

Address by József Szájer at the meeting of the European Convention on the future of Europe Brussels

2002.03.22.

Mr President, Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,

the 20th century brought a lot of suffering to the peoples of Europe, but the last decade decided the battle between freedom and oppression, democracy and dictatorship. The challenge for the new century is how to successfully organise Europe, and how a reunified Europe should meet the challenges of the 21st century.

It is my conviction that Europe has a bright future. The notion of Europe stands less for a geographic area than for a school of thought and shared values. It is these core European values on which the basic documents and sets of norms of the Union are built

The reason for bringing Europe to life was nothing else, no more and certainly not less, than to deny any possibility for war on the continent. The birth of Europe has a very clear message. The unity of Europe is really about peace.

With the end of World War Two, the question that Europeans needed to answer was whether they were going back to the system of national interests and zones of influence, that ultimately led them into two world wars, or they create something new - an united Europe. Whether we are discussing Schengen, enlargement or the ups and downs of the Euro, the issue remains the same, the stability of Europe.

What sort of Europe shall have to be?

A common Europe of human dimensions, a Europe of our own. In which every citizen regards it as his own, where citizens understand and support the system of laws and the operation of institutions

A responsible Europe, where the powers of the various common institutions are unambiguous, and there is a clear-cut sharing of tasks and democratic empowerment.

An efficient Europe. In which the efficient operation of the Union is an imperative.

A competitive Europe.

A Europe of shared interests. In which the knowledge and wealth of experience accumulated in two thousand years are concentrated in this part of the world.

A Europe of nations, national minorities and regions. Where with an ever stronger co-operation the identity of European nations must be preserved and further strengthened. The strength of Europe lies exactly in its pluralisme its diversity of languages, cultures and customs.

Europe shall be larger.

The shape of Europe today is the continuation of the cold war logic. Once the Cold War ended, however, this artificial division no longer makes sense. For Europe's competitiveness to match the challenges of the world today, it will have to become whole again.

Europe will have to be fair.

For Europe to be stable, we shall have to insist on mechanisms through which every member country, big or small, old member or new, feels equal. Each and every member country has to feel at home inside Europe.

Europe certainly can't and won't be a melting pot.

Cultural diversity has always been at the core of European identity. No country's political elite has been able to develop a kind of European notion, if it was against any nation's identity. Europe shall have to continue to preserve a careful balance between national identities and the European identity, but it will always be based on variety.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Politics is about creation. Creativity is a result of our ability to dream. Imagination is the beginning of creation. The chance to create is what makes politics attractive and exciting. Sometimes you have to create what you want to be a part of it. In our case, it is the future of the reunified Europe. The role of politics is to make a dream come true. Sometimes the process may be excruciating, but the dream can be realised.

When I was a student I dreamt big: the end of communism. In 1990, when communism collapsed, I still dreamt big: Hungary's and other countries' rejoining Europe.

They say that the future is not something we enter. The future is something we create. These years are crucial time for creating the future of Europe. I want to see my, I want to see our common dream come true.

Thank you for your attention.