

**Contribution of Mr. Józef Oleksy,
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in the Convention on the Future of Europe,**

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Poland, as a non-member State, did not have the opportunity to influence the development of the European Union at its subsequent stages. This gradual process of evolution took place without us. However, for a long time we've been watching the debate on the political and institutional shape of the EU, and now we wish to actively join it. In this debate our voice will be conscious and significant, adequate to **our joint responsibility for a Europe that we build.**

Poland has always shared the values that were at the heart of the European thought. An understanding of the common interest, humanism, the principle of equality, non-discrimination, the values of tolerance and respect for the law.

The European political project has got a chance to reach its full dimension only after the historical events, which have taken place in Poland in spring 1989. With this revolutionary developments, the famous "Peoples' Autumn" could begin in the rest of the Central-Eastern Europe. Now we face a unique opportunity to fully benefit from this transition. **We fulfil the legacy of 1989. It was a call for freedom, originally voiced in Poland. The integration of Europe has always been a dynamic process, not a static effect. Now we have to perceive it as a twofold process: the challenge of enlargement and deepening via institutional reform.** Enlargement of the European Union will serve ultimately to reunify the continent. It will be a culmination of the visions of the European founding fathers.

The expectations of Europe are sources of the debate of hope. It is a historical presentation of what our people and we personally expect of Europe. For the candidate countries, to become a member of the European Union means to **satisfy the wishes emanating from the fundamental values of the Community.**

We want a Europe that is strong, not weak. Europe that builds unity without blurring differences.

A proposal for reform of the Union must be comprehensible and based on the axes provided by the Nice Council, supplemented by the provisions of the Laeken Declaration. What radical changes will our work bring about? The aspirations to a much deeper integration are not inconsistent with the effects of enlargement. I believe that there will be less discrepancies and controversies in our work than some have indicated. In fact, **we are all concerned with having an efficient and a transparent Union, and close to its citizens. A Union which is based on distinct values.**

It is not our task to create the European Union from an outset. Our goal is, on the contrary, to repair and modernize it in order **to make it more effective and to ensure well-being to its citizens.**

What do we mean by delimitation of powers in the European Union? What will be our goal? Do we really have to determine an ultimate shape of our political system? And, finally, what kind of *finalité politique* are we ready to consider?

One thing is beyond doubt. Any division of powers between the Union and its Member States must enhance effectiveness of the European project and satisfy the needs of the citizens. The dynamics of the process of integration relates to its gradual evolution. **The European system is a progressive system.**

As an elected politician, I attach great importance to the transparency of the Union's decision-making process. I am aware of an utmost responsibility to be assumed for presenting the mechanisms of functioning of the EU to the Poles. Therefore, to explain to our citizens who is responsible for what in the European Union is of special significance. "Who we are and how we work?" Who does what in Europe?

Today we face temptations to define an ultimate political shape of the EU. **And just temptations, not the necessity.** I would rather use the term "necessity" to denote the definition of goals and attributes of that system. Here I mean its **effectiveness, efficiency, stability as well as the ability to achieve its goals.** It seems that **a model of a federation of nation states would be a common denominator of many existing concepts.** Even today, many perceive it as **an opportunity for a joint exercise of sovereignty.** In Europe, taking on the path towards a federation of nation states should be accompanied by such an arrangement of powers, in which **the intergovernmental mechanism will, in a higher degree, take into consideration building of strong, independent decision-making supranational structures.** The strengthening of the institutional dimension will be internally coherent when debates in this direction are not accompanied by re-nationalization trends relating, for example, to Community cohesion policy, common agricultural policy, or regional policy. I declare for a higher number of common policies. However, we cannot accept a situation where the higher number of policies will result in a reduction of their scope. **We cannot have "more Europe" at a lower price!**

The European Union has entered its present phase of maturity in small steps, as a result to which the Community factor and the intergovernmental factor contributed. I think it is not necessary now to make a radical turn in favour of any of these methods since their effective co-existence makes the European project a unique model. The enlargement will widen the already existing gap between the Members States. Therefore, **the Community method requires strengthening.** The system existing in the Union, based on the interinstitutional balance, has proved to be efficient in the history of European integration. We want this system to continue its evolution with its achievements preserved.

The aim of the simplification of the existing treaties should be to separate the fundamental values of the Union from more technical and detailed issues. Moreover, the **inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into a kind of Constitutional Treaty for Europe** would solve the question of its legal status.

