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Opening Ceremony
Academic year 2013-2014
5 November 2013

Vice-President of the Administrative Council,

Rector,

Governor

Mayor, Ambassadors, Members of the European Parliament,

Dear students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to welcome you this evening in Bruges and to share with you this opening ceremony of the 2013-2014 College year. An event in which we welcome the Voltaire promotion, named after the patron whose persona, life and significance the Rector has masterfully highlighted. And in praising Rector Monar, let me take this opportunity to express my very warm appreciation of

his predecessor, Professor Demaret, who for over a decade enlightened us concerning the patrons of each of the promotions at the College, and to whom I wish to extend these words of recognition, gratitude and affection.

As you know, at this ceremony, the address was scheduled to be given by the President of the European Parliament, but due to an unforeseen and unavoidable commitment, my good friend Martin Schulz is unable to be here today. In his absence and making good the Latin adage "Necessity makes law", I'm afraid you will have to bear with my modest contribution, as President of the Administrative Council.

And "What shall I talk about?", I asked myself when the Rector and I agreed on this stop-gap solution. Then I recalled an event that is very significant for this College. 2013 marks the sixty-fourth anniversary of the first graduating class of the College of Europe. And to underline the importance of this occasion, it seemed very appropriate to look back and remember that great believer in Europe who was the promoter and one of the founders of this College.

I refer to my compatriot, Salvador de Madariaga. Born in 1886 – the same year, by the way, as Robert Schuman – Madariaga was a thinker who was profoundly committed to Europe.

Not to any Europe, but to the one that emerged from the destruction of a terrible war and which set out on its present path with the Schuman Declaration of 1950.

To a Europe based on Franco-German reconciliation to safeguard peace on our continent.

To a Europe underpinned by a political system based on the principles of freedom, tolerance, pluralism and respect for fundamental rights.

To a Europe relying on the market economy as its source of growth, progress and prosperity.

To a Europe as a culture-defined unit whose identity arose from the confluence of two great traditions: the Socratic tradition, which demanded freedom of thought, and the Christian tradition, which demanded respect for human beings by reason of their humanity.

Madariaga dreamed of such a Europe when in 1948, together with Sir Winston Churchill and other politicians of the era, he piloted the Congress of the European Movement, which was held in The Hague and constituted the first official act professing European ideals and ambitions after the second world war. At that moment, everything remained to be done; Germany was still occupied by the Allied powers, the former Soviet Union threatened to extend its influence to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which would become, a few years later, the "*l'Occident kidnapé*" as beautifully titled in the essay by Milan Kundera. The people of Europe, famished and decimated by war, needed a path of hope. At that time, they found it. Exactly thirty years after the Hague Congress, Salvador de Madariaga passed away, shortly after

receiving the Charlemagne Prize, which is akin to the Nobel Prize, for work done in the service of European integration.

During those three decades, there were many changes in our continent, but in the 35 years since his death, the course of our continent has not been "*une longue fleuve tranquille*". And I wondered: if we had a gadget like HG Wells' time machine, and Salvador de Madariaga were transported to this hall on a day like today,

What would the founder of our College think of present-day Europe?

What would he miss, what would he find frustrating, what would he hope for?

In an attempt to answer these questions and, especially, to share this fantasy with you all, I shall outline the personality of our guest. As I said, his commitment to Europe was probably the mainstay and focus of Madariaga's concern. But this portrait would be incomplete without also mentioning his work as a novelist, essayist and illustrious member of what was termed the 1914 Generation, together with other intellectuals such as Ortega y Gasset, Azaña and Marañón.

Let us also acknowledge his foray into public life as Minister of Education and Justice for the Spanish Republic in the 1930s, his activism in the League of Nations (an attribute he shares with Jean Monnet), his exile after the Civil War and his passion for study and

learning that led him to teach at several universities in Europe, and especially at Oxford.

So, let us imagine. Someone who preached reconciliation as the necessary basis for reconstruction could not but feel proud of the successive enlargements of our Union. When Madariaga died, the six founding members of the original Communities had been joined by three more; today's Union has 28. I have the notion that our protagonist would have been especially pleased with the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986. Madariaga had contributed decisively to the first political reconciliation of the "*Dos Españas*" after the civil war, with the Congress of the European Movement, held in Munich in 1962. He expressed that idea of reconciliation as a precondition for the Union in beautiful words that I should like to quote: "Those who once chose freedom and paid the price of land, and those who chose land and paid the price of freedom have come together, to seek the path for all to enjoy both land and freedom". Thus, I have no doubt of Madariaga's yearning to see our country in the European Union, as a man who was, at one and the same time, profoundly attached to his native Galicia, a fervently patriotic Spaniard and a deeply-committed European.

