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Grundgütiger Vater,  
sehr geehrter Herr Landeshauptmann,  
sehr geehrte Frau Minister Schwarz,  
lieber Freund Johannes,  
sehr geehrter Herr Kommissar,  
Herr Vizekanzler,  
Herr Ministerpräsident,  
Frau Minister,  
liebe Freunde,

ich möchte mit einem Zitat von Dr. Busek beginnen – nicht zu viele Wörter,  
aber Meinung: Jubiläen sind nicht nur Anlass zu feiern, sondern auch  
Möglichkeiten zur Besinnung.

„Wenn Europa nämlich seine Rolle innerhalb der Welt nicht definieren kann,  
wird es weiter an Bedeutung verlieren, da es bislang sehr selten in der Lage  
ist, mit einer Stimme zu sprechen, um daraus auch die entsprechenden  
Konsequenzen zu ziehen.“ (Das war Dr. Buseks Stimme.)

Und jetzt, liebe Freunde, auf englisch.

Dolmetsch:

The European Union is as you all know and experienced it every day a sui  
generis construction. We all have contributed in the last 60, 70 years to its  
transformation towards a powerful and prosperous economic and political  
Union. The European Union has evolved indeed from a Union of Nations into a  
family of peoples. The general economic and political situation in Europe looks  
nowadays far different from what was the EU like in 2005 when my country  
Romania signed the Accession Treaty in April in Luxembourg.

But fortunately the euphoria at that moment has not yet shaded away at least in

my country. I strongly believe that the citizens in other European member states do still share the same feelings of confidence and solidarity.

Why? Because I believe that Europe stands for more than just economic prosperity, it also stands for democracy, for human rights, for rule of law, for freedom and tolerance.

It is that very set of fundamental values that represents the basis of our lives and makes the European construction sustainable.

It is true that national and global economic crises had and still have to be dealt with in a climate of likely uncontrolled changes encompassing every each socio-economic and cultural subdivision the society is composed of – from the sovereign debt crises to the crises in the Ukraine, from the most existential crises the European Union has faced in its brief history. All of them had an impact on Europe as a whole. We speak of high levels of unemployment today particularly among young people, roughly no economic growth, excessive levels of debt in Europe, and unfortunately we find out that we have enemies.

More and more member states and countries do share difficulties. There are just a few that have gone through them successfully. Besides these effects the crises may they be economical or political do also deepen the division between donors and recipients of funds within the Union announcing endless and bumpy discussions in own negotiations pertaining to the economic future of the European Union.

Moreover alongside economic crises some member states face political challenges from extremist forces that seem to further split nations and groups of nations along cultural lines of division.

Democracy itself and democratic representation have been put under serious questioning in some member states. What some of us can see is a re-enactment of historical risks aggravated and deepened on economic, social, political, and cultural reasons. Unfortunately crises whatever their nature may be contaminate and reduce the capacity of reactions of governments and European Institutions.

The Union did not have the opportunity to see how the Union functions after

entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty especially in the capacity of acting more and more a single voice on the continent. Europe – we can say today with a pessimistic but with a realistic voice – looks like shrinking and losing its engine for enlargement.

The European neighbourhood policy, the Eastern partnership face discrepancies of engagement among its participant states. Where even entering a new phase of re-drawing our borders we do have Eurozone insiders and outsiders, Schengen members, and non-Schengen members, stable North or Centre versus South and periphery countries, some of them facing economic challenges, migration challenges or sheer geo-political challenges.

Discussions on to speed or to tire Europe are again being brought into attention but this has been the reality of our cooperation the past decades. Moreover, the treaties already provide for a group of member states to cooperate among themselves under enhanced cooperation arrangements allowing others to join later.

Europe's history, ladies and gentlemen, has never been smooth, and there were speed-ups and slow-downs. Critics have always been accompanied the treaties. Many of us remember the negative referendum in France and the Netherlands on the constitution of treaty back into 2005 ten years ago or how the Irish voters have rejected the Treaty of Nice in 2001, and it is only one year ahead of us prior to witnessing how the Brits will organize their own referendum.

But connections among member states have become stronger and stronger in the last six decades and quoting a famous European academic, namely Professor Ewald Nowotny, he said "One should think of the European Integration not as a wavelike process but rather as a spiral staircase where each cycle is accompanied by an upward movement."

Which means taking into account what happens in our Eastern borders that we have to offer an answer to the following question. Do we have to return to pre-war political isolation and be happy in our island resembling a continent? Do we have to return to bureaucracy pretending when closing eyes that we do not see anything happening in our Eastern neighbourhood or we have to reinforce the new rules addressing the need of further enhanced integration at all costs, all

knowing that it is only through people integration that Europe would become stronger, more cohesive, more stable, and more prone to offer an answer to challenges whatever their nature.

What member states have nevertheless embarked lately upon themselves in Brussels is a paradoxical answer – hyper-regulation. Hyper-regulation as in common life usually kills creativeness and creates excuses under which we can hide when shying away from treating problems as such.

We are still far away from implementing the Lisbon Treaty in the very same way we would image Europe to be. The crises, the last crises have led to hyper-regulation and unfortunately to a lack of integration.

As to count on Europe. Whenever the Prime Minister of Great Britain Mr. Cameron – and we all know that the UK is regarded as euro-sceptic and reluctant when it comes to moving forward within the European Integration – said almost a couple of years ago: “Leaving the EU – and this is Mr. Cameron’s voice two years ago – is not in our national interest, outside we would end up like Norway, subject to every rule for the single market made in Brussels but unable to shape those rules. Believe me – Mr. Cameron says – if we were not in there helping write the rules they would be written without us, the bigger support of open markets and free trade and we would not like the outcome.”

Then why a referendum? It’s paradoxical, ladies and gentlemen, because although we rhetorically admit that more Europe thinks to be the solution preferred by national governments we do not dare to raise ourselves to the expectations of regular European citizens who tend to be less and less attached to the idea of Europe. We tend to forget that Europe needs PR, and that is one of our very important tasks.

Europe started as an anchor of peace and stability on the continent. Unfortunately from one point of view, fortunately from a different point of view, many of us do not have the memory of the World Wars that destroyed our continent and it is the last war who spired up Europe. That is probably the reason many analysts tend to speak of European Union Institutions and leaders losing legitimacy.

But I do believe although I am just a realist and not a sceptic individual, I believe that this is false. Legitimacy comes by votes and these are the leaders we chose to have and regardless normal democratic changes in our member states none of us yet has given up the idea of Europe. Why is that? Because it is accountability and predictability that counts. These are the pillars of our involvement into European business.

Otherwise we would not make up to the explanation for the huge power of attraction Europe still has for neighbouring countries.

I would conclude by saying, ladies and gentlemen, that in the past one year and a half we have found out that it is enough to pore one single molecule of dirt into a large bottle of clear water to have that water spilled and dirtied, we should not let crises spill and dirty our Europe.

Thank you very much ... Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

(Applaus)