

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, the current situation is still dominated by a virus, among other things. When I am saying this, it is not because I want to give a lecture on viruses now – I could not do that at all – but because the challenges that this virus called Covid-19 in all its mutations has confronted us with have a truly European dimension. Strictly speaking, the challenges that the virus has confronted European politics with should have strengthened Europe, the European Union, European unification. When we assess the situation today, barely two years after the start of this pandemic, we have to conclude that unfortunately the opposite is the case, that today the tendencies towards division are greater than before.

Let us recall. In February 2020, the European Commission drew attention to the problem and proposed a common approach. The EU has no health competence, so the Commission could not act by itself, but could only try to launch coordinating measures. The reaction from the member states was unanimous: we have everything under control, we are already mastering the situation. We still know what happened next: not only did they impose a lockdown, but they also tried to steal necessary equipment from each other. In the end, we had almost closed borders for two years, which in turn caused further disruptions, for example in industry. Only in the procurement of vaccines did they decide to proceed jointly.

Yet, all the prerequisites for strengthening Europe through this crisis would have been there. About ten years ago, a paper on European defense was published in which a pandemic coming from Asia was mentioned as a possible threat scenario. So, one might have been prepared. The principle of solidarity is enshrined in the European treaties. Few people probably know this: the EU even has a commissioner for crisis management. So, there would have been instruments to react to this global challenge on a European level. Moreover, it was not only national interests that were at stake, but all citizens of the European Union including politicians were directly affected. So there clearly was a European dimension.

The crucial question in a crisis always is how to react. Do we accept the challenge – in this case a global challenge that is not limited to health policy but also has geopolitical and economic aspects – and react together, or do we dig up old political patterns and retreat into the apparent security of the nation state.

But how one reacts, how politics reacts, is a question of political foresight. It is a question of political leadership, a question of the European idea. I have the very strong impression that we have buried this European idea in the state chancelleries of Europe, and also in the management personnel at EU level, and are instead making policies with soulless ideological concepts, which ideally still have a time horizon up until the next election but are normally marked by the dates of press conferences.

We must therefore ask ourselves what constitutes the soul of Europe, and we must resume this struggle for the soul of Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is obvious that there is such a thing as a soul of Europe, time and again it has been mentioned by politicians, demanding that Europe be given a soul. Jacques Delors, a former President of the EU Commission spoke about this, as one cannot love a single market alone. Ursula von der Leyen, the current President of the Commission referred to the soul of Europe in her State of the Union address in September 2021. The speech was even entitled „Strengthening the soul of our Union “. In contrast to Delors, she therefore probably assumes that this soul exists and that it need not first be created. And she quoted Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of the European Union after the Second World War: I quote: „Europe needs a soul, an ideal and the political will to serve that ideal. “ End of quote.

Robert Schuman thus very precisely described in one single sentence what politics means: to pursue an ideal, a goal. Politics is more than just the redistribution of welfare benefits to satisfy one's own electoral clientele. Today's politicians often use the term resilience. But the welfare state is the exact opposite of resilience. Politics needs a strategic vision. Today, many would say a narrative. This, however, requires a clear idea about what the original idea of European unification was, and on what value basis this idea of a European Union should be built.

After 1945, it was certainly the longing for peace in Europe. Two world wars rooted in nationalism and totalitarian ideologies not only caused massive damage – both human and economic – in Europe, but also divided the continent by an Iron Curtain. The old enmity between France and Germany had to be overcome in order to stabilize a peaceful order in the West and to escape the danger of a hot war arising from the Cold War. This founding idea of today's European Union was so successful that it not only achieved its goal of securing peace within the Community, but also developed so much appeal that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe sought to join it after the end of Soviet rule. If we look with open eyes to the region of South-Eastern Europe, or also to countries such as the Ukraine or Georgia, we will also recognize accession to the EU as a political goal in the region. Only the wrong kind of EU policies both by the Union and its member states could undo this wish.

But we have to be honest with ourselves: Dear friends, the narrative of peacekeeping has lost its appeal. This on the one hand is due to the fact that the EU had no instruments to counter the murderous gangs of Slobodan Milosevic, nor did it find a means to put a stop to Vladimir Putin's efforts to restore the territory of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the narrative of peacekeeping is becoming increasingly implausible to a young generation that has never seen war within the EU. Peace is there, it is taken for granted, just like the holiday trip or the smartphone.