Neither do I have the slightest doubt that he would be very satisfied with the major enlargement that took place from 2004 to 2007, when we were "stitching together the two Europes", to use the expressive statement of my good and well-remembered friend Bronislaw Geremek.

The Europe of 1978, upon which Madariaga last gazed, is far removed from that of today. Not only have we witnessed the

"numerical revolution" of which Alain Lamassoure spoke, but the nature of the Communities themselves has changed. In Madariaga's time, there was a great deal of customs union, much activity regarding external tariffs and some movement toward a Common Market, but very little policy as such. In those days, when the governments of the then nine member states debated an issue of foreign or security policy, they took the precaution of changing the meeting room, in order to highlight the non-existence of EU competence in those areas. Let us also recall that in 1984 the EU of Ten – Greece had just joined – was unable to reach agreement on a statement condemning the Soviet Union when two MiG fighters shot down a South Korean passenger airliner, killing over three hundred people!

Today's Europe is quite different. I believe Madariaga would welcome the abolition of physical borders between our countries, as a result of the Schengen agreements, and the enormous progress made in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters and police cooperation, together with the creation of Europol and of Eurojust.

In 1948, Madariaga wrote in an article, "Today, no single European nation can subsist by its own strength alone; our union represents the only alternative to economic collapse on the one hand, and the danger of military or revolutionary aggression on the other". He shared this view with another great European visionary of those early days, the Belgian Paul Henri Spaak, who said that post-war Europe did not have large and small states, but only small ones; the difference was merely that some had yet to realise this.

This vision is ever more accurate. In a growing multipolar world and with the rise of emerging powers, Europe has to grasp this opportunity to enjoy more influence in the world and vindicate its values and interests.

Consequently, I believe Madariaga would have supported the constitution of a European External Action Service led by a High Representative, comparable to a Foreign Minister for the European Union, which incidentally was the title used in the text of the Convention which prepared the draft Constitutional Treaty – before some Member States came along to trim it back...

Madariaga was a liberal, and as such participated with Popper, Friedman and Hayek at the 1947 meeting in Mont Pelerin, which for many was the founding act of the International Liberal project.

Therefore, I think Madariaga would have approved of the Single Act and its aim to finally bring about the Common Internal Market, the backbone of integration and the driving force of economic growth and competitiveness.

As a committed supporter of greater integration, Madariaga would have endorsed the creation of the Euro, as a common currency for Europe and a key element of political integration.

I believe, too, that he would have applauded the drafting of a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, such as is contained today within the Treaty of Lisbon, and whose first article proclaims "the dignity of the human person is inviolable", a principle dear to Madariaga's heart.

I am equally convinced that he would support the liberalisation of international trade, as a factor impelling growth and global development. And as a convinced Anglophile, he would support the conclusion of a free trade agreement between the Union and the USA, one of the most ambitious projects to have been addressed on the European agenda.

Trained as an engineer, Madariaga, like many of us, could not have remotely foreseen the technological revolution that has taken place in the last decade. In thinking of the quantum leap it has provoked, from our past to our present, I am reminded of the following anecdote. When the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, supported behind the scenes by Jean Monnet, launched what would become the Declaration of 9 May, the first cornerstone of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, he decided to send the text before its adoption by the French Council of Ministers to Konrad Adenauer, who was waiting for it in Bonn. The medium of communication used was that of a courier, who took a train from Paris to the German capital, where the document was delivered. The courier waited for the Chancellor's reply and then brought it back to France. Can you imagine this Odyssey? If such a situation occurred today, a straightforward email would probably be sufficient to transmit the message and to obtain the reply!

Beyond a doubt, the technological revolution would have been a very useful instrument for transmitting Madariaga's European message, that is, his belief in European culture as a channel and a means of integration. In his book "An outline for Europe", published

in 1951, he defended the thesis of a European cultural theme with national variations. This idea was a forerunner of the motto “Unibus in pluribus” which was adopted in the draft Constitutional Treaty. In his book, Madariaga set out his thesis on the prototypes of the European spirit represented by Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust and Don Juan. In his view, the construction of Europe is not a rational-constructivist endeavour, but one calling for patient resolution, as with the cathedrals raised in mediaeval times, sustained and inspired by diverse contributions over the centuries, but established on the solid foundation of a common culture.

