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Europe has to make two steps ahead, one is not enough

Europe Needs a Vision

It is commonly known that if one does not go dynamically forward he moves backwards. This is, as a matter of fact, the European Union problem: standing still, debating, looking calmly for a compromise, but in reality going backwards. Everybody knows that the rest of the most challenging world took another, faster train and the distance is growing. Mainly in the economic area, but also in science and culture new powers are developing faster and faster in a global world of today. This way Europe is losing its traditional position of a global player and its importance. As a world producer before all. Our continent is getting more wealthy every year, but building a huge market for the consumer goods, it's fed with goods produced outside the European Union.

The globalization of the world has no limits, no frontiers. The same companies, the same goods, the same mass culture and aspirations to achieve the same standard of living. The world has always been determined by globalization, but today - because of the information transfer speed and faster way we move around - has shrunk and become virtually a homogenous organism. This globalization is determined by the power of social life the same way as the environment is determined by gravitation. We have to learn to live with it and to take advantage of that.

The competition is not constrained to the United States of America or Japan. There are new even more hungry players. Today China and India, and tomorrow Brazil are becoming economic powers. The economists have difficulty with describing this economic phenomenon. Partly because it is also - to some extent - a cultural and social phenomenon, which creates a civilization development. The description and analysis of such process is more difficult because of the large scale effect. It is the same situation as if we wanted to make comparison between the mechanisms which move cars, planes and rockets. In the same way we cannot put together the economic processes in the markets of 50, 100 or 200 million people and the markets with billions of individuals. Different production and different scale of investment, different market of services, and different consumption. Different opportunities and needs.

So what the Europe of 2020s and 2030s should be like? The answer seem to be very simple : continent composed by the countries populated with happy, friendly, open minded , wealthy, innovative people, living longer and in a good health people, conscious citizens, well educated and free. It may be surprising - but it is our duty - to change, create, and build the world of happy people. Not for particular people, but to create the basis for everybody to earn his own happiness. What can we do in a global, challenging world, to build the Europe of happy people?

1.

Europe has to become the world player in the security field, sharing a good part of the responsibility for the stability of our globe. Only active international policy which reacts to the conflicts peacefully and in advance to their causes, strategy widening the space of freedom and building cooperation against poverty can bring security for our world today and for tomorrow. The leaders of Europe, using suitable organizational tools, such as the President of

European Union and European Minister of Foreign Affairs, have to be more present, in practical way, in these regions where conflicts are endangering the global stability. It is important to be there when the conflict breaks out but even more important before the ground starts to shake. To achieve this objective, regardless the resentments of some European countries, it is necessary to rebuild the partnership with the United States. This political alliance, based on equal rights of both parts, military and economic cooperation and mutual confidence, creation of balanced dipole, is vital for us and for the United States.

2.

Let me tell you a short story. I still remember advise I gave in beginning of 90-ties to the board of one Polish obsolete company producing the radios for internal market and for export to Soviet Union. They were ugly and malfunctioning but there were no others. With the open market economy the Chinese cheap but nicely designed radios came. Our company went bankrupt. I told them: don't compete with the country where the worker gets monthly the same money as the European one daily. Look for new projects, more technologically advanced and more sophisticated. So they did. Today they produce highly developed radio and radar systems for luxury sailboats. And they are really successful! Isn't it a path for us today when we face the pressure from new global players?

Europe has to support science and culture. 'The brain of development' that can guarantee the proper direction of changes and its accurate speed. These words have a special meaning here in Portugal, where the 'Lisbon Strategy' was developed. This bright initiative tied together science with economy and human development. Yes, it is necessary to refresh this process which today seems to be passed away. What shall we do then? Let's strengthen the best European universities, let's create the research centers working with the most advanced technologies, let's improve the financing of the educational system making it more open and accessible for everyone and than wait and admire the Europe of Wisdom. And here we have one of the most practical projects which should wake up the spirit of technological development - European Technology Institute. It may sound odd but if we do not replace our Common Agricultural Policy with the Common Science and Technology Policy with a budget bigger than that of CAP, Europe cannot dream of returning to the position of the leader. And without dreams there is no development

3.

European economy, like a sick man, needs fresh air. Reduction of labor costs, the opening of markets that are closed wholly or partially, and getting rid of bureaucratic burdens, in the member countries, but also in European directives, are the few but basic requirements for healthy and competitive economy. The economic freedom, the ease of establishing and running small and medium companies is becoming the basic challenge. Just as the opening of markets inside the Union. What would happen with roaming cost, with the prices of phone calls or internet connections if every European telecommunication company could freely operate in all countries of the community. European Union is becoming one entity and thus we have to care mutually about each other. Such approach pays dividends.

4.

If we want to feel safe and to live in a modern country we have to solve our energy problems. And again, the main road we should follow is the scientific research. If we dedicated only half of the resources we are spending on money consuming, and obsolete infrastructure systems, especially that of gas and crude oil, on research developing new energy technologies, for example from coal, we could solve a dramatic economic and partially political problem. The importance of new technologies in energy production is so important

for our security and common future that from this place I call you – European leaders to establish free, based on non commercial rules, exchange of technical innovations within the European energy space.

Let us imagine the world, where the geography of energy resources is no longer a salient economic issue. To make it funny, gas would no longer drive us crazy. How many problems for our world would disappear? You know there are strong controversies, economic as well as political and even military over the Baltic Gas pipeline project which is being built by Russian Gazprom and German company. Imagine now how the controversy would look like if European Union or its member states owned the gas pipeline and run its management? In energy issues the rule of solidarity, 'one for all, all for one', will quickly bring needed effects.

5.

Examining the world's history there is no place for doubt in one thing: the European Union seems to be the best multinational political and civilization project. A project that is effective and stunning, mostly because it is based on freedom, solidarity and openness. We cannot lose these qualities. On the contrary, we have to strengthen these values which have been playing for Europe a vital role during so many years, and to open reasonably European Union for other free and democratic countries. It is difficult to imagine in a predictable future for example that such big and important European country as Ukraine - will not become a member of our community. The future of enlargement concerns also other countries like Turkey or Balkan states. I know that for us, Poles who fought with unprecedented solidarity for our and others freedom, which broke down the 'Iron Curtain', such things are easy to say. Maybe, it is worthwhile to listen to that. Because freedom changes people, changes countries and the world. Freedom makes the world safe. Seventeen years ago we regained our freedom and democracy, four years ago we joined 'the club of the countries that are building happiness', and to close the doors to the 'club' would mean to put out the light at the end of the tunnel called freedom. We should not do this. !

There are of course more challenges. To make it short I will name only the most important. I cannot abandon one issue. It is the most difficult and most important challenge, precondition of the development. These are people. It is people that change our world. European Union needs challenging , full of fresh vision and dreams leaders.

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And I had a dream. We are in 2025. I am sixty-five years old citizen of Europe. Such young people do not retire yet. I am surely an adviser to some banks. My first son, currently twenty-five years old IT specialist working for an Indian company in Poland, in the year 2025 - as a European Commissioner responsible for computerization of underdeveloped regions - is flying to Minsk with the President of European Union to meet the Chinese President to talk about the transfer of new technologies from the European Technology Institute to Chinese universities. Why to Minsk? Because it is Belarus that has the Presidency of European Union.