES MINK

There was something of a downbeat tone to all or almost all of the commemorations of the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the communist regimes in Central Europe. The conferences organized in this context mainly addressed disillusion, betrayed dreams, wrong choices, and the misappropriation of the will of the people. The leaden weight of the perils of the present day seems to lie heavily upon perceptions of the year 1989, especially with the rise of populist narratives that find receptive ears in the social groups that have been excluded from the benefits of the transition policies. I am also thinking here of the national sovereignty narratives raised against European integration, and of the dismantlement of mechanisms of democratic control and their replacement by the mechanisms of authoritarian government. Lastly, it brings to mind as well the new

geopolitical configurations that are emerging, and the unpredictability of certain personalities with power over the fate of the world.

What is the cause-and-effect connection between the events of thirty years ago and those we are concerned with today? Starting in the years immediately preceding 1989, certain resources began to be amassed for future use by political actors. It is not determinism to identify and locate these resources, but simply part of an examination into the unpredictable effects of certain intentional actions and behaviours.

Some of the key actors of the time raised the alarm early on, such as Bronisław Geremek, who said in 1990: "We have freedom for sure, but whether we have democracy is uncertain." In May 2004, he added: "We have made Europe - but we still have to make Europeans. "

At the end of the 1980s, the situations in each country were nevertheless very different. In Poland there was a conflict underway between the power structure and society. Hungary, on the contrary, was still situated in the comfortable compromise summed up by the motto "goulash socialism," as the Communist Party splintered and the opposition struggled to find its way. For its part, Czechoslovakia, in spite of Charter 77 and the religious mobilization, was going through a normalization process, which appeared to be working even as it was in fact fizzling out. Bulgaria, meanwhile, followed in the footsteps of Gorbachevism and its *glasnost* policy. In Romania, Mr and Mrs Ceausescu still held power. This is a picture that does not account for certain deep tendencies, which were still underground, but it was the picture that dominated when Mikhail Gorbachev and his team were struggling to break free from the Brezhnev doctrine.

What was on the horizon in terms of expectations and tactical forecasts between 1987 and 1989? In the West, the general belief was that communism still had a long lifespan ahead of it. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, during a trip to Moscow, suggested to Mikhail Gorbachev that he should permit the "finlandization" of Central Europe in exchange for a guarantee that the Americans would not seek to draw the region over to the Western bloc. During his trip to Poland and Hungary, President George W. Bush situated himself intellectually within the communist storyline, two-headed power sharing, and the recognition of Wojciech Jaruzelski and the Hungarian leaders.

Ultimately in spite of his new year's wishes of 31 December 1981, when he declared, "we are going to do all the right things to get out of Yalta", François Mitterrand's vision for the future was limited to taking little steps at a time. Thus, he proposed a European confederation, which would include both Russia and the United States. European reunification, he added, would likely take decades. These remarks provoked a strong reaction from Vaclav Havel, outraged by Mitterrand's failure to understand the role that

Soviet Russia had played in his country for half a century. Confederation seemed to be little more than a ruse, designed to assuage impatience. To Central Europeans, it was seen as a kind of waiting room, or just a parking lot. Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl called for moderation, fearing an interruption to their *Ostpolitik* and to the growing rapprochement between the two Germanies. Many other examples of the geopolitical conservatism of the Western rulers of the day might be cited as well. As might have been expected, then, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia chose instead to form the Višegrad triangle in order to overcome the uncertainties in the East, and collectively tackle the transition to a European Community.

Uncertainty reigned in the East as well. Central European actors followed developments in Gorbachevism, often with a sceptical eye. Few believed that this would be a genuine turning point in Soviet foreign policy, despite the communications strategy of the Soviet leader, who was busy visiting Belgrade, Prague, Warsaw and Berlin. The Kremlin envoys were responsible for reassuring the satellite countries. In 1988, Leonid Jagodovski, discussing the events of the Prague Spring of 1968, declared : " No party can claim the right to call anyone to its aid to oppose a decision made by another country. "

In spite of a visit to Prague in 1987 that was disappointing to dissidents - and designed that way - Mikhail Gorbachev wanted change. Thus, when a journalist once asked him what the difference was between *Perestroika* and the Prague Spring, he replied : " just about twenty years. " Nevertheless, he hoped to see Alexander Dubcek come to power rather than Milous Jakes. It is well-known what happened next. The Gorbachevian scenario did not play out, and Vaclav Havel became the first president of post-communist Czechoslovakia, and Alexander Dubcek had to settle for the presidency of the Federal Assembly.

Mikhail Gorbachev wanted a sharing of power : the opposition forces would handle the economic crisis, and the Communists would take the president's office. It was a scenario that only came to be in three cases, and for very short periods of time : in Poland, with General President Wojciech Jaruzelski; in the USSR, with Mikhail Gorbachev; and in Bulgaria, with Petar Mladenov. The Gorbachevian vision for Europe was that everyone would live together in a shared home - a vision unsuited to the aspirations of the people, who were trying to free themselves from the Soviet yoke and were attracted to Western Europe.

One of the major consequences of what happened in 1989 has to do with the structures of legitimacy, both revolutionary and post-revolutionary. In fact, the way power was transferred - by negotiations held at round tables, or behind the scenes - tended to create confusion. The Communists immediately obtained significant gains in legitimacy. For the Polish or Hungarian ex-communists, who were engaged in the conversion of their party, the round tables offered a historical opportunity for two reasons. On

the one hand, the opposition would offer them the opportunity to negotiate a controlled and partial surrender. On the other hand, the round tables were also an opportunity for them to implicitly assert a kind of repentance, and seek their patriotic rehabilitation.

After 1989, a shift gradually took place, moving on from the failure of transitional justice to policies concerning the abusive tendencies of the criminal communist past. Disagreements on the interpretation of 1989 ultimately hardened around the theme of impunity for communist crimes. The lack of consensus on how to describe what really happened in 1989 facilitated the historical manipulation. One can simply look at the political effects of the attempt to delegitimize 1989 in Central Europe itself. This strange revolution, and the illegibility of its message, led to a whole beauty pageant of hybrid concepts, like historian Timothy Garton Ash's concept of "refolution" (a contraction of "reform" and "revolution"). It was an illegibility that opened the way not only for academic scepticism, but also for a whole class of political actors with demagogic tendencies, evoking an unfinished or betrayed revolution. Some even regret that blood was not spilled, and proposed a revolutionary second phase, enforced with executions, an absolute sea change.

Another semantic quarrel arose around the name to be given to the institutional integration process by which the countries of central and southern Europe would be brought into the European Community. The way not only the Eurocrats but Western politicians as well discussed European enlargement, it was as if they were ranking the countries of the continent between master nations and student nations. For the countries of the other Europe, it was simply a matter of reunification. In a recent speech at the Jagiellonian University, President Emmanuel Macron humbly acknowledged that this was a mistake. All European countries are equal from the perspective of their historical, cultural and geopolitical belonging. Nevertheless, Western countries must recognize their debt to Yalta, because they did nothing to prevent the Iron Curtain from dividing Europe in two. Albert Camus was right when he said : " To name things wrongly is to add to the misfortune of the world. "

Thank you.

### **III. MR ANDREĚ GRATCHEV**

Today's discussions should help us to explain this atmosphere of uncertainty, gloom, and perhaps even fear about the future of a project that seemed thirty years ago to portend a happy ending to history, with the reunification of a Europe that had been split in two since 1945.

It was the convergence of two major historical processes underway in the eastern part of Europe that made 1989 such a pivotal year. On the one

hand were the democratic aspirations of these societies, which were increasingly taking the form of popular movements. On the other, that state of affairs also coincided with the implosion of the Soviet system through Mikhail Gorbachev's project and the questioning of the Bolshevik model, which had been forced on Russian society as well. It was the convergence of these two currents that made possible the liberation of the two parts of Eastern Europe. And by this I mean not only the nations of Eastern Europe, but Soviet society itself, which saw in the Gorbachev project a hope of breaking free from a model it had been living under for more than 70 years. Soviet society saw that project of democratization and modernization as an opportunity to reconnect not only with the natural course of its history, but also with the rest of the continent.

Until these two major processes were able to converge, and as long as Europe, after Yalta, remained frozen in the ideological and strategic conflict between the two blocs, the protest and democratic currents in the Eastern European societies had no real chance of succeeding. I see the tragedies of Berlin in 1953, Budapest in 1956, and Prague in 1968 as proof of this. That is why, seen from the other side of the Iron Curtain, the process of 1989 actually began before 1989. It started in 1985, with the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev and the announcement of his project. It was then confirmed by Gorbachev's 1988 speech at the UN General Assembly. Its aim was to put an end to the Cold War, and heralded the official end of the "Brezhnev doctrine." It was a promise from the Soviet leadership that the Berlin, Budapest, and Prague events would not happen again.

We must also emphasize how much Gorbachev's project itself owed to the Prague Spring. It was an attempt to graft a variant of the Eurocommunist model onto Soviet society, characterized by a far more dramatic history and tradition. Gorbachev's announcement was confirmed by the withdrawal of half a million Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, leaving the regimes in place to face their own societies on their own. It was also confirmed by the departure of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and reforms that brought about a political democratization inside Soviet society. The first practically free elections were held in spring 1989 shortly before those in Poland, and served as a confirmation of Mikhail Gorbachev's appeal, which echoed the words of John Paul II : " Have no fear. "

Gyula Horn, Hungarian Foreign Minister at the time, told me in particular that Hungarian leaders made the decision to open the border with Austria without asking for permission from Moscow or even consulting with Mikhail Gorbachev, because they felt that as long as he was in power there was no need to fear Soviet military intervention.

I also feel that the human factor was essential. My reference here is to a book by British historian Archie Brown, aptly titled *The Human Factor*, which has three portraits of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Mikhail Gorbachev on the cover. Personally I would have added pictures of

François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl. I can only imagine what those years might have been like if the people in those pictures had been Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, and Vladimir Putin. I am not so sure in that case that we would now be celebrating the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Europe.

When Mikhail Gorbachev set this process in motion, he certainly could not have imagined the consequences. In Eastern Europe, for example, he certainly could not have imagined that Milous Jakes would be replaced by Vaclav Havel, or that Nicolae Ceausescu would be replaced by Ion Iliescu. Accused in his own country of having given away the fruits of the Soviet victory in World War II, he replied : " I have returned these countries to their own peoples. " It was up to them to choose the path of their future development, to choose their leaders.

And he could hardly have imagined all the consequences his policy would have for the development of his own country, either. His speech at the United Nations, asserting that people should have the freedom of choice, was heard around the world, including inside the USSR. This marked the beginning of a process that would lead, two years later, in 1991, to the break-up of the USSR and his own resignation. Nikita Khrushchev was one of the first to attempt a thaw policy in 1956, but later backpedalled - and therein lies the primary difference between the two : Mikhail Gorbachev did not shy away from the consequences of his actions. What a country may be called hardly matters much, the USSR being now called Russia again. What does matter is how this question will be answered : which Russia does Europe in fact have on its eastern border, and in what ways might it hope to influence its development in a positive direction ?

**Mr Jean-Yves Leconte.** - Thank you for these words and your conclusion. Zygimantas Pavilionis : in 1989 you were unwillingly a Soviet citizen. And for Lithuania, the independence process was not without its violence. Can you share your view of that period with us ?