This now is 2022. 100 years ago, an organization was founded in Vienna that is still considered the origin of the idea of European unification: the Pan-European Union. On 17 November 1922, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi published his proclamation „Pan-Europe. A Proposal “. Two days earlier he had already published it in the *Vossische Zeitung* in Berlin. To commemorate these events the Paneuropean Union will hold a jubilee congress in Vienna from 17 to 20 November 2022.

The jubilee congress on 100 years of Paneurope will open the door to the future of the Paneuropean idea and European unification with a proud look at the history of the organization. After a review of the development of the Pan-European Union, the focus will be on the discussion of important Pan-European topics for shaping future European unification: European Foreign Policy, European Security Policy, European Economic Policy, the Single Market, the Identity, and the Soul of Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, today I would like to cordially invite you to attend the congress. Of course, we are optimistic that by then we will have the Corona situation under control to such an extent that the event can be attended directly.

Let us take a look at the genesis of the Pan-European Union and also at the historical background that had shaped Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. He was born in Japan. His father Heinrich was the Austrian envoy to the Japanese imperial court. Richard came to Europe as a child, to his family's castle at Ronsperg in Bohemia. Coming from Japan, he could probably take a holistic view of Europe. Europe was his father's home, while Asia was his mother's home. Richard grew up in a supranational state, the Habsburg monarchy, which also strongly influenced his thinking. Claiming that he belonged to only one single nation is probably impossible. The family had roots all over Europe, from Greece to the Netherlands and Bohemia, and through his mother also to faraway Asia. At

that time, something like a European order still existed. It was European powers that determined world politics.

There is no doubt that the Christian worldview has shaped life and culture in Europe. Coudenhove described Europe as a community of destiny, „founded on monogamy and family, on private property, on the same customs and festivals, on the same religion, the same tradition, the same concepts of honor and morality, the same prejudices“. Even with respect to the concept of private property, we can no longer be sure that this still applies today considering the exorbitant tax burden.

After the First World War this European order had been destroyed. In fact, it was the intervention of a non-European power, the USA, that brought the war in the West to an end. 1918 brought the downfall of the empires that had been directly or indirectly involved with Europe. Four of these empires were destroyed directly as a result of the war, while the British Empire survived the war but was already doomed and stumbling towards its end. The soil of these former empires, however, turned into the birthplace of many a dictatorship and totalitarian system.

In Central Europe, a common cultural area that had evolved over centuries was dismembered. Nationalism took control. Small nation states emerged. But none of these new nation-states could fulfil the claim of being a nation-state – that is a state made up exclusively of members of one single nation. Each of the new states had its ethnic groups that belonged to a different language community than the majority population.

However, what was fragmented was not just a cultural but also an economic area. Each individual state tried to solve its problems through a policy of isolation, protectionism and nationalism. While they were trying to export problems in this way, in reality they only made them worse.

Coudenhove-Kalergi tried to draw lessons from this situation. 100 years later, I often have doubts as to whether people today are still prepared to take these lessons to heart. The first reactions to the Covid crisis, which I described at the beginning, are in any case a good justification for these doubts.

The Pan-European concept follows a geopolitical approach. The goal at the time was not the standardization of the highest possible tax rates or a Europe-wide redistributive welfare state, but the rewriting of a European order. Not in the sense of a – probably even then – unrealistic return to the old order, but as a structure that would restore Europe as a world political unit of action instead of turning it into a plaything of non-European powers.

Hence at the centre of his thoughts was first and foremost a European foreign policy – in order not to be dominated by others on the stage of world politics -, secondly a European security policy – in order not to become dependent on others and thus dominated in this question, or to be drawn into a new intra-European war -, and thirdly the dismantling of all intra-European customs barriers. Today, this would be called a free internal market, i.e., Europe as a free trade zone. In addition, Coudenhove already had a common currency in mind which in his concept was based on the gold standard that still existed at that time, and a European federal court, i.e., what we have today as the European Court of Justice.

The freedom of citizens, individual responsibility and a state that limits itself to setting the framework conditions as a constitutional state were a further basis of his considerations for European unification at that time.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends!

When we look at the situation in Europe today, 100 years later – even though the European Union now consists of 27 states – we will see that this approach is still valid and that we have to work on the implementation of this idea. It is true that we have the

four fundamental freedoms – the free movement of services, the free movement of capital, the free movement of people, and the free movement of goods – but we still have to fight against national egoisms and protectionist measures within the EU. And I am not referring to the restrictions imposed by the border closures due to the pandemic.

