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Sim. Ing-Ita (1175/B) Finali Feb 2001

Mr TRAJKOVSKI (*President of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"*).- Lord Russell-Johnston, members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman, it is an honour for me to address the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I should like to express my deep condolences for the death of Mr Pierre Pflimlin, a former President of the Council of Europe and former mayor of Strasbourg.

I should like to refer to two broad topics. The first is ~~about~~ the situation in southeastern Europe and how it relates to the Republic of Macedonia. The second topic is my vision for Europe in the twenty-first century and how we, as Europeans, can achieve it. In a world seemingly always filled with bad news, I bring you good news today. I am pleased to tell you that the situation in southeastern Europe is improving, despite the existing problems. That is largely due to your efforts, for which we thank you.

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society. Adopting the law will allow the Republic of Macedonia to ratify the European Charter for Minority and Regional Languages.

Our strong determination to be members of Euro-Atlantic structures such as the European Union and Nato shows our desire to be more stable, more secure and more prosperous. I believe that the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia have shown their willingness to do their part to achieve that, and I know that Brussels recognises that.

Let me share with you my vision for Europe in the twenty-first century and the way in which we, as Europeans, can fulfil it. The unity of our European continent at the very beginning of the twenty-first century is a necessary precondition not only for the development of the continent, but for a lasting peace. European values and fundamental moral principles, to which we all subscribe, must be administered and spread equally and justly. As a great civil rights leader once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Allow me briefly to touch on some issues that I feel are greatly important to us all as we lead and guide Europe into the twenty-first century. My vision for Europe is one in which the rule of law is strengthened through the commitment of all European states to respect for human rights. In that regard, the European Court of Human Rights must remain a symbol of that commitment, continue to be independent and be given the support that it needs.

Our children and our youth - our most important asset - must be given support, encouragement and the tools that they need to excel at leading Europe and, indeed, the world as they mature and come into leadership roles in government, business, education and society. At the same time, however, they must be given discipline and guidance as we teach them values, morals, the importance of hard work and the need to be creative. Our education systems must be strengthened and our children and our youth must be given an excellent education that is second to none. In that regard, I hope that you will support my country's initiative for the Euro-Balkan youth centre at our own Lake Ohrid.

The Europe of the twenty-first century must be more than a continent free of war. The Europe of the twenty-first century must be more than a continent in which peace reigns. The Europe of the twenty-first century must be a continent in which open borders rule and people are free to travel from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. The Europe of the twenty-first century must have a united economy. Some have even suggested that the euro should be extended, even now, to southeastern Europe to foster stability. The Europe of the twenty-first century must expand new business mechanisms such as e-commerce. The Europe of the twenty-first century must be a pioneer in science, technology, education and health. The Europe of the twenty-first century must be creative and innovative in finding new solutions to the many problems that will face all our people in this brave new world.

Allow me to conclude my address by again turning to the region from which I come. I am deeply convinced that the process of stabilisation of the region will be concluded when the countries of that region are integrated in Nato and the European Union - when Europe becomes a common home for us all. In that context, I stress that the stability and the development of the region will not be complete without the inclusion of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore, all democratic powers and efforts for democratisation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be encouraged.