#### **IV. MR ZYGIMANTAS PAVILIONIS**

I'd like to talk about the experience of the Baltic nations, but also that of the Black Sea nations. The number of martyrs who have died in these regions and in defence of European and Christian values has been the highest over the past 2000 years. We have been fighting to defend those values for a thousand years. The State once formed by these nations, together with Poland, stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea and was thus referred to by John Paul II as " the European Union of the Middle Ages. " However, we were wiped out by Russia, and Austria and Prussia, because our liberal, democratic model after approval of first written Constitution in Europe (inspired by French and American revolutionary ideas) posed a threat to the

systems of these three autocratic countries. Our history did not begin in 20<sup>th</sup> century. We have a long tradition of fighting for freedom and democracy.

Many freedom fighters were sent to die in Siberia. I completed my studies at the school that had the greatest number of victims killed by the soldiers at the TV tower sent by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991. That is why I cannot share such an amicable perspective on the role he played. Russia's vision traditionally was not a democratic one. Lithuania, on the other hand, had a European perspective. Having seen Russian special forces come to kill my friends, I felt I had to do something; so I decided to become a diplomat. I was the first diplomat appointed to prepare the ground for Lithuania's Eurointegration and later negotiate our accession to the European Union, and I think I have managed to implement the European vision that we share with the French, the Germans, and the Americans.

This was the precise opposite of the vision of the autocrats and murderers who ruled Russia in those days. However, it seems to me that this vision came to an end in 2008 at the NATO summit in Bucharest, and after the accession of Croatia to the European Union in 2013, which seems to have marked the end of transatlantic expansion. We have returned to a European context that leaves no room for countries like mine.

Andrei Grachev just now mentioned Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and Vladimir Putin. It seems to me that these figures represent the return of the European Realpolitik that held sway prior to the Second World War. I fear that Paris, Berlin and Washington may endorse this return and give up on the principle of defending human dignity, democracy and each European nation. Likewise, the vision of opening up the European Union to the Balkan countries now seems to have been abandoned. The autocratic regimes of Russia and China are gaining strength in this region and elsewhere in Europe. I remember very clearly that in 2008 I tried to warn France and Germany that there was a risk that Russia might occupy Georgia, but neither country reacted. At the time, I was the only representative in Brussels to request that sanctions be imposed against Russia. I denounced the prevailing spirit of appeasement, and warned that unless there were a reaction, Crimea would be next.

When the great Western powers give up their fundamental values, they lose out to autocracies like Russia and China. Brexit, or even the policies of Donald Trump to support Brexit, are legitimate causes of concern. It would thus seem that Europe is surrounded by countries that have their own vision for the future of Europe that is contrary to ours. The question is whether we fell the victims of their agendas, or implement our own. We share the ambition for a stronger Europe of Emmanuel Macron, we are ready to be active participants on the future of Europe debate. We are Euro-optimists, and we know that we must work to defend freedom at all times. But we do not think our Western friends are really ready to defend that vision of Europe whole and free, or to pursue the enlargement of Europe, not

only into the Balkans, but also into Ukraine, where 13,000 fighters died to defend Europe, or Georgia, or Moldova. Ukraine was attacked again today, despite Vladimir Putin's denials. I saw the Russian tanks in Georgia. The Russians have never complied with the agreement of 2008 negotiated by Nicolas Sarkozy to withdraw occupant forces from pre-war lines. If the European Union is not ready to defend its values in the face of these autocracies, it will be the end of Europe.

We must remain united, strengthen the European Union, and enlarge it to the countries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. These are European nations, baptized in the 4th or 5th century; they are still fighting, but we do not help them. We must come to their aid and defend our values - values that are shared not only by our friends in the Balkans, but also by our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Georgia. We must also think of the Russians. Vilnius is now a centre of Russian dissidents. Are we going to extend an olive branch to those who destroyed this country's future and pretended that they had nothing to do with the aggression in Ukraine, or do we support the Russian people, who have suffered from the KGB's reign for a hundred years? Can we together transform Russia and create longterm strategy of European Russia? I do not think that France currently imagines a future for Russia as part of Europe. On the contrary, Russia is strengthening its regime - a regime that is trying to crush the future of half of Europe.

**Mr Jean-Yves Leconte.** - Thank you. We will now hear from Alexandru Herlea, who will tell us about the events of 1989 in Romania, where the revolution was hardly a Velvet one.

## **V. MR ALEXANDRU HERLEA**

I intend in my speech to highlight the importance of history in understanding what happened in 1989 and the thirty years that followed. The Soviet occupation of Romania at the end of World War II resulted in persecution for 10 % of the population, two million men and women of all social categories. 600,000 of those Romanians were given penal sentences and 200,000 were imprisoned and deported without trial. The percentage of deaths is difficult to estimate. About 300,000 Romanians - those who were living in the territories torn from Romania after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and now located in the Republic of Moldova, and in those that today are part Ukraine, namely northern Bucovina and southern Bessarabia - suffered an even crueller fate, as the persecutions were also of an ethnic nature.

It is unfortunate that the history of the Eastern European countries is relatively unknown. Few people know, for instance, that the Romanian constitution of 1923, developed on the basis of the Belgian model, was one of the most democratic in Europe, guaranteeing universal suffrage and



providing protections for minorities. Romanian workers were guaranteed paid time off even before World War II.

The role of France in Romanian history is also largely unknown, although modern Romania is partly the work of the French. For example, who now remembers the role played in Romanian history by Napoleon III, Edgar Quinet, Jules Michelet, General Henri Mathias Berthelot, or Emmanuel de Martonne, to name a few? Many Romanians, too, have made eminent contributions to French culture, such as Constantin Brancusi, Victor Brauner, Tristan Tzara, Georges Enesco, Eugène Ionesco, Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Pierre Sergescu, Traian Vuia, and many others.

In Romania, as everywhere else, the transition from communism took place with no great legal proceedings equivalent to the Nuremberg trials. So far no purge law has been passed. The Romanian Parliament's 2006 condemnation of communism has remained a dead letter. Still today, the torturers of the *Securitate* receive pensions several times higher than the average pension provided to Romanians.

The management of the transition process remained under the control of the *nomenklatura* and the *Securitate*. Their members were thus able to retain real power, both political and economic. On the political level, still today they can be found both in the ranks of power and the opposition. The changeover was thus an illusion; democracy was just a facade. As historian Tom Gallagher pointed out in his book *Romania and the European Union*, those in power in Romania have become masters of "make-believe."

In terms of economic power, the old structures were able to utilize liberalism as a framework for the transition. The country was savagely looted, and today more than five million Romanians live abroad. The West, in its pragmatism, often refuses to face this reality, not only for the sake of efficiency in regard to its various material interests, but also because there was never a real strategy for the transition from communism to capitalism. It was improvised, with unmistakable dilettantism. I was Minister for European Affairs when the decision was made to open accession negotiations with Romania, and I saw it with my very eyes.

Fortunately, the European Union is firmly committed to the fight against corruption and for the proper operation of justice. This is shown by its cooperation and verification mechanisms. Nevertheless, unfortunate mistakes have been made; I am thinking above all of the impossibility of removing prosecutors, imposed by Brussels. While this may be perfectly desirable in a country with a democratic tradition, in the Romanian case, it has prevented the replacement of dinosaurs from the communist era.

In order to improve the process of European integration, we need an awareness of History. But the power structure in place in the former communist countries has sought to distort and control it. In Romania, the decisions of communist courts have been held as valid as long as they have

not been modified as part of a rehabilitation process. This is an insult to the victims of communism. Justice - a great European value - was thus left by the wayside after the transition from communism. Amnesia was promoted, instead of forgiveness based on admitting the sins and crimes committed and repenting for them. Protections of human rights have been skilfully exploited to prevent the course of justice. In the European Commission's 2017 White Paper, Jean-Claude Juncker referred to the four fundamental European values : peace, freedom, solidarity and tolerance. He made no mention of justice. This growing distance from the foundational Christian-Democratic values that gave rise to the European Union, particularly those of justice and solidarity, is quite visible in the European Parliament : the 1998 absorption of the European Union of Christian Democrats by the European People's Party and the way the latter party has evolved show it quite clearly.

It should nevertheless be pointed out that the September 2019 resolution entitled "Importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe" denounced the two totalitarianisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Communism and Nazism, with great lucidity, courage and vigour. The resolution was the fruit of a long struggle. As long as these two criminal regimes are not placed on an equal footing, Europe will not be able to move forward on the right track. Eastern Europe is particularly sensitive to this. This resolution also mentioned the USSR's June 1940 occupation and annexation of Romanian territory that were never returned. Thus, for the first time, the European Union recognized with some clarity the tragic situation faced today by Romanians living in the Republic of Moldova, southern Bessarabia and northern Bucovina.

I would like, if I may, to quote a few excerpts from this document : " whereas although the crimes of the Nazi regime were evaluated and punished by means of the Nuremberg trials, there is still an urgent need to raise awareness, carry out moral assessments and conduct legal inquiries into the crimes of Stalinism and other dictatorships. " It also stresses the need to keep " the memories of Europe's tragic past [...] alive, in order to honour the victims, condemn the perpetrators and lay the ground for a reconciliation based on truth and remembrance. " Finally, through this resolution, the European Parliament asserts that it " is deeply concerned about the efforts of the current Russian leadership to distort historical facts and whitewash crimes committed by the Soviet totalitarian regime and considers them a dangerous component of the information war waged against democratic Europe that aims to divide Europe, and therefore calls on the Commission to decisively counteract these efforts. "

I will conclude my remarks with the observation that today Romania is fortunately on the right side of the border separating the world of Western values from the Euro-Asiatic space dominated by Moscow. Despite the difficulties it has encountered in its thirty years of transition, it has seen substantial and promising development. That development however has

come about by ignoring people's suffering and refusing to provide justice, in contempt of ethics. The Memorial to the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance, in the Romanian city of Sighet, is one of three major memorials in Europe, along with the Auschwitz Memorial and the Caen Peace Memorial. In the words of its founder, Romulus Rusan: "The Romanians won back their freedom in December 1989 - but once they have been admitted to the free world, they hope to get the truth back as well." We need to promote the truth, and have the courage to assert our values, regardless of political correctness, that new kind of Marxist terrorism. That is the right path for countering the scepticism emerging today in Central and Eastern Europe.

I am convinced that as long as we do not prioritize our values correctly and apply our ethics efficiently, European integration will not emerge from its standstill.

**Mr Jean-Yves Leconte.** - It is certainly frustrating to have to interrupt our conversation to let the next panel begin. Nevertheless, our discussion has brought out some differences in the way the events of 1989 are perceived. It has also raised important questions. Have we really succeeded in liberating Russian society from the communist system? Have we fully accounted for the civic and social aspirations of the movements that led to 1989? Can we build the Rule of Law while disregarding the elements that are already there? It is with these uncertainties that Europe embarked upon its reunification. The round tables to come will doubtless help provide some answers.

## ROUND TABLE NO. 2

### 1989-2019 : REFLECTIONS ON THE ENLARGEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Speakers at the second round table :

- **Mr Lukas Macek**, Director of the European Campus of Sciences Po in Dijon;
- **Mr Joachim Bitterlich**, former Ambassador of Germany and professor at ESCP Europe;
- **Mr Gyorgy Karolyi**, Ambassador of Hungary to France and Monaco;
- **Mr Claude Martin**, Ambassador of France, and former Ambassador of France in Berlin;
- **Mr Georgi Pirinski**, former Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria and former MEP.

The round table was moderated by **Ms Anne-Catherine Loisiert**, Senator for *Côte d'Or*, Vice-President of the Senate's Economic Affairs Committee and member of its European Affairs Committee.