Various member states were extremely inventive in restricting the free movement of services, for example. In the end, they even passed a services directive to allow protectionist measures in various areas, contrary to the free movement of services, which actually has constitutional status. Or let us think of the Posting of Workers Directive which also adds to protectionism. So, there is still a lot to be done here to make a real free internal market possible.

You don't have to be a trained economist to be able to formulate a basic truth of economics: free trade is always better than protectionism, it ensures prosperity and thus provides the basis for all the other comforts in our lives.

The geopolitical approach also is still valid. During the Cold War, Moscow determined the foreign policy of the eastern half of the continent in totalitarian manner; for the free western part, the partner USA was the determining power. Without any intention to offend anyone in Paris, Berlin or Madrid, even today the major world political challenges are not decided in the capitals of Europe, but as always in Washington and Moscow, as well as in totalitarian China. Europe sits on the periphery of various conflict hotspots. Let us think of the Middle East but let us also think of the EU's eastern border, where the hybrid attacks – and there is no other way to name the instrumentalization of refugees by the totalitarian Lukashenko regime – from Minsk and also Moscow have created a zone of instability that only a united EU can counter.

It is extremely short-sighted if individual EU countries think they can build a special relationship with Russia that is at odds with European interests. Even if at first glance such a policy should bring a small advantage for such a country, in the medium term this country will already be used by Moscow to divide the EU. A divided EU, however, can neither efficiently counter the old divide et impera policy nor Moscow's new hybrid policy. And hence the small country that aimed to gain an advantage loses its protection through strong policies of the European Union, thus harming itself.

It is also shameful to see how often China has managed to divide the European Union on human rights issues. This is not about what is generally defined as interference in internal affairs, i.e. direct criticism of Chinese human rights policy towards the Uyghurs, for example, but about the fact that China is trying to redefine human rights in the first place and in terms of its own communist ideology and power interests.

The conclusion to be drawn from this – and I know this is not the first time you have heard me make this demand – can therefore only be: Europe, the European Union needs a European foreign policy. It is precisely on this foreign and security policy issue that European sovereignty is needed.

Sovereignty, ladies, and gentlemen, in this specific case means the ability to act and to shape. In terms of potential, European policy would bring clear added value here compared to a purely nation-state policy. To be more precise: European foreign policy here not only means coordination of the foreign policy of 27 member states by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (who is also one of the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission), and where individual countries, for example on important issues such as human rights policy in China, can block a European position, but an EU foreign ministry with a foreign minister (or minister for foreign affairs) at its head.

To this end, we need a core of a European constitution in which precisely this foreign policy competence for the European Union is laid down. A point, by the way, that would

also meet all the requirements of subsidiarity. Just as every foreign minister is now subject to the parliamentary control of his or her country, an EU foreign minister would be subject to the parliamentary control of the European Parliament, which is directly elected by the citizens of the EU.

Of course, creating a post is not enough to make real foreign policy. This also requires a willingness to define European interests. In some areas, this is already happening because of the current challenges. I am thinking of the protection of borders, the defence against direct or hybrid threats, the commitment to human rights, or even the concrete enlargement policy of the European Union.

I would not define feminism as a goal of foreign policy. After all, we do not want Sergei Lavrov and Vladimir Putin to laugh themselves to death, but our goal must be to support Russia on its path of decolonization towards a peaceful, democratic constitutional state with which we can live in a genuine partnership.

It must be clear to all of us that this step towards a European foreign policy will not be so easy. It will take a lot of convincing to actually find a European position in foreign policy. Let me come back to the Schuman quote: this is an objective, an ideal that requires political will to be achieved.

The fact that such a goal sounds utopian should not prevent us from standing up for it. For only those who have political goals will also make politics.

I have already mentioned the Pan-European Union. One of the slogans for which this organization has become known is: „Pan-Europe is all of Europe.“ When my father Otto von Habsburg became Vice-President of the Pan-European Union in 1957 and started repeating this slogan over and over again in his speeches, Europe had not even experienced the first peak of the Cold War. At that time, overcoming the highly militarized Iron Curtain not only sounded utopian, but also led some to believe that anyone who called for such a thing could not be in his right mind.

