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Rede von Bundespräsident Thomas Klestil anlässlich der  
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d'Europe in Brugge am 28. September 1993.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank the College d'Europe and in particular its new rector, Mr. Gabriel Fragniere, for inviting me to participate in the opening of the new academic year. It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today, on this special occasion, at this renowned European institution. As an Austrian, I feel especially proud and honoured by your choice of Stefan Zweig as patron of the class of 1993/94.

Stefan Zweig's personal life mirrors in many ways the fate of his native Austria. His tragic death in exile in 1942 reminds us of the country's darkest period. Stefan Zweig had fled a murderous, inhuman regime in which Austrians, too, participated - some of them even in high places. Nazi tyranny was the very antithesis of the larger, free and democratic Europe which we are building today.

In his work Stefan Zweig has often referred to Europe. I remember in particular his book on Erasmus of Rotterdam where he speaks of Europe as a "moral idea, as the source of that still unfulfilled postulate of the united states of Europe under the banner of a common culture and civilization".

He also compared the spiritual legacy of the dying Erasmus - the ideas of European harmony and of a brotherly community of all mankind - with Machiavelli's "principe" which he described as a "mathematically precise text-book of unscrupulous politics of power and success". And Zweig

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added wistfully that Erasmian thought has never shaped history or visibly influenced the destiny of Europe. But he concluded his reflections by saying that the dynamic force of unfulfilled ideals has proved to be invincible.

### The troubled transition to the New Europe

The Europe of today is still engaged in the struggle between Erasmian and Machiavellian thinking. After the largely peaceful revolutions that liberated Eastern Europe from the nightmare of communism, we have been witnessing the orgy of violence and destruction in former Yugoslavia. After the relief and joy over the victory of freedom and democracy, we were plunged again into sorrow and despair.

The Europe of today is still a Europe of different but overlapping identities and commitments. There is, first of all, the Europe of the EC. Yet there is also the Europe of NATO, of the CSCE or of the Council of Europe.

In order to build a truly united Europe, we have to reconcile all these different identities and commitments. In the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, we have agreed on the blueprints of such a larger Europe, But we still have a long way to go before it becomes reality.

Since this is the first time we have sought to unite Europe *by* peaceful means, and by the free will of its peoples, the Process of European integration is bound to be an exercise of trial and error, of learning by doing. And *it* is only natural that there will be setbacks and even crises.

There is no doubt that right now Europe suffers from a fit of pessimism. Europe appears to have lost its orientation, to be perplexed and helpless and unable to act.

What has happened? One thing is clear: the European idea is presently being put through one of its severest tests. Nothing in Europe will be the same again after the events of 1989. Everything has changed, in the East and in the West. So has the premise on which we have based our thinking and our actions for decades. We find ourselves right in the middle of a process of fundamental change, still influenced by the experience of the past and still unsure of the promises of the future.

### The Moral challenge

What we face now is basically a moral challenge: In view of the wasteland which communism has left behind, the Archbishop of Prague, Miloslav Vlk, has spoken of the spiritual and moral destruction inflicted upon the thinking and feeling of human beings. He said that the damage done to their minds and souls was much worse than all the economic devastation of communist rule. It should therefore not surprise us that the people of that region find themselves confronted with major problems of adjustment to their newly gained freedom and to assumption of responsibility for their own lives,

In Western Europe too, people are confronted with a multitude of problems related to the loss of traditional loyalties and values. Victor Frankl, the famous Viennese psychoanalyst, has spoken of a "sinnkrise", of a crisis of purpose. People, he said, have often more than enough to live from, but they have increasingly little to live for. As a consequence, he diagnosed a syndrome of depression, aggression and addiction in modern societies. And he pleaded for a more active search for the meaning of life, not in an abstract sense, but in the concrete situation of the individual.

These and other prominent voices all convey the same message: To build Europe, we have to look again at its foundations, at the moral and spiritual underpinnings of the European idea. Without strong foundations the whole edifice may crumble. The current President of the European Council and Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium, Mr. Willy Claes, has recently called for an ethical renaissance of Europe and for a renewed commitment to basic European values and standards.