#### I. MS ANNE-CATHERINE LOISIERT

Greetings to you all.

Our second round table will discuss the return to Europe of the countries which were on the other side of the Iron Curtain, which had been deprived of their sovereignty and freedom until 1989.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, all these countries saw the possibility of a return to Europe, i.e., a return to democracy and a market economy. But our neighbours had another legitimate desire as well : protection under the NATO umbrella. Our neighbours thus tend to use the term "Euro-Atlantic integration", which expresses their desire to join the European Union at the same time as NATO.

Today, we wish to make a preliminary assessment of the enlargements of the Union, and of their successes and failures. Some of us will be discussing the need for historical reparations, a kind of delayed compensation for their countries' abandonment at Yalta. Others will highlight the economic development of the Central European countries. But

what do the peoples of these nations really think ? As President Larcher suggested in his introduction, are they disappointed ? They have certainly regained their freedom; but they may perhaps have lost some sovereignty. What hope does the European Union stir today among the young generations of Central Europe, who have not lived through all the phases of its construction ? At a time when the European Union must take the integration process to a new, more political level, and reclaim democratic legitimacy in a way, at a time when issues are arising around notions such as a European defence, migration policy or *green deal*, what are the hopes of the citizens of Central Europe ?

To take stock of these historic enlargements with us, I am very pleased that today we have among us speakers of very high quality, most of whom know our country well and have studied here at its prestigious institutions, such as at Dijon, Paris, and Strasbourg.

Before giving the floor to Lukas Macek, who will host this round table with me, I would like to point out the special nature of the Lycée Carnot in Dijon, where he completed his secondary studies : starting in 1920, under a Franco-Czech cultural agreement, about thirty Czech students came to study at the Lycée Carnot in Dijon. It was a system that operated from 1920 to 1938, in 1946 and 1947, and then again from 1968 to 1970, when the Communist regime put an end to it. After the Velvet Revolution, when the tradition was restored, you seized the opportunity to enrol. And today, you are the Director of the European campus of Sciences Po-Dijon.

## II. MR LUKAS MACEK

I would like to propose four themes for us to focus on as we take stock of the enlargements conducted in 2004, 2007 and 2013. The first is the striking discrepancy between the observed success of this eastward enlargement and the negative manner in which it is commonly perceived by public opinion and amongst political elites. Though many of the bleak scenarios foreseen by the opponents of the enlargement failed to materialize, it has nevertheless been held responsible for the many difficulties since experienced by the European Union. The enlargement was thus a formidable success technically and even economically, but a partial failure politically. The political elites of the West and the East have neither provided a motivating discourse to help move the project forward, nor successfully explained it to the citizens. France may perhaps have a special part in this issue. Indeed, there is an intimate link between the 2004 enlargement and the results of the 2005 referendum, in which the figure of the "Polish plumber" seems to me to have played a role.

There has also been some growing frustration in the Eastern countries, due to a sense that the Western countries have failed to take them

into consideration. During the electoral campaigns for the 2019 European elections, I was struck by the recurrence of this theme in some of these countries, which are nevertheless economically dynamic, and do not face the same difficulties as Western countries. A discourse of great self-confidence is emerging in those countries, highlighting their economic successes. These countries therefore believe that they should be listened to more by Western Europe, not only in economic matters, but also in terms of immigration issues. A rather bitter, harsh debate then ensued about Europe's values and identity.

In the Western part of the Union, a discourse has also emerged, asserting that the enlargement was botched. I feel that this position has recently been gaining ground again because there is a sense that Central Europe is taking steps backward in terms of democracy, politics, and the Rule of Law. It is a position that has received much attention in the media in particular, holds that the enlargement did not work, and that the hopes of 1989 were betrayed. This position sometimes takes on a certain culturalist overtone, implying that these countries are not mature enough for democracy. It is important that we examine just how true these assertions are. Are we really witnessing a downward spiral, or is this a normal phase of adaptation? Is a new model emerging? What should be done to handle the disagreements that have emerged on such fundamental subjects?

Finally, what lessons can we draw from this enlargement? How can we make sure that we help improve the process of enlargement into the Balkans, even though the situations encountered are very different either geopolitically, culturally and economically? We might also ask ourselves the same questions with regard to other potential candidates, such as Ukraine or Turkey.

**Ms Anne-Catherine Loisier.** - I am now pleased to welcome Joachim Bitterlich, an alumnus of the National School of Administration (ENA), and former adviser to Chancellor Helmut Kohl when the enlargement was being prepared. Mr Ambassador, I do not believe we could have found anyone more qualified than you to give us an informed perspective on Germany's role in the reunification of the European continent, since after all, you yourself were the defining witness of those historic times.

### **III. MR JOACHIM BITTERLICH**

I share the sentiment expressed by Lukas Macek. In fact, all the enlargements of the 1990s were rather unpopular, and reluctantly carried out. In technical terms, they were performed rather well, via the "screening" procedure. Though it is true that these enlargements have been an economic success, I have no hesitation in calling them a political failure. It seems to me

that with the exception of Germany and Austria, most Western countries have seen this enlargement from a technical, rather than a political perspective. Above all, we have overlooked the need of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to develop a new identity and a new national political legitimacy, before additionally taking on a European identity.

On the other hand, we demanded the impossible from them in terms of democracy, the Rule of Law, and economic reforms. We asked them to reach in record time standards we ourselves had fought for over more than fifty years and still had never succeeded in achieving. There are still fundamental differences between us, including between the French and the Germans.

From this perspective, the European Commission's report on the Balkans seems to me to be particularly technocratic, and politically unreadable. If I were a parliamentarian I would be unable to approve it. The only positive thing about it is that it shows a desire to conduct negotiations in "cluster" form, which helps foreground the fundamental issues. That is an aspect that was neglected in previous negotiations. I feel that Brussels and the Member States have failed to understand Croatia's situation. They do not seem to have understood the situation in the Balkans either. I fear, then, that the Zagreb summit in May 2020 will simply be a new example of the European Union acting haphazardly, without real vision. I feel it is essential to implement a radically different, and much more progressive approach, adapted to the specific circumstances of these countries.

**Ms Anne-Catherine Loisier.** - Ambassador Gyorgy Karolyi, it is a joy and an honour to welcome you to this conference, a great Europhile, also trained at French schools. You are a francophone and a Francophile. Your family, in exile in France until the fall of the Wall, won the right to return to Hungary after 1989, where you found your family property, which you transformed in 1994 into a foundation that promotes the dissemination of European culture.

You have an intimate knowledge of France, Hungary and Europe as a whole, and in your five years as an ambassador in Paris, you have been a brilliant defender of your country, which was under attack for its position on immigration.

#### **IV. MR GYORGY KAROLYI**

The subject that brings us together today is a particularly topical one, and a highly relevant one from Hungary's perspective. European integration, which began in 1950, is a continuum. Thus, it is not possible to separate what has happened over the last thirty years from what needs to be implemented now.

I may be more optimistic than the previous speakers. I think it is counterproductive to call this enlargement a failure. We have not failed at anything. Indeed, the reunification of Europe was such a political obligation that it would have been impossible to not do it. The mere fact that it took place is in itself a success. Today there are still a few snags, a few doubts to contend with - but that is part of learning to live together. It is just something we have to deal with.

Chairman Bizet has quite rightly cited the issues involved in the conversion of the Deutsche Mark and Ostmark currencies at the time of German reunification. This is a typical example of a technically catastrophic but politically indispensable measure. All the credit goes to Helmut Kohl, who had the courage to make that decision, one that many contested, and that many still contest today. The accession of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was likewise a political decision, in the noble sense of the term. Certainly there is room for multiple criticisms on the technical level. Many explained that these countries were not ready, and that they had to meet certain conditions prior to gaining membership. This all may be true, but considering the circumstances, the opportunity had to be seized.

As far as Hungary is concerned, I think this story began before 1989. During the 1956 revolution, Hungary was brave enough to come knocking on the door of the free world. But the door was slammed in its face. The USSR was primarily responsible for the situation, of course, but the West failed as well by not coming to help Hungary. Ultimately, we had to wait fifty years to finally join the European Union. Had the Iron Curtain not existed, I think that the Union's founding countries would have been much more numerous. Indeed, Hungary would most likely have been one of them, because of its deep aspiration to join Europe. The current situation represents the miracle of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nobody expected it; I myself am a product of that divine surprise we all had when these countries were opened and granted accession to the European Union.

Nobody has the right to stop this process. It is bound to include all six states of the Western Balkans. Of course, a number of conditions must be met. We ourselves have gone through a long process of learning what the European Union is all about. Thus, during his first government between 1998 and 2002, Viktor Orban lamented the European Union's repeated promises of membership "next year," which kept being postponed another year and another year. We must not make empty promises. Moreover, if we get caught up in considerations that are too highly technical, it is to be feared that nothing will happen. Hungary is a strong supporter of the enlargement of the European Union to the six countries of the Western Balkans. We know that there is reluctance in various countries, including France. That reluctance having been expressed, the European Commission has taken up the issue. Even if certain aspects of the accession programme we have been given are questionable, at least we do have a programme. It tries to make



room for the sensitivities of both the countries in favour and those opposed to this enlargement.

It is quite legitimate to expect the Balkan States to make an effort to adapt, as we have had to do, and to assimilate the *acquis communautaire*. However, there are two dangers, to which we must pay great attention so as not to halt this process. Thus, the argument is often advanced that public opinion is reluctant about this enlargement. Nevertheless, it is hard for me to grasp the merits of that argument. Governments are certainly under an obligation to follow the state of public opinion in their country. Nevertheless, they also have the obligation to be good at explaining things to the public when they are convinced of the salutary and necessary character of a measure. Many politicians are capable of rising to this task. Thus it seems to me that this argument simply hides a desire to not conduct the enlargement.

There is a second argument put forth in opposition to the enlargement, however, that seems to me more dangerous than the first. It is that the European Union should itself be reformed before it can integrate these new countries. But the European Union is above all a process, which has no end in itself. That is something for which we must certainly congratulate ourselves. It is such a unique structure that it has to reinvent itself constantly. That is what makes it unique and valuable. Thus, it would be quite difficult for it to ever find the right moment to take action if it is supposed to wait until "the end" of its reform process. That is why I fear that this argument may end up being used to refuse the accession of these countries, even once they have implemented all the requested reforms. I may perhaps be too concerned about the mind-set of the managers who will need to decide to carry out the enlargement, but I would like it to be done transparently, and in the best interests of Europe. If we do not include the Western Balkans in our vision, others will include them in theirs. Moreover, this enlargement is essential to ensure the security of the European Union. The Union's institutional perimeter must cover its geographical perimeter, and that is why Hungary calls for enlargement as quickly as possible.

**Ms Anne-Catherine Loisiert.** - Ambassador Claude Martin, we are honoured that you have taken a moment out of your active retirement to come here to the Senate to share your experience with us. You have published a book of memories and precepts for future generations of diplomats called *La diplomatie n'est pas un dîner de gala* [Diplomacy Is Not a Dinner Party]. For this book, you recently received the Grand Prix des Ambassadeurs francophones de France, as well as the François Mauriac Prize. We are eager to hear your analysis, in particular concerning Germany, with which you are very familiar.

