

Speech by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini upon receiving the International Prize for Democracy 2016

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Remarks/speeches

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You cannot get used to this kind of nice words but you also gave me the news that sometimes I do not convince him so I will have to work harder.

And just on Monday I will have the Foreign and Defence Ministers together, so not 28 but the double. But never call me their boss. The trick is this: you know, sometimes out of there, people think that either you are hard or soft. Well actually - which means sometimes either strong or weak - I think the trick is being soft and strong at the same time and a friend to all. And this is a way.

But Martin [Schulz, President of the European Parliament] let me thank you very much not only for your words that were maybe even too kind, but also and especially for all the work you are doing and we are doing together, as you said, every single day. The way in which you lead the [European] Parliament, you create the space for democracy in the European Parliament and the way in which we work together across the European institutions is something that is really precious I think to all Europeans and to all of Europe and I would like to thank you for that.

And also because you put a passion in what you are doing that is really incredible and really precious as well. It is really for me, Mister Mayor [Ashok-Alexander Sridharan], friends, I also – if I can call you friends -and all of you coming here today including those who gave me another prize and were demonstrating outside of here, I am actually more used to demonstrate outside the buildings than receiving prizes inside a room so I feel very sympathetic about that.

I am really and truly honoured and humbled to receive this prize – which was awarded for the first time in the first edition to a real champion of our continent's fight and work for democracy, President [Vaclav] Havel. It really honours me in an incredible manner. And I am particularly grateful to you all for pointing the European Union as a force for good, force for peace, force for democracy, human rights, dignity, equality and international cooperation. Because these are indeed challenging times. We truly need to be reminded and to remind of how important the European Union is both for our continent, for our people and for the rest of the world. We need to keep in mind this Union is a story of success. This is not often the message we hear in these days. But we need to feel the pride of being Europeans; because only if we feel this pride, we will have the force, the strength, the courage, to change and save this Union.

Being proud to me does not mean that we should close our eyes in front of our own shortcomings – which are many. The European Union is not perfect, far from that. Our democracies are not perfect. This is probably the essence of democracy: being aware of your shortcomings and working on that. And our societies are not perfect. Democracy is never achieved once and for all: it requires constant care, and a critical, severe, vigilant eye. We need to take care of our European democracy; we need to nourish and reform it, so it can

stand the many challenges of our times. And yet, I believe we have to really rediscover a European pride.

Every day - you were saying that Martin very well - I meet our friends and partners from all around the world. It is like seeing Europe in a mirror. To them, Europe is not only the greatest economic power in the world – which it is, also this sometimes we forget - but it is first of all, a great democracy. It is a Union that has been at peace for over 70 years after centuries of wars that we have exported in the rest of the world. To our partners Europe is this: a very well-functioning economy, a very well-functioning space for democracy, for peace, but also innovation, high standards of education for all, universal healthcare. Europe is freedom, fundamental rights and civil liberties.

Europe is a land of hope and possibilities. And in my daily work, I see Europe every single day through the eyes of our partners and friends in the world, from Japan to Brazil, from South Africa to the Arctic. And I see a Europe of which we can be proud. This makes me really proud of Europe and of our European Union. And I am not ashamed of saying this. I think we have to pass the messages even when they are not necessarily the messages that are the most popular ones in our public opinion.

I see our Union through the eyes of Syrian children in refugee camps who can go to school and keep hoping for a normal future thanks to our support and the programmes that the European Union run and finances, being it in Lebanon, or in Jordan or in Turkey. And this is why I have decided that the Prize you are awarding me tonight will finance the public intermediate schools in Ber Alias, in Beqaa, in Lebanon one of the schools with the highest density of Syrian children in Lebanon that I visited just last spring. And our Union is there, on the ground, to prepare Syrian girls and boys of all ages for their future. And that is the Europe I see, that is the Europe I work, that is the Europe I am proud of.

I see also the Union through the eyes of the Iranian youth, the same that welcomed you at the University of Tehran, and thanks to the nuclear deal we negotiated and reached – and let me stress this especially in these days and hours - it is not a bilateral agreement between the US and Iran, it is a multilateral agreement guaranteed by me personally, I still chair the Joint Commission supervising the implementation of the deal and that is framed in the UN Security Council resolution. So, thanks to that Deal that we negotiated and we achieved, not only the region is safer, but those Young people in Iran live in a more open country and in a more secure region. And we live in a more secure region.