The new Europe must therefore be first and foremost a community of values, of solidarity, of peace and security - and a community of citizens. To enable such a Europe to emerge we will still have to remove many layers of egoism and hatred, of violence and destruction that have built up through centuries of European history.

#### The Need for New Thinking

It is quite obvious that the fundamental changes in Europe will also require new thinking. To make new thinking possible, we have to tear down the walls in our heads and hearts. This will demand great effort, and it will require time which we can ill afford. In the last analysis it means a revolution in human education and social behaviour.

Europeans also have to learn, as Vaclav Havel put it, to live in truth. A Europe that ignores its past will forsake its future. To learn the truth of our past we have to know our history, and we have to seek the facts behind the myths. An international commission of European historians may be useful to assist us in our journey into Europe's past,

And Europeans will have to learn to seek unity even in the absence of an external threat or danger. Solidarity

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today must mean more than joining forces against a common enemy, more than just a strategy of deterrence. It must be a much broader and a more enduring commitment to act in harmony.

### Unity in Diversity

Equally, Europeans must learn to live with diversity. Cultural pluralism will be one of Europe's greatest challenges. The peaceful co-existence of cultures in Europe is far from assured. Instead, we are witnessing a new wave of xenophobia and ethnic violence. Here, we must act quickly and forcefully. Intolerance, hatred and extremism must never again be condoned in Europe. This we owe to the millions of victims this plague has claimed, especially in this century.

In the larger Europe, all its peoples are minorities. Living together with minorities should therefore be the most natural and normal thing for all Europeans. But, as we know, the reality is quite different. In many European countries the existence of minorities is still considered a problem rather than an asset, an obstacle rather than a bridge to one's neighbours, a threat to rather than an enrichment of the cultural life of a country. There is not even agreement on the definition of minorities, on their rights or on the degree of their protection.

Just how dangerous this situation can become we have seen in the former Yugoslavia. We ~~must~~ therefore devote much more attention to ethnic conflicts and to ways and means of resolving them by peaceful means. The forthcoming meeting in Vienna of the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe will be a unique opportunity to demonstrate Europe's determination to tame the deadly potential of ethnic strife. Protection of minorities will thus be the most important item on the summit's agenda.

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Austria, as the host to this meeting, is fully committed to the achievement of real progress on this central issue for the future of Europe.

The respecting of borders is another fundamental factor for the stability of Europe. It is also an essential precondition for the peaceful resolution of the questions of minorities. To advocate changes of existing borders would lead to a wave of new and old territorial claims and disputes. What we should do, instead, is to make borders more permeable and less of an obstacle to Europeans coming together.

Europe also has to beware of nationalism. It continues to be a potent force in East and West. Of course, national pride and patriotism have their place in Europe. But to quote the famous physician and great European Paracelsus whose five-hundredth birthday we have just celebrated: "The dosage makes the poison". To control the destructive force of nationalism, and especially ethnic nationalism, we need a strong civic culture based on tolerance and pluralism. And we need a strong Europe where all nationalities can live together in peace.

### A Citizens' Europe

The new Europe cannot be constructed over the heads of its people. The citizens of Europe must have a stronger voice in European affairs. The reaction of the people to the Maastricht treaty has shown the risks of the top-down approach to European integration. Although the treaty has already provided for more subsidiarity and greater transparency of decision-making, the people's reaction has revealed the need for greater openness and clarity. Europeans are obviously no longer prepared to accept automatically whatever has been negotiated by governments. The present crisis of European integration is, in my view, not least a crisis of confidence in politics.

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With Maastricht the process of building Europe by 'stealth' has reached its end. To regain the confidence of the people, governments will have to make a much greater effort to inform the public of the contents and the results of negotiations. This will also require major changes in the methods of negotiation.

It will also mean new forms of public diplomacy and a commitment to openness just as radical as the other reforms which are vital to the very process of European integration.

The more the process of integration has a direct effect on the lives of people, the more they want to be consulted, and the more important will be their active participation.

And for the people to participate, they have to be convinced that their participation will make a difference. Of course, more participation would also mean a much stronger commitment on the part of the people to become involved in the political process. This may well require changes in our democratic system, allowing for more direct democracy.