## V. MR CLAUDE MARTIN

I would like to take Franco-German relations as my starting point here today. At all the negotiations where I was an active participant, there was always talk of the coming "great enlargement" of the European Union. We had never experienced such a thing. I spent three and a half years negotiating the conditions of membership for the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark. That turned out to be quite difficult. The whole process was endorsed by a referendum, held among the peoples of the founding nations of the European Union. It was an experience that left a lasting impression on me. But I think it is important that we go back to the origins of the European project. I was born in 1944. Across the street from the house I grew up in, someone wrote "Death to General Speidel" on the wall ; that was General Rommel's deputy, who General Eisenhower later appointed Commander-in-Chief of NATO landforces in Central Europe. Obviously, it was difficult to accept, but we accepted it. Thus we have built our entire future on the great reconciliation between France and Germany. I can consider myself a European above all because this project allows those two countries to join together in a great adventure.

When I was Director General for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I participated in the Franco-German summit in Dijon with Jacques Chirac. There was then some tension between France and Germany at the time partly to do with the mad cow crisis, but especially to do with Union enlargement. From the end of François Mitterrand's term of office, France considered Germany to be somewhat torn between its love for the European Union and other stresses upon it. Many discussions were thus held at the Dijon summit on how enlargement should be conducted.

Against this background, the violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who was set to give a concert at the Dijon opera at the time, was invited to a luncheon. There, Jacques Chirac asked him for his advice on how best to bring about European integration, and he replied : " People always ask me why I love music, and why I became a musician. I owe it to my mother, and to the fact that while I was in my mother's womb, she was playing, and I was listening. So I think you French and Germans ought to learn to listen to each other. If you learn to listen to and respect one another, you will be able to build Europe together. " I have always believed that this maxim should guide us in European affairs.

In 1993, the then Foreign Minister Alain Juppé told me that I was going to be placed in charge not only of enlargement, but also of the reform of the European Union. It was indeed obvious that we were facing a task of unprecedented magnitude. Our first enlargement took on three countries - the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland; we then expanded to one more, Greece, and then to two more, Spain and Portugal. But then we had another

ten or twelve countries to deal with. So it was necessary to proceed methodically.

By 1969, at the Amsterdam summit, we were already of the belief that it would be necessary to strengthen the European Community before enlarging it to include the United Kingdom. I find that to be a perfectly logical approach. Before taking ten additional passengers on the boat, one should make sure that it will not sink. So, when I was Director General for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1994 to 1998, we tried to make the European boat capable of accommodating those ten new passengers.

I have very much come to regret the Maastricht Treaty. It basically brought together several cooperation programs without much in common with one another under three pillars and a shared roof. We could also have thought about a step-by-step integration of candidates, where that they might be brought into the European Community but perhaps not yet integrated into intergovernmental cooperation in matters of security or diplomacy. Faced with a list of very different candidates, a diversified set of responses might have been offered. But that was no longer possible after Maastricht.

We also considered not integrating all of these countries at the same time, and possibly starting with the four countries of the Višegrad group. For my part, I was in favour of that approach, because we had already succeeded in implementing an enlargement of that size. Furthermore, the information at our disposal showed that these four countries would have less difficulty adopting the *acquis communautaire*. Nevertheless, other countries protested against this selection, complaining that they too had suffered under Soviet dictatorship. So the idea of organising that big enlargement came about based no longer solely on economic and political criteria, but often on moral criteria as well.

We knew that the enlargement would involve risk, especially since we were including Malta and Cyprus. Conducting an enlargement of that magnitude within such tight deadlines required considerable work. My German colleague Hans Friedrich von Ploetz and I toured various cities in those countries to explain why the negotiations were taking a while. Nonetheless, the negotiations ended up rushed, and the notion that the European Union needed to be strengthened to give it the capacity to absorb its new members fell by the wayside. The European Council meeting in Amsterdam turned out to be catastrophic. At the meeting Jacques Chirac tried to convince the Member States that a kind of European Security Council ought to be set up, and that the decision-making process could be streamlined. Indeed, it seemed as if it would be impossible to make decisions with 28 members. This proposal was not directed against anyone in particular, since it was provided that the members of the council would be

rotated fairly. But it was not accepted, due to the selfish reflexes of certain countries.

Finally, at the Nice summit, we basically "broke the mechanism" of European decision-making. All the Member States had been dissatisfied with it anyway. The constitution that was then submitted to the peoples of Europe has now become a general rule through the Treaty of Lisbon, but it does not really work. It keeps the European Union locked into its state of powerlessness. Comparing the present situation to the European Community that I originally chose to engage with as a committed European, I see Europe failing everywhere to play its proper role. Indeed, when I began my career, we were on par with the United States. The common trade policy has broken down as well. Last, we are discussing whether North Macedonia should be admitted to Europe, when the UK has exited. We would perhaps be wise to ask ourselves what kind of body we really wish to form together. I thought it was just as important to make efforts to keep the UK in as it is to make efforts to bring in new Member States.

**Ms Anne-Catherine Loisier.** – We are very honoured to welcome Georgi Pirinski, Member of the European Parliament for Bulgaria. You were born in New York, where your parents had taken refuge to escape the dictatorship. So you have felt the consequences of the division of Europe in your own life. Your country is now a member of the European Union, but difficulties have persisted since accession. Perhaps that is why your reaction to the positions taken by our President Emmanuel Macron, who has put forward a program for Europe based on freedom, defence and progress, was such a vigorous one. Your position is that the European Union's three pillars for the future must rather be solidarity, cohesion and convergence.

## **VI. MR GEORGI PIRINSKI**

I would like to thank Ms Loisier for the kind introduction, as well as President Bizet for the invitation. As to my family history, I am afraid it is a bit more complicated, however I would not like to pursue that theme here.

Bulgaria is the 13th year of its membership, having joined the Union as of January 1st 2007. In its first term as President of the Council in the first half of 2018 it was recognized, with some surprise, that the country demonstrated a high level of competence and remarkable ability in achieving agreement on a large number of dossiers on the agenda.

Yet in Bulgaria the most hotly contested issue over the past several years has been the Mobility Package on road transportation, supported by older members with arguments that it is necessary in order to counter what is known as social dumping in the transport sector, as well as letter-box companies. However in Bulgaria and other newer members the package

provisions have been seen as a veiled attempt to eliminate the competition of their national road haulers that have achieved significant shares of the European market.

This sharp confrontation is an indicative reflection of the problems and frustrations that have built up over the 15 years of what was misnamed the fifth "enlargement" as of 2004. By the way, no one has used so far the term "accession", and what we were talking about then was us "acceding" to the European Union, with the notion that there was not much room for negotiation, but rather for accepting the terms of the "club". The EU 15 are experiencing increasing discontent over what they see as workers from Eastern members unfairly taking jobs away from local labor, billions of cohesion funds inefficiently spent plus growing disregard for EU core values and rules.

From the point of view of a newer member like Bulgaria the assessment is quite the opposite. The drastic deindustrialization in the very first years post-1989 and the following collapse of living standards led to the emigration roughly 1.5 million active-age people, not infrequently being employed by western companies profiting from reduced wages and irregular terms of employment. As to structural funds, it has been estimated that over 50% of transfers eventually returned to western contractors, thus making marginal contributions to the development of local industries. Hence the bitterness in society, necessarily reflected in official positions, that in an industry such as road transport, where Bulgarian companies have been able to compete successfully, there is now an effort underway in effect to take away a means of hard-earned income on which several hundred thousand drivers and their families depend for their livelihood.

Last Saturday in Munich President Macron in setting out his 10-year vision for Europe, urged European countries to recognize that the continent was reaching the hour of truth, the moment when it must decide about greater integration and commonality. The Conference on the Future of Europe offers an opportunity to realize that the transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, by following the dominant neoliberal approach, have led to captured market economies, controlled by elites that have appropriated economic and political power, leading to extreme inequalities and social exclusion of large parts of the population.

And also to forge the will to subordinate all policies and resources to the overarching objectives of Article 3 of the Treaty, namely to foster sustainable economic growth and price stability in a highly competitive social market economy with full employment and social progress, combatting social exclusion and discrimination and promoting social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child, together with the protection and improvement of the environment.

The Western European countries should be aware of the deep transitional dislocations sustained by the countries of Eastern Europe. The efforts of the former to enhance European integration may not always have been of comparable magnitude to the severe challenges confronting the latter. As to the future of Europe, whilst pursuing the development of European sovereignty, the countries of Europe must recognize the need for preserving a degree of national sovereignty as well, as the way to ensure a positive future for the European project. Claude Martin spoke of the importance of another vital issue, that of the need for reconciliation. The presentations preceding my own have seemed to me to express significant bitterness and failed expectations.

As for myself, I can share with you, from my personal experience as a participant in the 1990 National Round Table that led to the holding of the first free elections in Bulgaria in June of the same year and the adoption of its new democratic Constitution, how challenging a task reconciliation is. It is still a challenge today, not only for our societies, but for Europe as well. In that respect, I am disappointed that the European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 has created a rift amongst us.

## VII. QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- (1) As a speaker I spend much of my time combating the lies or misconceptions going around about how the European Union works. Claude Martin has asserted that the Treaty of Lisbon made us powerless. Could you explain why? Moreover, what do you propose to remedy it?

**Mr Claude Martin.** - I have no particular proposal, but in my experience, I see that the European decision-making mechanism does not work. As Ambassador in Berlin, I witnessed the whole debate on the reform of European institutions. What we ended up with was the TCE (Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe), which was rejected by the French people. It was subsequently amended and became the Treaty of Lisbon, which was approved by parliamentary procedure. But I feel that the treaty fails to give the European Union decision-making capacity on a number of subjects.

Thus, the weighting used at the European Council, and the functioning of the European Commission itself, with its principle of one commissioner per Member State, have diminished the realism and legitimacy of these institutions. I no longer vote in European elections, and yet at the National Assembly I supported the act that made European parliamentarians subject to election by universal suffrage. I think that the way the election process works makes it impossible to communicate the will of the people to

the mechanisms of European governance. A Member State with only 300,000 inhabitants might have 6 members in the European Parliament today. So some MEPs can end up representing twenty times fewer voters than others.

I have had to defend the European budget many times before Parliament. I know very well how it works. Nevertheless, it is very detached from the people. My former colleague, Nathalie Loiseau, who was heading a list in these elections, is a highly qualified person. But during this election, when they voted either for or against her, the voters were actually voting for or against Emmanuel Macron. The other people on that list were unknown to the citizens. Thus, they were not actually expressing their opinion on European issues. That is part of that detachment from European institutions.

(2) Do you consider the media to have some responsibility for this state of affairs ?

**Mr Claude Martin.** - I never place the blame on the media. I was very much in favour of the creation of Euronews, which I felt could be a European media outlet capable of covering Europe. It certainly has an important role, but I feel it is of marginal importance in the actual formation of European public opinion. One of the few positive provisions I see in the Treaty of Lisbon is the provision that provides the possibility of organizing consultations at Union level. But we have not yet explored that path.

**Mr Lukas Macek.** - I would say this is no more than the age-old debate about whether to see the glass as half empty or half full. I find that the reaction of our 28 Member States, now 27, to the very severe crises that have impacted the European Union since 2008 has been better than their reaction to the crises of the 1970s. The European project fell apart completely in those years, and was then relaunched in the 1980s. The 28 Member States had a difficult time managing the crises, but in the end, on the verge of disaster, the 28 Member States have always come out with a Europe-wide solution. We never relapsed into widespread protectionism, and the common market was not dismantled. In terms of international politics, I find it remarkable that with 28 members we were able to reach an agreement to place sanctions on Russia.

The list of post-Lisbon successes is therefore not so small. I might mention other initiatives, such as the energy-climate package, which seemed unattainable but was nevertheless adopted. The idea that it is necessarily more difficult to decide between 28 of us than 15 or 9 seems to me a misconception. The Member States have a certain tendency to imitate the others, and most new members tend to take rather conforming positions.