Let us remember Willy Brandt, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his policy of change through rapprochement and who, as late as 1988, described the belief in German reunification as one of the lies of the Federal Republic of Germany was thriving on. The die-hard pan-Europeans, as we were often called, not only put their faith in the reunification of Germany, but even believed in a unification of Europe.

Dear friends – and we still do today. We still take the slogan „Pan-Europe is all of Europe“ very seriously because every European country has a right to belong to this European unification. I am thinking specifically of the countries of South-Eastern Europe which like a non-EU island are located in the middle of EU countries and are targets of influence by non-European powers exploiting the EU’s weakness. But I am equally thinking of Moldova or countries like the Ukraine, Georgia, all three of which are occupied in part by Russian soldiers and their mercenaries. I am thinking of a country like Belarus, where a long-term ruler, having obviously been defeated in the elections, has established a totalitarian regime in which arbitrary arrests, torture and even murder are unfortunately reality.

A European foreign policy cannot look the other way. A European foreign policy must tighten the sanctions in such a way that Moscow and Beijing come to the decision to drop Lukashenko. Freedom and human dignity are part of the European soul, of European identity. Abandoning them for whatever flimsy reasons in the case of Belarus would be contrary to being European. I also plead for Lukashenko’s regime to be indicted at the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

Incidentally, the same determination applies to support for Ukraine as a guideline for a European foreign policy.

Of course, the question of EU enlargement is a highly political one. It is a betrayal of the idea of European unification when individual countries that already are EU Member States abuse their member status to block others from joining. No matter whether this regards the opening of accession negotiations or visa-free travel for the citizens of Kosovo.

Let us think back to the admission of Spain, Portugal, and Greece. In all three countries, military governments were in power before the integration process. It was the governments of the EC countries at the time that took the political decision to start the accession process with these states. Greece joined the European Community in 1981, Spain and Portugal followed in 1986. The Commission, as guardian of the treaties, opposed the start of accession negotiations at the time claiming that the countries were not yet ready for it. The political decision in the Council, i.e. the representative body of the Member States, was: we want to bring democracy and the rule of law to these countries which is why we want to integrate them. Incidentally, this objective, this political ideal also applied after 1989, after the end of the Iron Curtain, to the then beginning accession process for several of the former Eastern Bloc countries.

When I look at today's blockades against enlargement, I have to repeat one sentence here that I already mentioned at the beginning with regard to Corona policies: „I have the very strong impression that we have buried this European idea in the state chancelleries of Europe. “

Ladies and gentlemen: when I say the European idea is buried, it means that the European idea exists. There is the European identity, there is the European soul. We just have to dig this idea out again, make it again visible. A very central element of this is freedom and individual responsibility of the citizens, as well as the principle of the rule of law.

It is precisely this principle of the rule of law that is often distorted at the European level today. Without going into the details of the disputes between various EU Member States or between EU Member States on the one hand, and the Commission and the Parliament on the other: essentially it is always about questions of power and ideological concepts. The conflict is not one between Western and Central Europe, even if some are now hyping it as a new division between East and West. This narrative is driven by ideologues who use it to portray themselves as victims of the oppression of Eastern Europe by Western Europe in order to build the story that they are the only ones (and the last ones) to defend the true values of Europe. In fact, it is a conflict between two etatist, paternalist ideologies, where one places etatism at the level of the nation state, the other at the level of the supranational EU. Both ideologies are characterized by a primacy of politics, not by a primacy of law.

It is therefore a conflict between ideologies that ultimately want to undermine the rule of law and impose their ideological view on it.

The essence of the liberal constitutional state after all is not the imposition of a certain idea of happiness and welfare by the state. The task of the liberal constitutional state is to guarantee justice and freedom!

An ideology that follows the primacy of politics claims the freedom to regulate pretty much everything, indeed the liberty to regulate truly everything. The more politics does this, however, the deeper the conflict with the law becomes. This conflict is becoming ever more acute because it is less and less the rule of law that governs – that is, the rule of law – but power relations. In the long term, this conflict will have a detrimental effect on Europe.

