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Address

by

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Member of the Commission
of the European Communities

on the occasion of the presentation
of the Charlemagne Prize

Aachen

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Mr. Oberbürgermeister,
Your Excellencies,
Fellow members of the Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Commission of the European Communities has decided that the magnificent distinction which you have been kind enough to award us should be received by the President of our Commission, as is right and proper, and by its youngest member, which may appear symbolic.

Allow me then to express all my thanks to the Charlemagne Prize Committee and to the City of Aix-la-Chapelle, but also to President Rey and my colleagues for an intention which has greatly moved me.

And since it is because of my relative age that I have the honour of speaking to you, let a man who first began to reflect on political matters on a continent with its eastern part amputated, with its western part destroyed, some of whose countries were enervated and as though astounded by their victory and others crushed or rent asunder by their defeat, and whose first need in every case was to find their identity again, let a member of this generation raised in the chaos of a world for which it did not feel responsible, but drawn too soon by the misfortune of the times into consciousness of responsibilities, tell you today what Europe means to him. Responsibility means being capable of providing responses. What responses must we, can we, expect from Europe?

Europe is at once a tradition and a hope. The tradition begins with nostalgia. The hope must not end in a dream. Why should we, and how could we, give solid form to the vague feeling of what may once have been a common sense of belonging and to what it might be in the future? This it seems is the dual question which we have always had to ask ourselves.

To be sure, factual "European" situations have existed in certain places and at certain times. In the Middle Ages, the University could have been called "European" and to quote only one example, among the great names of the University of Paris, we find a German, Albertus Magnus, an Italian, Thomas Aquinas, a Briton, Duns Scotus. Today, in most of our countries, it is forbidden for a foreigner to hold a professorial chair. Other fields could be mentioned in which, in past centuries, a common language together with total freedom of movement achieved what today is unfortunately sometimes no more than an ambition.

But what was general and constant was a sort of "European nostalgia": like the memory of unity lost by our own fault, a memory linked with the memory of Rome (the Holy Roman Empire was Roman before being Germanic and even Clovis, King of the Franks, took care to have himself nominated Consul of Rome), then of Charlemagne, the Great Emperor of the West, whose name is indissolubly linked with your City; remorse reinforced by the fact that the unity of religion, then of culture, were not reflected in any political harmony, or even peace.

The movements of real cohesion have been mainly negative, in the face of a danger no longer to a country but to what we would today call our way of life itself, in the more general sense. At Lepanto, then before the walls of Vienna, part of Europe for a few days was voluntarily united. We may recall that the word "Europe", employed by the Greek geographers to designate our side of the Dardanelles, and out of use for centuries, was used again for the first time (in a project of European organization, moreover) in the year of the fall of Constantinople!

This remorse for not having been able to agree with each other as Europeans in permanent and organized fashion has come with us through the centuries and has been expressed, without any success, century after century in "European" projects signed by kings, Popes, poets, ministers, soldiers, economists

and, I might add, even diplomats. The last two world wars, begun in Europe, could only reinforce this feeling of incomprehension, even scandal, at the spectacle of our internal rivalries. I have still ringing in my ears the memory of the reciprocal declarations of war of 1939 and 1940. When one judges our European edifice today, its progress, its limitations and also its motivations, one should never forget this will and this result (and, as for me, I shall never forget it): that what I heard thirty years ago, which may appear incredible to those younger than myself and therefore unreal, but which was sadly real, should be no longer possible, should be physically impossible.

Thus I come to the Common Market. I would like to make some personal comments on its spirit and its machinery.

Following various earlier endeavours it was decided to apply to economic life the general concern for European organization.

All the provisions of the Treaty of Rome thus have double value.

Their value as action, inherent in the field which was chosen: creation of a vast market with its technical advantages of competition, division of labour, development of trade, higher living standards, co-ordination of economic policies.

The value of the intention behind them, which is that the achievement of these commercial and economic objectives, the application of these technical mechanisms, besides their direct interest, shall indirectly create durable links, a real solidarity which can and must be the basis of all other progress and which is already in itself an immense political progress. The Common Market is at the same time the means and the permanent occasion for feeling as Europeans.

Today, let us admit it, this outline sometimes appears less convincing, primarily because of its success; this is unfair but normal.

The need for greater co-operation in economic matters in Europe was evident twenty or even twelve years ago, when our countries were separated by multiple tariff and quota barriers, their currencies were not convertible and even the movements of persons were subject to multiple restrictions. Today, the greater liberalization we have achieved appears an accomplished fact, at least when things are normal. What obvious motivation would impel us to go further? And, more serious: what technical reason would impel us to go further in Europe?

While European opinion has got used to the results obtained and, in view of these, feels the need for further progress less, a pressure which has always existed, but which is developing, tends to treat the remaining problems on "world scale". Why make something "special" in Europe, something special to Europe, when trade, the economic situation, investments and currency depend on decisions and conditions which go far beyond this continent?