They have at times modified the balance of power, but have rarely brought in new elements making the conflicts more numerous or more complex.

To my mind, the Treaty of Nice was a real disaster. If we had managed to agree as a group of 15 on what we agreed on as a group of 28 in Lisbon, I think we would have spared ourselves a lot of trouble.

**Mr Gyorgy Karolyi.** - It seems to me that we should not attach too much importance to institutions. They provide a framework, but politics is conducted by people. When the political will to accommodate a given institutional framework is there, things can move forward. It reminds me of Jean Racine, the playwright who provides no directions for the actors in his plays. Thus they do not know how to behave, or what intonation to adopt. And a play's success, ultimately, depends on how it is performed. The political world, whether governments or the voters who appoint them, must understand that is under no obligation to adapt to the institutions, and is at liberty to do as it pleases.

**Mr Joachim Bitterlich.** - I am in favour of enlargement for the Balkan countries, but I would like to see it done more intelligently than the way it is envisioned in the European Commission's plans at the moment. Integration needs to take place differently depending on the country at hand.

Moreover, the reform of the European Union is a very broad topic. Nevertheless, politics seems to me to come first, before institutions. Thus, we should concentrate on a small number of projects that might appeal to our populations: namely, migration and internal security; defence policy; economy and research; and environment. If the Heads of State focused on these four subjects, it would send a strong message of Europe's vitality.

**Ms Anne-Catherine Loisier.** - Thank you.





## ROUND TABLE NO. 3

### 2020: WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE EUROPEAN PROJECT ?

Speakers at the third round table :

- **Mr Andi Mustafaj**, associate of the Robert Schuman Foundation;
- **Mr Christophe Parisot**, advisor for European affairs to Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and deputy director of the cabinet of Ms Amélie de Montchalin, Secretary of State for European Affairs;
- **Ms Rudina Hajdari**, Chairperson of the European Integration Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania;
- **Mr Ralf Gjoni**, Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania;
- **Mr Oleh Shamshur**, Ambassador of Ukraine to France, Permanent Delegate of Ukraine to UNESCO;
- **Mr Nikola Poposki**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia, President of the National Council on European Integration of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The round table was moderated by **Mr Jean Bizet**, senator for *La Manche*, and chairman of the Senate European Affairs Committee.

#### I. MR JEAN BIZET

With the first two round tables of this conference, we intended to take some time to look back on history, both the genesis of 1989 and the last thirty years. As Victor Hugo once said, " the future is a door, and the past is its key." When planning for the future, it is important that we do not underestimate the weight of the past, though without seeking to exploit it.

An end to fifty years of Nazi and then Soviet occupation, the beginning of the reunification of Europe, with many countries of Central Europe regaining their sovereignty - a great wind of hope has carried the European project since 1989, but opposing winds have also risen, notably with the awakening of populism and nationalism, feeding persistent bilateral conflicts, and feeding the temptation of a new, illiberal authoritarianism. Winds from afar are blowing more and more strongly in the very heart of

Europe, coming from Russia, Turkey, China and even the Gulf countries. War has even returned to our continent, to Georgia and then to Ukraine, not to mention terrorism and cyber-attacks. All this has challenged the European project, which at the same time has been shaken by the departure of a Member State from the Union. In this regard, I heard Claude Martin's comments. We are indeed approaching difficult times. I have just returned from London, where I have been impressed by the change in the atmosphere over the past few weeks.

As our Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian - whose Europe adviser, Christophe Parisot we are happy to have here today - pointed out in Prague last December, this project is simultaneously one of humanism, convergence, and of European power at the service of our peoples. The challenge here for Europe is to take a lead role in forging its own destiny, breathing life into this project which forms our common identity. At the foundation of Europe's is unity in diversity - and that is the only foundation capable of guaranteeing our collective security while respecting the primary principles adopted in Helsinki in 1975 and detailed in the Charter of Paris of 1990. That is the European outlook that we hope to see shared by all the countries of our continent, and was expressed at the Thessaloniki summit in 2003.

In this context, the European Council's October 2019 decision to postpone the opening of accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia was not well received. France has been largely held responsible. That was certainly the feeling in Zagreb, which I visited last December with a few colleagues from the Senate European Affairs Committee.

Even though I share President Emmanuel Macron's ambition to make the accession process more dynamic and credible, I must admit that I would have preferred if the European Council, instead of simply saying "no," had said "yes, but" to those countries knocking on the Union's door. I am not sure that we fully anticipated the extent of the disappointment that followed in Albania, but especially in North Macedonia. That country has indeed made a historic gesture by agreeing with Greece to change its own name.

And have we really fully grasped the extent of emigration from the Western Balkans, which impoverishes those countries and reduces pressure to create the necessary political changes? Have we forgotten why the Balkans look like a powder keg? Andi Mustafaj, who works with the Schuman Foundation and wrote a noteworthy article on European policy in the Western Balkans, will help remind us. It is my pleasure now to yield the floor to him, with my thanks to all presenters for coming to be with us here today.

## II. MR ANDI MUSTAJ

The European project and its enlargement are like a married couple, and probably one of the oldest in the European Union. From the genesis of this couple and up until recently they have been entwined in what is an almost passionate relationship, and in their own eyes and both for their admirers and detractors as well they have always relied on one another and completed each other.

But relationships within a couple evolve over time - and when one or the other cannot reinvent themselves, the other has to keep going alone. And if nobody really thinks through that change, it becomes just unwanted. Europe has been exposed to the risk of stagnation by a great many of those in charge in Brussels, who have been unable to define the third phase of the European project after attaining peace and attaining prosperity. So, gradually, as sometimes happens in a couple, one of the two partners simply withdraws into the shadow of the other. Thus, the European project has been diluted as a result of Europe's enlargement.

In Brussels and in most of the European states, there is a constant insistence on the need to unite, to reunite the peoples of Europe. People warn of historic error and injustice whenever the opening of negotiations is postponed even by just a few months, forgetting that human beings unite when they have a common cause and a shared outlook. The stronger the cause and broader the shared outlook, the stronger shall be the union that arises.

The candidate states for their part speak of broken promises, clearly perceiving the near-automatic nature of a process sufficient unto itself. They feel membership in the Union is owed to them, and it appears as a kind of El Dorado, which they aspire to discover. In so doing, however, they forget to think about what their country can contribute to the European project.

Enlargement has been gradually emptied of substance, and has become a mere technical, mechanical matter, and, as it is approached today - we must face it - an absurd one. The capacity of a given State to join the Union is assessed by its capacity to translate into its internal body of law a set of norms that are supposed to represent European standards. It is like a kind of original sin. A written legislative measure cannot be understood independently of the population and legal culture of the country where it is to be applied. A powerful reminder of this simple truth is necessary, since it seems to have been completely forgotten.

During my time at the Albanian Ministry of Justice, first as a civil servant, and then as an advisor to the minister, I was shocked by the multitude of bills that we had to make law almost as-is, because that was what the European Union wanted. These bills were very often poorly put together, for various reasons.

First of all, they failed to take into account the specific local characteristics of Albania. For instance, legislation concerning the right to information in public documents was certainly based on the best European standards, but it ignored a difficult reality on the ground, in towns and villages outside the capital. It ignored the need for investment in infrastructure, and for a cultural change on the subject, which largely made the law *de facto* inapplicable.

Furthermore, these bills are usually the result of legislative scheming. So, the reassuring argument put forth by the representatives of the European Union in asserting that the specific administrative justice system created in Albania would be of the highest quality was that this system took the best of both the German and French systems, even when those two systems of administrative justice are so contradictory. Moreover, no attempt was ever made to investigate the real nature and inspiration of Albanian administrative law.

Finally, the gradual additions of legislation have caused, are causing, and will continue to cause a reduction in the overall coherence of the legal system. At the whim of successive Union representatives from different countries, and with no particular knowledge of the candidate states, public law, or state reform, and at the whim of the various countries that win development aid tenders, whole packages of legislation with no ideological coherence continue to pile up.

These elements are of crucial importance because slowly but surely a clear separation has been created between the formal State and the real State, between the country we see in the texts published in the Official Gazette and the one we see in everyday life. Nevertheless, all that counts in the progress reports is that the laws have been enacted. But that is just a kind of ostrich policy.

Everyone is concerned about the Balkans again now. The United States seem to have lost their sense of reality in the region, as shown by their sometimes surprising positions. Russia and Turkey are back too, with cross-purposed and harmful policies of ethnic and religious affirmation. China is making the most of monetary geopolitics by routing a segment of its Silk Roads through the region.

The European Union's only response cannot be enlargement for the sake of enlargement. While it is true that this would reduce the risks posed by these foreign influences in the region and on the Union, it is in fact only a short-term solution, and fails to respond to that dichotomy between the formal State and the real State. It poses a risk to future generations, to whom we have a collective responsibility.

A window of reform seemed to have been opened with the refusal of France and certain other countries to open negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. Unfortunately, the Commission's response has not been

up to par. The proposal went from 35 chapters to a mere 7 : the procedure thus remains technical and formal. The role of the Member States has certainly increased, but their assessment will still be based on a truncated system of values.

If we refuse to define the third phase of European integration, we must at least redefine the enlargement procedure in order to really help candidate states strengthen themselves, and reduce the gap that has arisen between the real world and the formal world. This may involve defining high-priority major projects that could become the subject of enhanced partnerships between the Union and the candidate states. These projects would need to be organized on the basis of observations on the ground.

For example, how can the *spoils system* and partisan subordination be broken in the administration of a country when public officials have a protected status ? By creating an enhanced partnership to address access to civil service positions, since by guaranteeing a truly impartial and merit-based system, we can break the influence of political parties in appointments and transfers of positions in the administration. This reduces the risk of systemic corruption, as public officials would owe their positions only to themselves.

How can we fight against the manipulation to which an uneducated rural and peripheral population is still subject, even when education is free and compulsory ? By creating an enhanced partnership in the educational field, by investing in training and improved working conditions for teachers, and by providing support to improve the organization of the educational system.

The creation of the European Union was possible because it was supported by a generation with a common goal. Today's generations are looking not so much for a goal as for meaning in what they do. We urgently need to discover, or rediscover that meaning in the European project, in order to re-establish the balance between the project and enlargement and ultimately make the European Union strong.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - I am now pleased to welcome Christophe Parisot, advisor for European affairs to Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and deputy director of the cabinet of Amélie de Montchalin, Secretary of State for European Affairs. You have served successively as advisor to several ministers for European affairs. Prior to that, you were Chief Advisor at the French Embassy in Budapest from 2003 to 2007, when Hungary joined the European Union. We are aware of the upheaval caused in the Balkans as a result of the position taken by France at last October's European Council meeting. Though fundamentally the French proposal, which was intended to improve the accession process, did receive a rather positive reception, because the proposal was put on the table after that

meeting of the European Council, and not before, there was some misunderstanding. Ultimately many people are unsure about what France's vision is for Europe's next steps on the road to reunification.

### III. MR CHRISTOPHE PARISOT

France does indeed appear to be an easy target for blame, and has been since year 1989-1990, because of our initial reaction to the great enlargement. But, as the President of the Republic reminded us, France is also favourable toward enlargement. The prospect of the accession of the Western Balkans countries was thus never called into question. These countries are European, and are entitled to join the European Union. There's no question about that. Moreover, many hide at times behind the French position, which is often misunderstood or poorly presented.

