AN ENLARGED AND UNITED EUROPE, A GLOBAL PLAYER

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEWT CENTURY

Speech by Romano Prodi
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Ladies and gentlemen

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak about Europe in Bruges, one of the jewels of European culture and history.
I am particularly honoured to do so here, at the college of Europe, which has such a strong tradition of debating the major European issues.

Europe's international role

to discuss

I should like now to turn to the role that Europe can play on the international scene.
The main challenges of the second half of the last century were the confrontation between East and West, first, and the consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet
empire thereafter. In both cases Europe succeeded in playing a key role.
I believe that the main challenge of the new century will be the relationship between the northern and southern parts of the world and that, here too, Europe will need to play its part in contributing to stability. North-South relations offer great opportunities for collaboration, but, at the same time, contain seeds of conflict in the management of commercial and financial systems, energy resources and the environment.

Europe has the resources and capacity to become a global player in the search for a new multipolar balance in the new century.
An enlarged Europe working with the euro will, above all, have the size and demographic, economic and financial weight to constitute a fundamental component in world equilibriums.
Europe’s history, its experience of political integration under democracy and its cultural experience of respect for diversity will be equally important in the dialogue with countries in search of more stable structures capable of stimulating development.
Although each country has its own particular characteristics, European societies share a vision of human rights and the rights and duties of citizens and institutions that is based on a sense of solidarity. It is natural for Europe and Europeans to understand how the formation or, worse, the exacerbation of inequality - and here I am thinking primarily of Africa - creates tensions and possible breakdowns in world equilibriums.
While the relationship between North and South is the factor that will be most decisive in political balances in the next few decades, the outcome of the present crisis concerns relations with the Islamic world. Today, it is essential to transform this frontier into a source of cooperation to consolidate a coalition against terrorism now. It will be even more essential tomorrow if we want stability and development to emerge in a crucial area of the world, which is close to us and has a rapidly increasing population.

Despite the endless violence, there is hope that in the Middle East a new phase of dialogue is emerging. And that for Europe, a role is emerging that will be of greater importance than in the past. This is the moment to show that we are on the side of the peacemakers in both camps. But it also the moment to
give full emphasis, when weighing up the pros and cons of conflict and peace, to the resources in capital, investment, technology and people that the EU can bring to bear.

It is not only for the peace process in the Middle East that we need to mobilise. The time has come to embark on a new phase for the Mediterranean as a whole. Few of the objectives we aimed to accomplish in this region through the Euro-Mediterranean partnership have been achieved. The difficulties encountered by our measures in the past show that we need to rethink and relaunch the Euro-Mediterranean partnership with the aims of establishing a single market, setting up an area of security and liberty and promoting balanced development. The first practical steps must be part of a three-point strategy:

Firstly, we need to reform the structures and working methods of the partnership by setting up a permanent structure for dialogue and decision-making. Secondly, we must recognise that the resources provided by the Union are not adequate for the needs of a Mediterranean policy that is intended to reduce existing economic and social disparities by promoting indispensable sub-regional cooperation while taking account of the heterogeneity of the area. The time has come, as called for by the Spanish Prime Minister Aznar, to implement the proposals to create a bank for the Mediterranean, possibly involving the European Investment Bank. It will need to become a focal point for the creation and support of joint investment and development projects.