#### The need for More Europe

Despite all the criticism raised against the present state of European affairs, we should not forget that the European Community continues to be the central anchor of stability on the continent and remains the main engine of European integration. Can we imagine what Europe would look like today without the European Community? I therefore believe that we have good reason for hope and optimism. And today there is an ever greater urgency to create a stronger and more united Europe,

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The terrible tragedy in the Balkans is a brutal reminder of that urgency. This conflict has clearly revealed the shortcomings of the present state of European integration. I do not want to be misunderstood, I am not blaming the European Community for the disaster in the former Yugoslavia. But the longer the present impotence of the international community in the face of the Bosnian tragedy continues the more it will endanger the belief of Europeans in the effectiveness and the credibility of European institutions.

We have to draw the appropriate lessons from the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia. We have to strengthen the European institutions and move forward towards a truly Common Foreign and Security Policy. And we should not harbour any illusions that war and destruction in Eastern Europe will leave the rest of the continent unscathed. The fate of Europe is too intertwined for such containment to work.

### The Priority of European Security

priority must be given to the creation of an effective system of European security. Europe is at the crossroads today: The longer the present state of drift continues, the more difficult it will be to provide security, and the higher will be its price.

Today the concept of security has become much broader, ranging from the military to the economic, social and environmental spheres, European security is threatened not only by military confrontation but also by uncontrolled mass migration, international organized crime and terrorism, and by nuclear accidents and other forms of environmental disaster. A European security system will have to address all these threats. It is also quite



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evident that such comprehensive security can no longer be provided by one country alone but requires international cooperation and solidarity.

There is also an urgent need for a political and security dialogue with the new democracies of Central and eastern Europe. Western Europe and the institutions of European security will have to respond better to the security needs of these countries. Of course, the transatlantic partnership and the role of Russia will remain central elements of European security, but Europe itself will have to assume a much larger degree of responsibility for its own security. The present state of suspended animation cannot be maintained indefinitely. The historic opportunity offered to Europe by the end of the Cold war must not be lost.

Security is also vital for economic progress and social stability. A successful transformation of Central and Eastern Europe would be the single most important source of hope for economic recovery and prosperity in Western Europe as well. There is no better remedy against the current economic recession with its millions of unemployed than a huge open market right on our doorstep and a concerted European strategy of economic growth, job creation and stability.

#### The European Dilemma

Considering the challenges of today, Europe is facing a basic dilemma: on the one hand there is a clear need for a united Europe capable of effective action, on the other there is also a strong desire to preserve national sovereignty and independence. In contrast to the United States of America, Europe has no single government and thus has to cope with a complex system of decision-making

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which limits its capacity for swift and decisive action. There is also growing opposition in a number of European countries against more powerful European institutions.

To resolve this dilemma, we have to understand that a more pronounced European identity will not be a threat to our national identities but fully compatible with them. We have to allay the fear of stronger European institutions with a greater capacity for common action by increasing their democratic legitimacy and by defining more clearly their responsibilities. The intergovernmental conference of the member states of the European Union scheduled for 1996 will provide a welcome opportunity to take the necessary decisions in that regard.

We will also have to be more flexible in reacting to the challenges of the larger Europe. As Maastricht has already shown, there may well be justification for an inner core of closer integration in certain areas. But at the same time the process of European integration must remain open for the participation of others. European unity and solidarity would not be compatible with a system where countries would be relegated permanently to the fringes of European integration.

This includes the challenge of the enlargement of the Community. I am convinced that with the entry of hopefully four EFTA countries into the political Union, the process of European integration will receive a strong impulse. And more dynamism and flexibility is what Europe needs today to overcome its self-doubts and missing sense of purpose.

#### An Austrian Perspective

Let me now add some comments on European integration from a more specifically Austrian perspective. Our view of Europe is shaped primarily by Austria's central geographic

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position, her long history and tradition of living in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environment, a sense of scepticism towards nationalism as the result of historical experience and by her idea of a Europe transcending the narrow confines of the nation state.

Based on this view of Europe, Austria strongly supports a Europe of common values, of common security, of good neighbourliness, a Europe of the citizens and a Europe of global responsibility. This also makes Austria a natural candidate for membership of the European Union.