Previous enlargements have undeniably been rather successful. But the European project should not be confused with the enlargement process. Enlargement is not the only cause upheld by the European Union. Our proposal therefore starts from a threefold observation, and is based on three principles that are intended to guide the reform of the process. It is intended to respond to three key issues.

First of all, the preliminary process, which we had nevertheless already reformed, did not fit with the reality of the regions, or the interests of our nations, or of the candidate countries. It made no provision to address the brain drain or the demands of the people. We thus had some doubts as to the substance of the transformations it made possible. So we had to be pragmatic, instead of allowing ourselves to pursue too formal a vision. Simply incorporating the 36,000 pages of the *acquis communautaire* into national law does not suffice to prepare a candidate state to join the European Union.

Moreover, it would seem to us that enlargement has been the exclusive prism through which relationships with Western Balkans nations have been viewed. For instance, at the Berlin Process summit in Poznan, it was agreed that we would not talk about enlargement, but about economic development, youth, and enhanced cooperation. However, 90 % of the discussions did end up focusing on the question of enlargement and on the opportunity to open a new chapter. This is unfortunate, because we have to be political, not technical.

The question of enlargement is ultimately linked to the future of the European project. This is a geostrategic issue, because we are in a context of geopolitical competition and influence from other actors in this area of Europe. Those actors do not share our agenda. We must therefore guard against both instability and projects that would go against our values.

Based on this triple observation, the response given at the European Council of October 2019 underlined the need for three prerequisites for enlargement, the first being process reform. The second prerequisite is compliance with the criteria, which requires not only the adoption of the reforms, but also their actual implementation. This will need to be evaluated over time, since a reform cannot bear fruit immediately. The criteria nonetheless remain the same, whether regarding Rule of Law or market economy. With that in mind, we thus await the next reports to be released by the European Commission on North Macedonia and Albania, which should be published in the coming days. We will then be able to reassess the extent of the implementation of the requested reforms, which, in October 2019, was not deemed perfectly satisfactory.

Moreover, as the President of the Republic emphasized in Munich, no accession is possible before the Union is reformed. Contrary to what Gyorgy Karolyi has suggested, I do not see this prerequisite as a fool's bargain. Lastly, the final criterion must be the settlement of regional disputes. This is no formal criterion: it is essential that these disputes be kept out of the European Union.

Thus, France has set forth three principles in the frame of the process reform. In this regard we are satisfied with the methodology proposed by the European Commission on 5 February 2020, because we find those principles to be present. The first is gradualism in access to these policies. Joachim Bitterlich has pointed out the fact that we have gone from 35 chapters to seven. But from my perspective, the reality is more complex. These chapters have been grouped together in a coherent manner. These blocs must provide access to European policies, i.e., a concrete fulfilment, both for States and their populations, of what membership in the European Union means. These States have access to a number of programs, such as Erasmus, but the objective is to go further, to allow them to prepare more effectively.

The second principle is reversibility. We used to talk about it as a slide, meaning that once negotiations were launched, final integration would be automatic, perhaps even rushed. That automatic nature thus tarnished the credibility of the process. The preceding methodology of course had sought to place the fundamentals at the heart of the process, in particular the Rule of Law. It was however specified that whether or not these criteria were met would only make accession more or less rapid. Thus it did not provide any possibility of reversibility, and did not allow us to achieve the result we wanted. That is why we felt reversibility was important. If problems are observed, the benefits acquired should be able to be reversed.

The last principle is that of the credibility of the process, which can be evaluated through political management, but above all through the fundamentals: Rule of Law, market economy, measures against corruption, respect for fundamental freedoms, and a functional justice system. I feel that any enlargement that does not respect these principles would be built on



quicksand. We therefore agree with the new methodology, and will keep it in mind in our approach to future discussions.

These principles respond to three key issues, starting with ensuring the better preparation of the countries of the Western Balkans. That also makes it possible to restore the enlargement process back to the context of our vision for Europe, which the President of the Republic invoked quite clearly in his speech at the Sorbonne. The issue of sovereignty is indeed an essential one. We believe European sovereignty can be strengthened through this method and through the values underlying it. It is an issue of power and efforts to combat external interference.

We must also remember that there are other processes through which we maintain relations with the countries of the Balkans, aside from enlargement. Among these I might mention the Berlin process, or the agenda adopted in Sofia. These involve reforms that correspond to enlargement criteria and will provide reinforcement for the fundamental principles. We are waiting for proposals from the European Commission in this respect for the Zagreb summit on 6 and 7 May 2020, so that we can work on developing them.

A European conference has been proposed to define the future of the European project: the Conference on the Future of Europe. We feel that it would be desirable for candidate states to participate, because it is important for them to participate progressively in defining the European project. The results of the last European elections show how essential it is for us to work to restore citizens' confidence in the European project. We must therefore reflect on issues of democracy. We must also make our policies more effective, which means reforming the European Union before enlarging it.

Lastly, there is the question of institutional reform. With thirty-two Member States, the functioning of the institutions might be a more delicate matter, with an increased risk of deadlocks. We will need to start working toward a solution. Nonetheless, we are not making that a prerequisite, because we feel that the reform of the project, which should happen first, should inspire the reform of the institutions, which will come next. That is the key to a successful enlargement, since we have no doubt that the countries of the Western Balkans will eventually join the European Union.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - Thank you for clarifying the French position, which is today shared by a majority of Member States.

Madam President Rudina Hajdari, you currently chair the European Integration Committee of the Albanian parliament. Despite your young age, you already have substantial political experience. Your father Azem Hajdari led the student movement in 1990-1991, which led to the collapse of communism in Albania. He was murdered when you were a child, and you went to study in the United States. After gaining experience as a staff

associate in the United States Congress, you decided to return to Albania, where you became a member of parliament in 2017.

In solidarity with the new student movement, you refused to leave Parliament when your political family, the democratic party, decided as a whole, exactly one year ago, to boycott the assembly. Today, therefore, you have gained your independence, and now lead the parliamentary opposition. We look forward to hearing from you on your vision for the future of Albania in the European Union.

You are accompanied by Ralf Gjoni, also a member of the Albanian parliament and its European Integration Committee, which you now chair. Ralf Gjoni is also Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament. He has also acquired international experience both in English-speaking countries and in France, and is a fluent speaker of French.

#### **IV. MS RUDINA HAJDARI**

Thank you. I have often been asked what my expectations are for the European Union. It is a difficult question. My answer, however, is usually that I would prefer to lead a profoundly boring life. This answer may seem surprising, but, to quote Winston Churchill: "The Balkans have produced far more politics than they can consume." So, what I would like is for my fellow citizens to no longer have to get up in the morning unaware of what awaits them. I would like Albanian opposition parties to not boycott the Assembly, using our institutions for political purposes. I want the future generation to enjoy a life that will no longer require struggles like those my father had to embark upon. However, today I must defend the ideas for which he fought.

I believe that much remains to be done before we can reach this objective, but many sectors are already bearing witness to Albania's integration into Europe. We are working to make this a safer space, to improve our economy, and to improve the rule of law. Our pursuit of these 3 pillars will be of benefit both to the Member States of the European Union and to the other Balkan countries as well.

This is a democratic process and must allow us to move forward. Without it, the number of our fellow citizens who turn inwards and refuse the idea of an interconnected world will grow. Albania is a very fragile country. Unlike the other countries in this region, which lost their illusions after the war in Yugoslavia, Albania was born not of war, but of communism. We therefore had no opportunity to make our country more democratic, or more able to join the European Union. This is because of the substantial fragmentation of our political system.

Becoming a member of the European Union is our only goal as a nation, because it is precisely this process that will modernize and

democratize our country. To do this, we need everyone's support. It is however unlikely that the opposition in our parliament will share these views. Nevertheless, we in Albania will continue to fight, and to represent our electorate. But we face many difficulties and uncertainties. We are the only country in the region for which the European Union is the only possible alternative. In the neighbouring countries, there are new political groups that look only to the east. For our part, we shall remain on this path. It is the only path possible for Albania in the years to come.

Over the last two years, the European Union has issued repeated refusals to us; because of our European mentality, this has of course been disappointing. 98% of Albanians wish to join the European Union, and I do not believe that this has been sufficiently taken into consideration. This refusal hurt us deeply. We saw it as a call to implement drastic judicial and electoral reforms, which are very important not only for our people, but also for the European Union. We want the lives of Albanians to improve, and we will do whatever we can to adapt our country to meet European standards.

When we received the latest refusal, despite our disappointment, we were happy about France's proposal of follow-up action. We hope that this proposal will not remain mere words, but will actually be implemented. We have not been granted membership talks per se, but the last word has not yet been spoken. We hope that this initiative, presented by the French government, and Croatia's take-over of the Presidency of the Union, will help encourage the opening of accession talks for Albania.

We have become a reliable partner. In 2009, we joined NATO, which demonstrates that we are able to take on major challenges. This year, we are also participating in the rotating presidency of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). We have accomplished a great deal over the past decade, and now play an important role in the region. But we must continue to develop in order to maintain this momentum.

The European Union is our most important trading partner. The EU's contribution, in terms of foreign direct investment in Albania, today exceeds €400 million. Likewise, more than 5,000 Albanian students have now participated in the Erasmus program. The opening of accession talks with Albania will allow us to continue our pursuit of reforms and to help the Albanian people, and will also be of benefit to the nations of the European Union.

Thank you.

## **V. MR RALF GJONI**

When Rudina Hajdari's father led the student revolution in 1990, I was fifteen. I rallied the students at my high school to join the university

students in their fight against communism. Thirty years later, we have before us a Europe that has grown tired of itself. This bloc, which for decades shared the same values, now appears more divided than ever, and shows no confidence in the institutions of Brussels.

I agree with the ambassadors' opinion. The question of enlargement is a political, rather than a technical one. As such, I would remind Christophe Parisot that when the French said "no" it was very badly received by Albania and North Macedonia. The latter has really made great progress. It even agreed to change its name. I do not know of any other country ever making such a gesture. The question posed to the Macedonian people was: "Do you agree to change your name in order to open the door to membership negotiations?" It is important to remember that. I fear that technical questions will be an excuse to cover up the European Union's unwillingness to expand to include these Balkan countries.

It seems to me that many European leaders lack a strategic vision, in particular concerning this area at the heart of the European continent. Russia, Turkey and China are already there. Thus, Vladimir Putin was very happy with the "no" votes cast by the French, the Dutch and the Danes. The corrupt political class in the Balkans, especially in Albania, also welcomed it. That class is quite aware that this setback will allow them to maintain a status quo favourable to them. At the same time, many young people in the Balkan nations wish to leave their home country. This is the case in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and of course Albania. But now even citizens over forty years old wish to leave.

During the negotiation meetings, I was asked about my feelings about illegal immigration, and asylum seekers from Albania. But we are not so worried about that phenomenon; it is the legal migration we are concerned about. Germany will soon open the possibility for citizens of the Balkans to obtain work visas. So we are losing our best-educated citizens every day. Thus, if Europe wants to be strong, powerful and strategic, it must see the importance of integrating the countries of the Balkans. The negotiations should be started as soon as possible. To fail to do so would be a strategic mistake, which will cost both the region and Europe as a whole dearly in terms of security.

Thank you.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - Ambassador Oleh Shamshur, you have represented Ukraine in France for five years. We invited Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, to participate in this conference, as well as Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, who had preceded him in that position; unfortunately neither of them could be with us today.

