

Dear Rector, Dear Professor Espada, Dear Guests, Dear Students,

As you have heard, this newly established Chair is a continuation of a Chair held by Professor Geremek in Natolin since 2002 till his tragic death in 2008.

At the same time, I would like to stress the **support of the European Parliament** we received for the re-creation of the Chair bearing Professor Geremek's name. The response to our efforts was prompt and positive, not only because Professor Geremek was one of the most distinguished MEPs, but also because he truly acted for Europe.

And now, let me share with you **a few personal thoughts** about Professor Geremek.

He had chosen the College of Europe Natolin campus for his academic affiliation and was present here for years. Students often underlined that they were privileged to meet him regularly and to exchange views on Europe.

This is a story about **a man who loved Europe**. This is a story about a man who had a faith in Europe. Who promoted Europe successfully and who knew how to teach Europe.

What is more fascinating about him is that his faith in Europe and his passion for Europe were based on **profound experience and knowledge**.

Being aware of how difficult and painful the history of Europe is, only Professor Geremek could be so convincing in his European narrative. A man who survived the war, witnessed the hell, and escaped the extermination can fully understand **the meaning of integration**.

But, first of all, Professor Geremek was **an academic, a historian, and a scholar of medieval issues**. History was his first love, while he got involved with politics simply because he couldn't stand his country being humiliated and dependent on others.

Thus, he "revolted", as he always stood by the saying that if you don't like something in your country, you just have to change it, instead of complaining and doing nothing.

His role in fighting for democracy and **freedom in Poland**, his great contribution to **Solidarność**, and his untiring activity to rebuild Poland after the end of communist rule, including being **Polish Foreign Minister**, distinguish him as an outstanding personality.

Furthermore, he was **a great teacher** who “infected” his students with Europe. Who taught Europe without hiding problems to be faced, and, at the same time, underling common values and goals.

**The Chair we have just established is a kind of our tribute to Professor Bronisław Geremek.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen. Now let me introduce you** Professor Joao Carlos Espada who is a chairholder of this newly established Chair. He is also the director and founder of the Institute for Political Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal. He was previously a Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon.

He earned his PhD from the University of Oxford, under the supervision of Lord Dahrendorf, and he taught at Brown, Stanford and Georgetown Universities in the US. He is editor of the quarterly journal Nova Cidadania and president of the Portuguese section of the International Churchill Society. He has co-founded the Board of the European Partnership for Democracy. He has authored nine books and edited another ten in political theory. For several years he has been political adviser to the Presidents of the Portuguese Republic. In June 2010, he was awarded The Medal of Gratitude by the European Solidarity Centre in Poland. In 1996, he was awarded an Order of Merit by the President of the Republic of Portugal.

**Our new Chairholder - Professor Espada - will face the difficult task ahead of coping with the legend but I am convinced Dear Professor, that you will manage and I do believe that you will significantly contribute to the success of our Natolin mission.**

**- Thank you for joining our team and good luck, Professor! The floor is yours.**