The effects of this false policy, which believes it can regulate and control everything, are now being felt in the Corona pandemic. Over the past 50 or more years, we have

developed a welfare state that has pretended to be able to relieve people of more and more worries. This was not only the fault of politicians attempting to attract votes in this way. It was also due to citizens shying back from leaving their comfort zone. Who doesn't dream of a carefree life in which the state takes everything off your hands? The bottom line is that we have come to live in a state in which everyone expects the state to implement their precise ideas of freedom. It is only logical that this leads to a political conflict of goals that no government (or opposition) can solve. The economist Felix Somary, who has unfortunately almost fallen into oblivion, described this in his „20 Social Laws of Wrong Proportions “. In law number 4 he says: „The more functions a state assumes, the harder its administration is to control. “And he adds in law number 5: „The larger and the more diverse the state, the less influential the people.“ A massive loss of confidence in politics is the result. This is then the hour of the populists.

Ladies and gentlemen! It will therefore be necessary to talk about redimensioning the state, about deregulation and cutting back on dense regulation.

Ladies and gentlemen: European tradition offers us a very useful instrument for this, namely subsidiarity.

Since the Maastricht Treaty, it has been part of the European Treaties, where Article 5 of the EC Treaty states: I quote: „Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level. “End of quote.

However, this definition does not adequately reflect subsidiarity. Firstly, because it only focuses on the relationship between the EU and the member states, and secondly, because it reduces subsidiarity to a kind of delimitation of competences, according to which member states lift competences to the European level. In fact, however, subsidiarity is much more, namely a natural principle of order that includes the principle of „in dubiis libertas “. There does not have to be a legal regulation for everything (no matter at which level), because there is such a thing as freedom, individual initiative, and individual responsibility.

Pope Pius XI was more precise in his definition in his encyclical „Quadragesimo anno“, in which he defines the „social-philosophical principle“ (subsidiarity), which „is not to be shaken nor falsified“: I quote again: „just as that which the individual can accomplish on his own initiative and with his own powers must not be withdrawn from him and assigned to the activity of society, so it is contrary to justice to claim for the wider and superior community that which the smaller and subordinate community can accomplish and bring to a good end; at the same time it is exceedingly disadvantageous and confuses the whole social order.“ End quote.

Pope Pius XI argues that by observing this principle the respective units of society function much better than if the power of the state interferes in all areas: He specifies: Quote: „the better the gradual order of the various socialization is maintained by strict observation of the principle of subsidiarity, the stronger social authority and social efficacy are, the better and happier is the state. “End of quote.

In other words, Catholic social teaching gives us a very clear guideline for resolving the political conflict of objectives described above, which arises in the welfare state because the state interferes in too many areas of life in a regulatory way.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends! We are not surprised that this approach to a solution comes from the Christian tradition. Inevitably, as soon as we begin to clear

away the rubble that has buried the soul of Europe, we will come across the Christian roots of Europe, the Christian-Jewish tradition.

Let me summarize this again in the words of my father: „The Christian faith has made possible the growth and strengthening of Europe. The concept of human dignity and the development of human rights are inconceivable without Christianity and its Jewish roots. Although it is often claimed that human rights were only formulated by the Enlightenment, it should be pointed out that the thinkers of the Enlightenment period also found their philosophical basis in charity and the scholasticism of the monks of the Middle Ages. If faith disappears, other idols take the place of the Almighty. Man is oriented towards transcendence. God is rarely replaced by nothing, but by substitute idols or substitute ideologies that dangerously promise man paradise on earth. A glance at the world map shows without a spirit of its own, this Europe is doomed to disappear. Viable political forces are only created by an idea because this is the soul – also of the continents. Europe was, as long as it was Christian. “

In the text I have summarized here, he then goes on to write that the descent began at the moment this awareness began to fade.

But we are not gathered here – even if only virtually – to mourn Europe’s decline, but to shape its future. Therefore, may I ask you: help to once again uncover the soul of Europe! Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends!

Allow me to close with a comment on the urgently needed reunification of society. You are probably wondering what I mean by this? In my opinion, this is an absolute prioritarian task of politics. After all, while I am optimistic that we will gradually get the pandemic under control medically and return to a normal life step by step, the deep rift that is running through families, communities, states and even the EU due to the extreme social polarization on Corona issues will not be patched up so quickly.

To achieve this, we must first and foremost disarm verbally and emotionally. Politicians must set a good example and place responsibility for social cohesion above electoral considerations. And in society the bitterly opposed camps will have to take first steps towards each other. Because anger and hatred always block the view of solutions – and also of the root of Europe, our values.

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