So we are very grateful to you for coming to contribute a perspective from Ukraine. Your country is indeed the Gordian knot of Europe. It is the scene of persistent painful tensions on its eastern flank. As I recalled at the opening of this round table, your country is currently experiencing the cost of war. We are well aware that the future of Europe is at stake there. Your perspective is therefore particularly valuable to us, in order to help illuminate our discussions on the possible prospects for the European project.

## **VI. MR OLEH SHAMSHUR**

I am aware that we are currently nowhere near approaching membership. Nonetheless, the institutional changes underway in Ukraine and the consequences of our conflict with Russia are highly significant, not only for us but for the whole of Europe as well.

The first question that we face, in my opinion, has to do with development models. With the exception of the Baltic nations, Ukraine is the first of the countries that emerged from the USSR to have adopted the Western European development model, which is based on democratic values, high social standards, and a market economy. There was, of course, a fair amount of vacillation before we opted for it, but we ended up deciding that this model was the one that would give Ukraine the best opportunities. Moreover, if we are successful, the impact on Russia and the other ex-soviet countries would be immense. It would also have a major impact on Europe as a whole.

In 2014, we passed a point of no return regarding our choice of the Western model and our rejection of the Putin model. Our desire to join the Union was decisive in this regard, since our decision was the consequence of the cooperation we had initiated with the European Union. The EU is our main source of financial support, with aid exceeding €3 billion. It has also become our most important business partner, accounting for more than 40 % of our trade. It will therefore be of benefit to all parties for this process to continue.

The association agreement we signed with the European Union is also the best reform program for Ukraine. One of the European Union's greatest strengths is its inclusiveness. It is very important to us, and to all the ex-soviet countries seeking to go down this road, that its doors remain open. Procedures and timelines may be subject to discussion, but the principle of openness must remain.

We also adhere to the Eastern Partnership project. But to make it more effective, the principle of differentiation must be reinforced. The different aspirations of the partner countries should be taken into account. They cannot be treated as a bloc, since their ambitions, interests, and

development models are specific. With that in mind, we are looking forward to the discussions at the next Eastern Partnership summit.

Lastly, in regard to European integration, it is essential that we take strategic issues into account. The need to build a new architecture for European security is often brought up. But it must be recognized that this architecture was destroyed by the aggressive actions of Russia. We have had further proof of Russia's aggressiveness with the major offensive it launched this very morning. Five of our soldiers are dead, and civilians are dying every week. If we fail to stop the Russian aggression, it will not be possible to ensure the stability of Europe, which is essential for the success of the European project. It may be upsetting, but it is the reality.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - We are pleased to welcome Nikola Poposki to our round table. You served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2011 to 2017, and as Deputy Prime Minister of North Macedonia from 2016 to 2017. Your educational background includes studies in Nice, and you served as secretary at the French Embassy to the Republic of North Macedonia. So you have a special relationship with France. Since 2017, you have chaired the National Council for European Integration. As a member of Parliament, you cast your vote on the Prespa agreement, concluded in June 2018 between Greece and North Macedonia, which led to a resolution of the dispute over the name of Macedonia that began with the independence of your country in 1991.

Your country thus agreed to change its own name, a historic, courageous, and unique decision, becoming the "Republic of North Macedonia." Many believed that this major step forward would automatically trigger the start of accession negotiations with the European Union. The European Council's recent decision to postpone those negotiations was thus particularly destabilizing for your country, and early parliamentary elections are now expected to be organized there in April.

## **VII. MR NIKOLA POPOSKI**

It is my honour to represent a country that is often presented as if it were a job applicant. In fact, we signed our stabilization and association agreement in 2001, and acquired candidate country status in 2005; the European Commission then recommended the opening of accession negotiations for the first time in 2009. But now, eleven years later, we are still hearing the same things being said. We have learned the hard way that you do not get to join a club because you want to, but only when its members decide to let you in. It is a tough principle, but that is the reality.

We have heard a lot of apologies about the long delays in this membership process. Nevertheless, I often ask the following question:

would Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic be what they are today had the European Union lacked the political courage to decide to take the plunge ?

The question we are raising is : what are the prospects for the European project ? When I first became interested in the European Union, in the early 2000s, the Lisbon strategy was in place. Lisbon set a target to make the European Union the most competitive economy in the world by 2010. The idea was to bring Europe up to speed in terms of its productivity, since its per capita GDP was only 75 % of that of the United States. But since then that difference has stayed the same at the aggregate level, even though some Member States do have a higher per capita GDP than the United States.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that with this objective, we have chosen to run a race on terrain unfavourable to us. Europe's economy may not be the most competitive, but nonetheless it is the region with the greatest quality of life in the world. So that GDP indicator is not necessarily very relevant. GDP may be high without the populations benefiting from acquired social rights such as the pensions provided to French citizens. Outside the European continent, such acquired rights, whether in terms of social benefits or the quality public health services accessible to all, are rarely found.

North Macedonia, furthermore, assumes that the European Union wants peace, stability, economic progress and democracy. But in terms of peace and stability, whenever a problem arises, Washington is always preferred over Brussels. I share the position that Europe needs to make efforts in regard to defence - but that has a cost. And today, peace and stability in the Balkans - and in Europe as a whole - are thus still guaranteed by the continued engagement of the United States.

As far as economic progress is concerned, Europe still seems to me to be in a very comfortable situation. But there may be problems in the long term, however. The model of many of the founding countries is not sustainable unless it is radically transformed. And in this regard, I share the vision of John Maynard Keynes, who liked to point out that in the long run we are all dead. We must therefore act today.

Lastly, democracy favours the short term as well. Many people in my country are very disappointed with the European Union's recent decision. However, since we do not question the principle that any club gets to make its own decision about when it will accept new members, we simply point out that no European politician today could campaign on the accession of the Balkan countries. It is a short-term vision, but the short term is very important, since we have to take into account the point of view of those who make the decisions. It was not the European Parliament, but the Member States that made this choice. Their decision was based on their own political

contexts, which are much more important to them than very long-term projects.

Jean Monnet once argued that the European project is made up of people, men and women. The reality today shows that people will join it either way. The question is simply whether they will join it in the current Member States, or in their own countries of origin. If Germany liberalizes the visa system, it will mean that many Albanians will leave their country. The longer this phenomenon persists, the more people will integrate. But as for the countries they came from, they will not integrate. So, we can imagine a scenario where the Balkans will be emptied of their active workforce, which will be welcomed by certain Member States. The strategic choice therefore seems to me that these territories should be admitted, rather than abandoned. I feel this debate is quite topical, and I am delighted to see Alexis Tsipras among us today, since Greece has experienced this phenomenon. Although Greece has been admitted into the European Union, many highly-qualified Greeks have been forced to leave due to the economic crisis, which represents an irreparable loss for their country.

**Mr Andi Mustafaj.** – Christophe Parisot has mentioned that aid would be provided to the real economy of the Balkan countries, based on their achievements. But in fact those achievements are always evaluated from the perspective of the reforms being implemented at the time. Furthermore, that aid is provided to the candidate countries through the State. So we need to take care to ensure that the solution will not worsen the problems.

Moreover, presenters have evoked the fear of foreign influence in the Balkans. It is indeed a reality, but it is no cause for panic. Instead it should be seen as an opportunity for us to define a project, to give these countries something to aspire to and motivate them to re-establish their bond with the European integration process. The last European Parliament elections saw a strong mobilization of young people. We must build on this, because today's youth are tomorrow's leaders of the European Union.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - To conclude this conference, we welcome Alexis Tsipras. It is a great honour and a great joy for us to receive you today in the Senate. You were Prime Minister of Greece from 2015 to 2019, and today you are the leader of the opposition. You have participated in historic times for Greece. You contributed to the resolution of the conflict with North Macedonia by obtaining the Greek Parliament's ratification of the Prespa agreement. I imagine it must not have been easy, but you are used to overcoming difficulties. You have also been able to accept the enormous sacrifices required of your country to remain in the European Union at a time when it was in severe financial turmoil, and came close to leaving the



euro zone. Nothing could have prepared you for that, and you surprised us all. That is how a true statesman is revealed. Your perspective here today is thus particularly valuable to us. Perhaps you will tell us why you chose to gamble on keeping Greece within the European Union.

## CONCLUSION

Speakers for the closure of the conference :

- **Mr Alexis Tsipras**, Former Prime Minister of Greece and Opposition Leader;
- **Mr Jean-Louis Bourlanges**, Member of Parliament for Hauts-de-Seine, Vice-President of the European Affairs Committee of the National Assembly.

### I. MR ALEXIS TSIPRAS

Thank you. I think it is essential that we discuss the enlargement of the European Union to Eastern Europe, as well as the prospects for its enlargement into the Western Balkans. This is a very important issue for Greece, because we know how important accession was for us, in terms of democracy, stability, and prosperity. The same goes for other countries in the South, which were emerging from histories of military dictatorship, such as Spain and Portugal.

Not only is Greece already a long-standing Member State of the Union; it should also be remembered that for many years it was also its easternmost country. Furthermore, Greece's civil war in the mid-1940s was one of the first manifestations of the Cold War. Then, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the war in Yugoslavia presented a major challenge, right on our doorstep. At the same time, the Albanian economy and State collapsed, and hundreds of thousands of Albanians emigrated to Greece. For all these reasons, Greece has always been an active supporter of strong relations between East and West, just as it supported the integration of Eastern Europe and the Balkans into the European Union.

The first agreement between the European Community and a country of the former Eastern bloc was signed under the Greek presidency: namely, with Hungary in 1988. We thus sent out a very clear message about the role the European Union should play in the following years. In the early 1990s, substantive negotiations were held in Athens; these included the peace negotiations for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993. The negotiations led to the signing of the Thessaloniki Agenda, affirming the prospect of European integration for all Balkan countries. The 2018 signature of the Prespa Agreement with North Macedonia to settle the issues that had arisen regarding the name of that country gave new impetus to the prospects for Europe vis-à-vis the Balkans after twenty-seven years of tension.

Today it would be easy to say that the past is the past, and that continuing the enlargement process would simply divert our attention from the many difficulties we face. Clearly, the European Union we hoped for in

the 1990s is no longer advancing. We now face the challenge of the weakening of the West and of economic and geopolitical competition from major powers in the East. We now have to deal with a refugee crisis that has divided our continent from East to West and from North to South. We also must now face Brexit, and the rise of anti-European and nationalist movements in the Member States. As President Emmanuel Macron pointed out in Munich a few days ago, we are becoming a continent that no longer believes in its future. I would add, however, that we cannot believe in our future if we do not acknowledge our past.

Barely twenty or thirty years ago, Europe was suffering from war and ethnic cleansing right on its own soil. Countries in Europe were living under dictatorships. The shock therapy actions taken by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) threw hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern Europe into conditions of extreme poverty. A substantial amount of illegal migration was taking place at the time. The European Union delivered a project of transformation. It opened up great prospects for the States of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, offering them a chance not only to leave the cold war behind, but also to leave behind the enormous economic challenges and instability of the period that followed it.

From this perspective, the strength of the project of European integration was that it was a transformative project. If we really want to bring about its renewal, we cannot think of enlargement as a zero-sum game. The project was a powerful one in the 1980s and 1990s because it proposed a model of transformation that was geopolitically, politically, and economically credible. It did not favour integration at the expense of enlargement, or vice versa. The Treaty of Nice, which came into effect in 2003, went hand in hand with the Thessaloniki Agenda signed the same year, and with the 2004 enlargement program. The new vision we need today cannot give up on the processes necessary for an enlargement to the Balkans.