Because (and this is the technical answer) it may be useful, even in a world concertation, already to have within this concertation a geographical area of greater cohesion and greater dynamism. Because (and this is the second answer) our machinery also has its value as intention. The customs union, under the second head, had the virtue of leading to economic union, and this in turn to political union.

But this movement or sequence of movements, which our treaties called for and to a certain extent undertook, is itself also questioned. This is a time of contradictory questionings, a time when the second generation of European problems is that of concertation and harmonization in all the fields of activity of the States having an economic effect—the budget, wages, currency, etc.

Is it really possible to pass "naturally" from economics to politics, and are these not two totally different fields requiring re-examination and distinction of objectives, procedures and even institutions? Should we not after twelve years' experience of the Treaty distinguish between the administrative requirements of such a considerable economic Community (which have already led in agriculture to interesting institutional developments) and the problems of general orientation, of principle, the outline laws of our progress, in a sense?

Can it not be said on the other hand that political progress is essential to all serious progress of the economic union and must therefore come first?

Does the possible enlargement of the Community from six to ten or twelve countries again raise the question of the very driving capacity of the machinery envisaged, and therefore the machinery itself, or does it not?

Should we or should we not speak of matters of defence, notably nuclear defence?

- (a) No, because it is not of our competence; everything depends on the United States; the German problem is insoluble;
- (b) Yes, because what is the use of a political Europe which can only make pious recommendations on foreign policy and, above all, which is not responsible for itself, i.e. first and foremost for its defence?

When we mention political Europe in speeches, it seems at times that we are talking basically or solely about institutional progress. It is certainly one solution, and often the best, to rely on the institutions, and I shall not grumble. But should it not be obvious that every institutional solution is valid up to a certain degree of difficulty: more precisely we ought to refer to a "quantum of difficulty". If divergences of substance

are too serious or uncertainties concerning objectives are too extensive, it is not of the institutions which we should speak first or solely but of the problems of substance and objectives, which are those of the construction of Europe. Political Europe is, after all, also a matter of knowing what policy Europe wants to follow.

If Europe today is less interesting, in particular to youth, this is because of our success, as I have said. It is also because of the field chosen, which leads to a refinement of economic techniques of sometimes discouraging abstruseness, and here we are sometimes rather hoist with our own petard. But there is more, and this more affects our motivations.

It is undoubtedly serious that between the countries signatories to a Treaty there is no longer agreement on what they have at the back of their minds. But it is at least as serious that there is no longer a clear and powerful attraction for the general public as regards objectives, that is, if I may so express myself, what they have in the front of their minds.

In what way is Europe still something desired, in what way is it still a response? That is what we should ask ourselves. To be sure, progress and agitation should not be confused. But when we see that on the stages or among the characters who seem to excite people twenty years younger than I am, from Vietnam to the American colour problem, from Che Guevara to Mao Tse-tung, there is no European theme or name, we may, if not be worried, at least ask ourselves what all this signifies.

Externally, how can what we do, say and plan be understood readily as a concrete response to the concern for an easing of tension in Europe and in the world; in what way can it be a hope here as in Prague, and not only the improvement of a status quo, such as the authorities have a natural tendency to maintain? Internally, if the problems which stir our conscience in all

countries are problems of human relationships, from educational or social relationships to those between the citizen and the State, what link with our efforts, what consequences can we deduce from our successes and our failures?

While the world presents the sad paradox of being at the same time more and more uniform and less and less ordered, while in agriculture, the city, the university, the parliament, the Soviet solutions appear less and less those of hope, the solutions imported from America more and more in need of adaptation, it is important for Europe to be a framework for certain responses which we are all seeking and, if not of a "European way of life", to be the scene of a new European civilization.

Where are the frontiers of Europe? A Scandinavian may feel more at home in Minnesota than in Portugal, an Italian more at home in the Argentine than in Belgium, an Englishman finds in New Zealand his language, his religion, his sports and even the colour of his pillar-boxes. Our first problem is to define ourselves. By the voice with which we can speak to the world, to be sure, but also by the way we invent, by the way we organize, our own life and our own way of living. And it is perhaps here where we shall in the long run find the best justification of something concrete and special in this continent which has always been, as it were, outside itself.

For centuries Europe has been an almost universal source of ideas, actions, modes of thought or ways of living, for the good or ill of others. Europe had no need to define itself, it was the rest of the world which defined itself largely in relation to Europe, either by fashioning itself according to Europe or by opposing it. For whom today are we even an example?

We must become exemplary again, and first of all to ourselves. To be sure, this is not within the powers of the Treaty of Rome or

the Commission. I would even say that in this field it is not a matter of treaties or institutions. It is a matter of civilization, and therefore of men.

The Common Market provides only a basis, and it is absolutely essential that this should not be jeopardized, either in its fundamental economic aspects or in certain links already established between us. In this connection I want to mention Franco-German reconciliation, the guarantee of peace for us as for the others.

Now we must go on. Goethe once said to Eckermann that the objective is the road itself. What remains to be found on the road, from Sweden to Spain, from Ireland to Turkey, and what we shall find if we go on, is Europeans.