Our perception of Europeanness as a particular culture is best perceived when we travel outside the continent. Allow me to share a personal anecdote. In the 1990s, a good friend of mine, from Britain, married an American from Omaha, Nebraska. Nineteen Europeans, of various nationalities, were invited to the wedding (which speaks volumes for my friend’s relational talents). I well remember the cultural divide between us and the American guests during those days in Omaha. The Europeans, who had not met before, all reacted in a very similar way to the comments, jokes and attitudes of the Americans. I realised then that there existed a very definite feeling in common between a Spaniard, a Finn and a Greek, which was much stronger than the faint dividing lines of national borders. So when, years later, I heard Milan Kundera say that he felt particularly European when he was in the USA, I understood straight away what he meant.

As you remember, Jean Monnet inspired and encouraged the joint production of coal and steel by France and Germany, and the

ECSC Treaty entrusted its management to the High Authority – the embryo of the European Commission – in order to ward off nationalist temptations. But possibly the most important effect of this initiative consisted in getting yesterday's enemies working together. "Familiarity breeds content", to change the saying around. Well, Jean Monnet thought, and history has proved him right, that the best way to avoid a third world war lay in making enemies friends. And while Monnet achieved his goals by focusing on economic matters, Madariaga did so in the field of education, and the College of Europe is an impressive showcase for his initiative. By bringing together in one place, in this beautiful city of Bruges, students from different countries, whose fathers had fought in opposing trenches, Madariaga sought to heal the wounds of the past through mutual understanding and cooperation.

In other words, through love, as professed, years later, by Denis de Rougemont, another great intellectual, of comparable calibre. Madariaga would have been especially proud of our Natolin Campus, a showcase for freedom and excellence, which owes much to the perseverance of Jacek Saryusz-Wolski and to the efficacy of Rector Osniecka.

For these reasons, I think Madariaga would have supported all the programmes we have introduced to facilitate movement, language learning, cultural exchanges and joint projects among European universities. And very especially, he would be very proud of the Erasmus programme, which has provided the opportunity for so many European students to realise the same dream as was fulfilled by those who arrived in Bruges in 1953. Madariaga would

think, like many of us, that Erasmus has helped create more Europeans than any number of political speeches or umpteen summit meetings, because this programme represents Europe at its best, the Europe which adds value to training and to mutual understanding and awareness among Europeans.

That said, let me return to the question of Madariaga's liberalism, to underline his critical, nonconformist spirit. Given this outlook, what would Madariaga think of the direction our Union has taken in recent years? What verdict would he reach on the changes undergone by our institutions?

He would surely be surprised – and pleasantly so – by the heightened authority of the European Parliament, which has been transformed over these years from a very subordinate consultative assembly to a real parliament, elected by universal suffrage and enjoying powers equivalent to those of the Council.

While Madariaga was not exactly an institutionalist, he would have been impressed by the leading role played by the European Council, as exemplified by its having met six times in a year, becoming *de facto* the most powerful decision-taking body within the Union.

He would probably regret to witness the diminished presence of the Community method and the resulting upsurge in intergovernmentalism.

He would advocate strengthening the irreplaceable role of the European Commission as the guarantor of the general interest. He

would also defend its monopoly on the exercise of legislative initiative and demand respect for its collegiate nature when adopting decisions.

He would also be struck by the long hours worked and the enormous effort expended by its institutions to overcome the economic and financial crisis of these last five years. I am sure that he would readily accept the explanation given by President Van Rompuy, in whose graphic words, in mid-ocean and buffeted by the storm – that is, the present financial crisis – we have discovered there are insufficient lifeboats – that is, institutions of economic governance – and that we must extemporise them as best we can. On the other hand, our protagonist, in the manner of Teilhard de Chardin, would also favour "rising higher to see more clearly" and seek to "discriminate voices from echoes" in the words of a Seville poet.

Madariaga would probably consider that Europe has lost the thread, and is unable to weave a narrative that is compelling enough to engage its citizens. Nevertheless, such a narrative has existed in the past. In the late 1940s, the founding fathers of Europe conveyed the message that the cause of Europe was one of reconciliation and peace, in contrast to the nationalism that had led to the most terrible of wars. But who in Europe today views France and Germany as bitter foes? I can only think of one such case, it is just the rivalry of their national teams on the football pitch! That is not cause for great concern.

During the 1960s and 70s, Europe represented the democratic, prosperous option to the totalitarianism on the other

side of the Iron Curtain. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the goal of achieving the Single Market and the euro became the benchmark of Europeanism.

In the early 2000s, the narrative became somewhat less clear-cut, and Europe was called upon to provide added value; "Europe has to deliver" in the words of Tony Blair. Fifteen years later, we have no narrative, no inspiring message to engage Europe with its citizens, but just a clash of discordant voices, which use Europe as a punchball and blame it for all their complaints.

