

Speech by Ms. Emma Vermunicht
Natolin Campus Student President
Official Opening of the Academic Year 2018 – 2019
Natolin campus
25 October 2018

Honourable Commissioner Navracsics,

Distinguished Ambassadors,

Madame Vice Rector,

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Mariners,

It is my honour to stand here today representing our 137 students coming from not only the European Union, but also from the Union's neighbouring countries and other parts of the world. All of us came to study at the College of Europe, arriving here with various backgrounds, diverse perspectives and different goals. Nonetheless, all of us have demonstrated a common interest in the European project, its successes and its challenges.

We want to sincerely thank you, Commissioner Navracsics, for your presence here today, your interesting and inspiring speech and more than anything for fostering Europe's next generation through education, culture and sport. Your work enables us students to learn, not just through courses but also, and maybe even more so, through our interaction with one another. Living side by side, on this beautiful campus, we are creating our own European community. Our promotion, more than any of those before it, is an Erasmus promotion. Not just because our Patron is Manuel Marin, one of the founders of the exchange program, but also because our generation, more so than any previous generation, has had the opportunity to discover Europe freely.

Today's education is Europe's future. I therefore strongly believe that it is important now, more than ever, to take every opportunity to learn and to challenge what we learn. Especially as College of Europe students, we should realise how important education is and appreciate the fact that we can benefit from it, even if it means having classes at 9am on a Sunday. The European Union faces many challenges, and education might be the answer to overcome many of them. Throughout educational processes, we will be able to better understand the past and present, which gives us guidance, support and encourages us to handle the future.

I would like to end this speech with wishing you all the best with your further work, Commissioner Navracsics, and in the meanwhile, here at the College, we will

continue to learn, to understand the European project that many of us might one day be working on. *Thank you.*