Transparency and clearness of decision-making mechanisms should make the Union closer to citizens. And this requires greater legitimacy, which involves also a clear inclusion of the parliament in the decision-making process. After all is said and done, **the parliamentary dimension**, whether in the formulation of the European Parliament or of

national parliaments, **is the centre of democracy.** It is the **most perceptible emanation of peoples' will for whom and owing to whom the Union exists.** Therefore the question that arises is not whether but how far we should extend the principle of co-decision of the European Parliament and whether this should be a mere compensation for the "opportunities lost" as a result of the majority vote in the Council. It is necessary to define the principle of **including national parliaments in the decision-making process at the Community level.** The relevant cooperation should take into account the relationship between the Parliament and a given standpoint regarding legislative matters taken by any government at the European level. There must work **regular mechanisms of consultation and cooperation as regards relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments;** moreover, channels to transmit information to national parliaments should be consolidated.

We in Poland analyse these questions and will participate in their redefinition, bearing in mind that a change of one important element will alter the significance of the remaining ones.

The Union is a strong and rich actor who must take up the challenges of the globalized world. We can achieve this thanks, among other things, to a substantial reducing of the gap between the rich and the poor regions of the future, enlarged Union. **Solidarity should remain the prevalent idea.** Only by non-discrimination and by abolishing the divisions into the rich and the poor, the small and the big or, last but not least, those from the north and those from the south, we can make the system we will create efficient. **At changes within the Union we in Poland look through the prism of the ultimate cancellation of the effects of the post-Yalta division of Europe. Therefore we contemplate all ideas of "closer cooperation," of a "hard core" or of a "gravitation centre," asking ourselves a question whether they develop the sense of community or create conditions for new divisions.**

We want a Union that would make a strong partner in international relations and would have an unequivocally common external policy. Entering the Union, we expect a greater stability in the geopolitical context. The European Union with no effective and coherent foreign and security policy will not make a strong global partner. **We want the European Union to encourage important international events, and not just to confine itself to expounding the respective positions of the governments of the Member States.**

The Union is seen as an economic powerhouse and a "political dwarf." Our ambition is, I believe, **to strengthen and more precisely to define the Union's external role.** As a representative of Poland I wish right now to declare that in this process **we want to create room for the eastern dimension which we know well.** We want to contribute to the Community our opinions, views and proposals which will let the Union favourably to affect open relations with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus or Kazakhstan. **Because of its position, Poland is vitally interested in the participation in the devising of the EU's external policy. Poland wants to promote stability and security in the region.**

My children often ask me what Poland can bring into the European Union besides its economic and demographic potential. Only life will bring the answer to that question. However, I already know that our presence in the European Union will strengthen the fundamental values such as human dignity, respect of citizens' rights and freedoms. Not only Poland fully shares those values, but is also able to reinforce their meaning. Values, which are of great importance to us because, along our history, we were so often stopped from fully benefiting from them.

While preserving the present achievements of the European Union, we must not allow a situation where the oncoming Intergovernmental Conference is yet another conference. **I challenge you to show courage, to reject the traditional way of thinking! If we confine ourselves to no more than minor changes, we will stop in the middle of the road.** My country does in no way want to lose its self-identity as a national state. Too often in history our state was threatened or deprived of its sovereignty. We are ready to participate in the promotion of a joint project Europe needs. **We subscribe to the idea of a federation of national states, with strong Community institutions and with a wealth of different cultures of particular national states. The Convention does not have to settle the ultimate model of the European Union.** The Convention should however indicate which path we want to follow in order to create the most propitious conditions for the achievement of our strategic goals.

When bringing up fundamental questions regarding the political shape of the future European Union, we are moving in the sphere of our political imagination. The latter, in turn, should never lose sight of the goals the European Union set itself many years ago. Those goals were: peace, freedom, prosperity, security and solidarity. Only when respecting these values, we will be able to build up the European organism and to gain our citizens' trust. **We can't help dreaming. Our peoples need hope and optimism of the future. Suppose people in Europe receive such good signals.**

To overcome the stereotypes is to fight the European fears. As Jean Delumaeu wrote: "Fear kills freedom". Freedom is a European device, not the American one. We have therefore a particular responsibility to defend it. Globalisation, unemployment, social exclusion, terrorism – they all determine today's fear. Let the answer be more freedom. Freedom initiated by the "Peoples' Autumn". The peoples who declared for Europe.

Thank you for your attention.