I believe Madariaga would be a dependable ally in the creation of a new European message.

This new narrative would spotlight the achievements made during the past six decades in our continent in terms of freedom, justice, progress and respect for fundamental rights.

This new narrative would be inspired by the principles of responsibility and cohesion, of mutual trust and solidarity.

All these values and principles go to make up what might be called the "European way of life". And it is very important that when we set out to draft new rules of global governance, whether in economic and financial terms, or concerning trade, industry or the environment, we should be able to bring to the fore those principles and values that constitute what we are and how we live and which have helped strengthen our democracy and which have achieved progress and well-being for our peoples. Brazil's ex-President Lula observed, quite rightly, in the darkest moments of the financial crisis

– now happily behind us – that the European Union could not disappear because “it belongs to the democratic heritage of Mankind”.

Every narrative seeks to combine conviction and passion, as reason and sentiment are two powerful mobilising forces. But a university professor like Madariaga would not be content with mere theorising, but would rather make use of narrative as a lever to develop a message about Europe.

On occasion I have asserted that Europe is like the air we breathe; it is there, it is necessary for our existence but ... how many of you get up every morning and really think about it, its purity, how much we need it? None of you, I am sure. One deep breath and, that's it, now for a cup of coffee or tea. Similarly, Europe is part of the everyday routine of our existence. Even though, according to a recent survey, only 43% of us know what it means to belong to the European Union and 48% of us are unaware of our rights, the fact is that we are Europeans, albeit without realising it. And even though we only rarely perceive the presence and the influence of Europe in our lives.

Let me illustrate this with a personal experience. Some time ago, I had to take my daughter Inés to school because the German girl who usually went with her was ill with peritonitis. She was admitted emergency department and was operated on the very next day, after merely presenting her German health insurance card. That experience reminded me of a time several decades previously, when as a child I accompanied a friend, who had broken his arm, to an English hospital. Before anyone would look at his arm, he had to

pay a deposit of however many pounds sterling the regulations required. The difference between the two cases is called Europe. The mother of our German girl arrived *post haste* when she was told her daughter was in hospital. On arriving in Madrid, she told us that the flight from Hamburg had cost 89 euros. I remembered, then, the 500 euros that I used to pay fourteen years ago when I had to fly from Madrid to Brussels. The difference between one air fare and the other is not mere chance, either, but has arisen from the disappearance of monopolies and from opening up the skies to competition. The reason for this change also has a name: Europe.

That morning, when I was preparing breakfast for my daughter, I saw that the wrapping of her drinking chocolate container specified a list of conditions satisfied, in accordance with European regulations to protect consumer health, these regulations being the same for all EU countries: again, Europe. Later, we took a bus proudly proclaiming its “low emissions” status – in accordance, of course, with European regulations. Once we arrived at Ines’ kindergarten, I found that the toys she and her friends were playing with all bore labels certifying their compliance with European standards. Again, Europe.

Within a few years, those same children will have an opportunity that my generation never had: one day, they will cross international borders without waiting in lengthy queues, without having to show a passport, without having to obtain foreign currency, in order to study a degree at a European university. And I could add endless further examples from the everyday lives of the people of Europe.

And very soon we shall have a good opportunity to develop a new European narrative and to spread the word about Europe. I refer to the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament to be held next May.

There is one idea of Madariaga's that I often repeat: he said that "Europe will not be a reality until it is within the consciousness of its citizens". Those same citizens may be tired; perhaps they are disheartened by the severe economic crisis we have undergone; those same citizens view with dismay the unbearable slowness of the Union in taking decisions that will affect their lives. This is all true, but the fact remains that European integration remains the most beautiful utopia of the twenty-first century. And like all utopias, it is in need of people who can combine far-sightedness and ambition to bring it about. And it is not populist or Eurosceptic attitudes that will resolutely create the European edifice – such attitudes can destroy but they cannot create. In these times, Europe needs responsible citizens who are capable of electing politicians with heads and hearts, to face and overcome the challenges facing our continent.

In conclusion, one final thought.

In 2010, Professor Derungs devoted an essay to Salvador de Madariaga, whom he termed "an unknown European". Madariaga may not have received the popular recognition he warrants, but for those of us who admire his work, who know of his dedication and who respect his intellectual insight, today, 35 years after his death, he continues to be a beacon, powerfully illuminating the decisions we must take in difficult times. And someone like this, believe me,

deserves the recognition of us all. And that – no more but no less – is what I have tried in all modesty to convey in this opening session to welcome the Voltaire promotion.

Thank you very much for your attention.

IMdeV

05/11/2013