First of all, the European Union can only be a strong geopolitical player at the international level if it is also a credible player in its own neighbourhood. How can we provide support for political stability and economic growth in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali or Ukraine, if we cannot even respect the commitments we have made to candidate countries? How could the European Union credibly support international dispute settlement projects if it can't even support a European country like North Macedonia that has successfully resolved a European dispute? On the contrary, the world must be shown that integrating the Balkans will guarantee peace, stability and prosperity for the region. This will send a clear message of the vitality of the European project, twenty years after the end of the war in Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, the cancellation or even any postponement of this enlargement would have serious consequences for the stability of the region. The European Union needs to face this issue. In 2014, when

Jean-Claude Juncker announced a freeze of the accession process, the region sank into instability for several years. There was one crisis after another, in Albania, in North Macedonia, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Montenegro. Organized crime and smuggling networks grew more powerful. The influence of external actors, such as Russia, Turkey or the Gulf countries grew as well, and often at the expense of that of the European Union. The rate of emigration from the Western Balkan countries to the European Union countries also increased. During this past year, a citizen of these countries entered the Union legally every two minutes. Nobody knows the numbers of those who have come in illegally.

When the Prespa Agreement was signed in 2018, North Macedonia saw the prospects for its integration open up. This gave new impetus to Albania's prospects as well, as well as to dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. If we lose this momentum again, it will be extremely difficult to regain it. The region will return to the path it was on from 2014 to 2017, and the European Union will need to resolve the many political, migratory and security difficulties that would ensue.

Furthermore, the renewal of a European vision must be based on an honest assessment of the mechanisms and institutions necessary for the enlargement process and for the cohesion of the European Union. In this regard, it is very positive that a new method is being discussed, so that we can improve and simplify accession procedures. But we must be clear: no mechanism can stand in for the Balkan peoples' prospects of accession. The European neighbourhood policy is a very powerful instrument for reform and financial assistance. Likewise, the Berlin Process for the Balkans is an initiative that can supplement the prospects for enlargement by promoting European investment in the region. But enlargement instruments are the only thing that can make a real difference, by guaranteeing political stability, reforms, and lasting economic progress. This is clear in the case of Serbia and Montenegro, whose accession prospects must be encouraged for the good of the whole region.

It is however obvious that there are shortcomings in terms of cohesion and solidarity in facing our common challenges. We see this very clearly on the issue of migration. The problem, however, is not enlargement. The objective must be to reach difficult compromises in the face of these challenges. We have to fight against nationalism and strengthen European values as well as the Union's role in promoting employment and social justice. That way we can restore a sense of solidarity amongst the Member States.

At a crucial time such as this, when democratic ideals, European values and international law are being challenged, Europe must demonstrate that measures exist that can provide support for democratic reforms and good neighbour relations. Such is the very essence of conditionality. It must however be able to rely on positive regional examples.

Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of North Macedonia, had the courage to find a compromise with me on the issue of the name of his country. He also signed an agreement with Bulgaria, although it came at a very high political cost for him. We attained these achievements acting on the basis of mutual respect and in the interest of finding solutions acceptable to both sides. We did not seek to deceive one another, to play politics, or to play the all-too-easy card of nationalist populism, as certain forces still do in our countries. We have complied with international law.

If Zoran Zaev and the people of North Macedonia are rewarded for their efforts, it will send a clear message to all other leaders in the region. It will also send a message to the Albanian government to take more action on the rule of law, including the protection of the Greek minority. It will provide an incentive for the leaders of Belgrade and Pristina to settle the Kosovo issue. And it would send a message to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in favour of stability. But if the accession process remains blocked, the message will be just as clear, namely that Europe does not reward reform leaders who seek compromises.

The cohesion of the European Union is fragile. It faces an existential challenge, which traditional mechanisms do not allow it to face. So we have to improve them, or find new ones. But a re-examination of our mechanisms does not mean questioning everything, in particular enlargement, which is an essential part of what Europe represents. We can choose to take the easy path, and build walls. Or, on the contrary, we can take courageous measures and settle our differences. If we choose the first option, and continue to block the enlargement process, we will compromise the role that the Union could play as a regional and global force for transformation. But North Macedonia and Greece have shown the world that we have the ability to choose the second path. That is the only possible way to renew the European vision and strengthen the Union. I firmly believe that.

Thank you.

**Mr Jean Bizet.** - Thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for your crystal-clear remarks. All the more so since they are the words of a Prime Minister of Greece who we all know lived through quite a bit of turbulence, and to whom Europe has always been true. I remember taking a trip to Greece with the President of the Republic François Hollande; it is true that France has always supported you. We have trusted you, and I want to salute the efforts made by the Greek people and the government to repair what was quite a difficult situation. It will always be our Senators' pleasure to welcome you here at the Senate.

My thanks, as well, to all the participants. I would especially like to thank Christophe Parisot for explaining France's position. I am pleased now to give the floor to my colleague, MP Jean-Louis Bourlanges, for a final

word. During twenty years, Mr Bourlanges was a member of the European Parliament, which he joined a few months prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. He has thus been able to watch from the inside as Europe has grown towards reunification. His experience in European institutions is unique, and is complemented by a great degree of culture and a remarkably broad perspective. He is a wise and valuable analyst.

Before I give him the floor, I would like to submit to you three phrases to reflect upon : The first was spoken by Claude Martin : " Learn to listen to each other. " The second by Gyorgy Karolyi : " A play's success ultimately depends on how it is performed. " And the last was spoken by Joachim Bitterlich : " Politics above institutions. "

Thank you.

## II. MR JEAN-LOUIS BOURLANGES

Thank you Mr Chairman.

I would just like to say, Mr Prime Minister, that when I climb onto this rostrum I feel filled with emotion to speak after you. I believe that you were the protagonist of a key moment in the resurgence of the European Union. From its beginnings, the Union's history has been marked by unique moments, such as the Schuman declaration, the meeting of Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer, or François Mitterrand's speech in Bonn, at a time when the Cold War was intensifying.

Paradoxically, the fall of the USSR has gradually plunged us into a kind of apathy. Europe seemed to be becoming less necessary, less useful - and we were becoming less and less aware of what we had achieved together. The European Union was nearly destroyed. But, under extremely difficult conditions, just one day after a referendum that cemented your political power, you made a decision that made it possible to change course. You said that Greece's future lies in Europe, in the European Union, and with the Euro. It was a wise and incredibly courageous decision. And it proved tremendously fruitful. Many other forces more hesitant about that decision - such as Podemos in Spain, or right-wing parties in Austria or the Netherlands - ultimately made the same choice too. Those who did not, for example during the French presidential election, paid the price.

That is why I think you changed the course of European history. Everyone should be aware of this, and should be grateful to you for it. I wanted to tell you that, because it is something I have truly believed since July 2015.

I find that we tend to overestimate certain issues raised by the reunification of the continent and underestimate others. Among the overestimated issues is the issue of numbers. The French have always seen

enlargement as contrary to intensification. But the first 45 years of European integration have always associated the triptych of enlargement, development of competences, and institutional intensification. Each time a new state was admitted, the Union's competences were expanded. When the Southern States joined us, its cohesion grew. When the UK joined the Union, we set up the internal market and the Single European Act thus made it possible to adopt qualified majority voting. The European budget also grew considerably.

In the 1990s, we kept expanding, but we stopped developing. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the ones responsible for this state of affairs are not the peripheral States, but we ourselves. But we have encountered an existential problem here, and have not been able to face it.

The second issue that I feel is overestimated is size. There are States of all sizes, small, medium and large. I think we have managed to strike a certain balance. I have certainly fought for the European Commission to be organized differently, and for there not to be one Commissioner per Member State. That turned out to be impossible, but ultimately we manage. At the Council of Ministers of the European Union, as in the European Parliament, we have succeeded in combining quite well the requirements for equality among States and equality among citizens. These two requirements are contradictory, for demographic reasons. A balance had to be found, and it seems to me that on the whole it was, even if the European Council, with its interminable speaking turns, is perhaps not organized in a very satisfying way. Indeed, heads of State or government have difficulty seeing themselves as members of an assembly, rather than an ivory tower elite.

The third issue we tend to overestimate is the difference in wealth. This issue has arisen quite acutely with regard to Greece; but ultimately over the last five years the convergence between Western and Eastern of Europe has been much more positive than the convergence between Northern and Southern Europe. But this is a paradox, since for the most part the Central and Eastern States were not members of the euro zone. Divisions have thus been arisen, but not always linked to differences in means. The example of Greece proves this; it is not enough to have low interest rates and significant cohesion funds to resolve these phenomena of divergence. It is a massive project, but we will carry it through if we set up the right solidarity instruments.

Nevertheless, I also think we tend to underestimate certain issues, starting with the question of identity. Nikola Poposki referred to the European Union as a kind of club; but this club cannot define its own organisational object or make its own set of rules. Indeed, in the past even such very illustrious voices as Angela Merkel herself have questioned the Community method, advocating an intergovernmental method instead. This is a club that does not manage to make its own set of rules or freely

determine the conditions of its membership. So it is a very strange club indeed.

La Rochefoucauld asserted that " Death, like the Sun, cannot be looked at steadily. " I would add that the same is true for Europe. We dare not say what we are, what we want, or how we want to do it. It is thus extremely difficult to get the peoples of Europe to agree to this triple uncertainty. The democratic deficit we have is therefore simply that national public opinions do not understand Europe. We must start from the idea that our foundation is first and foremost respect for the law, fundamental freedoms, and democracy. That is what sets us apart from the others, whether the peoples of the South or of Russia. We must accept that what underlies our identity is the separation of the temporal and the spiritual - which takes very different forms depending on the country - as well as respect for the law, freedoms, and universal suffrage.

Our second major fault is a lack of solidarity : we are not in solidarity with each other, especially economically. In France, compulsory taxation accounts for 45 % of GDP and public spending accounts for 55 % of GDP - but only 1 % of its GDP is devoted to the European Union. This proportion is not satisfactory. And we are expected to do extraordinary things with that 1 % ! Moreover, the average citizen believes that 30 % of our taxes are spent on Europe, which is obviously totally false.

But we are not politically united either. Our greatest difficulty involves making commitments in terms of immigration. Solidarity consists in accepting common competences, exercised within a community framework. The real question, which we have not faced, and which prevents us, for example, from taking an open-minded approach to others seeking admission, is the distinction between what we want to do together and what we want to do separately. We do not need to be overly federalist, but we do have to work together to define what we share in common, what we want to do in common, and what we want to do on our own.

Finally, the institutional model remains another great enigma. We talk about a European democratic deficit, reproducing at a continental scale the tension between participatory democracy and representative democracy. European integration must be built on the principle of the delegation of powers to representatives. We must resolve the problem of relations between small and large States, as well as that of accommodation amongst peoples, citizens and States. We have plenty to be happy about now : the Community system as defined at Maastricht is fairly close to a satisfactory balance; the European Parliament is functioning; for the first time, abstention rates in European elections have fallen ; for the first time, the right and the left were not both divided between pro and anti-EU factions ; for the first time, the issues raised were indeed European, and not simply national. At the centre was a great pro-European movement, and at the wings, anti-European



movements incapable of offering anything. In addition, the stakes of this election were largely European stakes.

We must go further. The European Commission is an institution of great quality. It is accountable to the European Parliament. The latter, moreover, demonstrated its authority by refusing the appointment of a commissioner. The European Commission is carrying out a major project, but does not have the means to assume it. We must support this project, and say to our populations : be united, be generous, look to the future, and you will achieve the reunification of Europe as well.

Thank you.