Because of her European vocation, Austria, after having regained its independence after the Second World War, has made great efforts to participate in the process of European integration. However with the division of Europe and the outbreak of the Cold War, Austria's role as an element of stability in the Europe of East-West confrontation did not allow the country to realize its other aspirations. In that sense Austria has sometimes been referred to and with good reason as a "pays fondateur manqué" of the European Community.

In the new European environment, Austria finds herself more directly and more strongly affected by the changes in Europe than most other Western European countries. For Austria, the opening of Eastern Europe has meant a return to normalcy but at the same time a reversal of her former strategic position.

Today, the country is surrounded by democracies to whom it is bound by good neighbourly relations and close links of history and traditions, Austria is, of course, greatly interested in the successful transition of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to democracy and a market economy, and in their full integration into the European community of free, stable and prosperous nations,

### Austria's Membership of the European Union

While rebuilding her relations with Eastern Europe, Austria is pursuing her negotiations for membership of the European Union. In this endeavour we are guided by the conviction - which is also shared by the European Commission - that the more firmly the country is anchored in Western Europe, the better it will be able to play its role in Central and Eastern Europe. Serving as a partner for the new democracies and acting as a gateway to their region gives Austria's adherence to the European Union an important European dimension.

Provided that the electorate gives its approval at the referendum required under the Austrian constitution, Austria will participate actively and constructively in the continuous dynamic evolution of the European Union. As a member of the European Union, Austria will fully support the objectives of the Maastricht treaty, including those on **Common** Foreign and Security Policy. Our security is inseparably linked to the security of Europe as a whole.

Let me, at this point, say a word on Austrian neutrality. For Austria, neutrality has always been an instrument of security policy, never an end in itself. When adopted in 1955, Austria's neutrality was the only available means to secure, in a climate of East-West tensions, the country's territorial integrity and independence. It has served the country - and the international community - well. Today, the situation in Europe has fundamentally changed. And so has the role of neutrality. It no longer serves its original purpose. As a consequence, the Austrian government has adjusted its policy of neutrality towards a policy of solidarity.

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### The Assets of Austrian membership

participation in the process of European unification corresponds to Austria's European vocation as well as to her concrete political interests. We accept European integration as a dynamic future-oriented process. Austria's accession will therefore strengthen the cohesion of the European Union and will facilitate the further development and the deepening of its structures.

Because of Austria's proximity to areas of actual and potential insecurity, Austrians have become increasingly aware of the importance of their country's participation in effective arrangements to enhance European security.

The Austrian government has therefore stated unequivocally that Austria fully accepts the provisions of the Maastricht treaty, also with respect to security and defence,

There is no doubt in my mind that Austria will also be willing and able to participate actively and constructively in the further evolution of the security and defence dimension of the European Union.

The Austrian economy is well prepared for its further integration into the single market. The country is already the third-largest trading partner of the Community. The Austrian schilling is among the strongest currencies, and Austrian economic indicators already largely meet the criteria for joining the European Monetary Union.

As a major transit country, Austria holds a pivotal position in the internal market of the European Union. Yet as an Alpine country with a unique but vulnerable ecological system, it deserves, however, a special measure

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of environmental protection. We consequently trust that the substance of the transit agreement concluded between Austria and the European Community will be preserved for its entire duration of twelve years. We are confident that the transport policy of the EC will in the longer run evolve into the same direction.

Despite the present recession, the strength of the Austrian economy is still impressive. This is mainly due to the quality of the country's human resources and the system of social partnership, which remains an important factor of social peace and stability. The country thus has much to offer to the European Community.

### A Historic Opportunity for Europe

This is indeed a historic moment for Europe, We must not fail. We have to seize it. Let us draw courage and optimism from the generation which rebuilt Europe out of the rubble of the Second World War. They had lost everything, they had to struggle for their daily lives, they had to face overwhelming problems, and still they had the will and the strength to take the future into their own hands.

Today " despite all our problems " we enjoy a quality of life which past generations could only dream of. We have no reason to be faint-hearted and unsure of ourselves. We have every reason to be confident that we are able to meet the challenges of our time. Let us apply ourselves to the urgent task of building the new Europe.