I see our Union through the eyes of our friends in the Balkans. To them, we are not simply a big, rich neighbour – which we are also. To them, we are not a partner but the partner on the road towards better democracies, functioning economies, stabilisation and most of all peace only twenty years after what we have seen in the Balkans.

This is the kind of power the Union can be and to a great extent the kind of power we are already today: a principled power and a cooperative power. And in the years ahead, actually, maybe we should say in the months ahead, in the days ahead, I am sure that the need for a principled and cooperative power will grow even bigger in the world. The world will be looking at us, at the European Union.

They will look at us as a global security provider, a power that believes in multilateralism, strongly, that works for multilateralism and in a multilateral way and a champion of

fundamental freedoms, equal opportunities and minority rights. They will look for someone who can craft win-win situations, and not just play power politics.

This is already happening today: it is happening in Colombia - you remember that - where we have engaged constantly with my friend President [Juan Manuel] Santos the Nobel Peace Laureate, in support of the peace negotiations. I am still confident a peace agreement can be finalised and welcomed by the Colombian people very soon. And President Santos, as a sign of recognition of our common work for putting an end to such a long conflict that has affected also Europeans is going to travel straight from Oslo and Stockholm to Brussels on 12th of December, the day he will receive the Prize, to launch together with us, the European Union Trust Fund to support implementation of the Peace Agreement. I think this is the most powerful sign of how powerful, how strong our work for democracy, for peace, for human rights, is across the world.

And this is happening also on the other side of the globe in Myanmar where we are accompanying the national reconciliation process led by Aung San Suu Kyi. And it will happen even more, ever more. I would say that Europe is and will become an even more indispensable power for peace, democracy and international cooperation.

We will keep working for these goals first of all because they are our European values. But also because it is our interest. It is not only because we are good-hearted. Peace, democracy, international cooperation – that is the European way, that is the European history – recent history but still we have learnt from the past – and that is also the European interest. Peace is in our interest, because only when there is peace, our citizens are secure, our economies can thrive and our children can build their future.

Democracy is our interest, because only democracy can guarantee peace, social justice and bring real, sustainable, stability to all countries. And international cooperation is our interest, because the only way to build peace and expand democracy is through cooperation, especially when things are difficult - and in these days they are difficult everywhere - especially when your neighbour is a difficult one, especially when you do not agree; you need this soft but strong dialogue, you need to build ways for cooperation. It is a little bit – a journalist once told me "But your job is just like being an ice breaker!" I said "Exactly that!" Yes. Even when it seems, you know, all flat, there is always a way, there is always a way and this is the European way to peace and security. We have learnt it through a long history of wars: centuries when our nations have tried to conquer and submit each other and other nations also far away from Europe. And today we know that only when we seek cooperation – and not gains at the expense of others – can we achieve peace.

The European way is made of regional and international dialogue. And this is why our foreign policy is investing so much also in supporting other regional organisations, such as the new G5 in Sahel but also in strengthening the UN system and let me tell you that we will work, I think, incredibly well together with the incoming UN Secretary General – another true European, believing in the European way to peace and security – and also we are working to facilitate the most effective multilateral formats to address different conflicts and crises.

The European way is this. It involves “sustainable security”. Peace has to be sustainable in the long run: it cannot simply be enforced by military force or by international players. It has to grow, within societies, within the places where conflict was.

Security requires for sure strong democratic institutions – not so much strong men or women- but also it requires economic growth, decent public services, available to all, good governance, human rights, access, accountability, good opportunities for all starting from women and young people across the world.

Its sustainable security that calls for a mix of hard and soft power, military and civilian tools rapid response and together with that long term work on resilience. And I would like to say here a few words because I have understood our friends that were with us in the room here before were complaining about military operation that the European Union has at sea in the Mediterranean Sea that is actually, currently, since one year and half saving lives in the Mediterranean when before we were seeing hundreds of thousands of people dying. I am proud of that.

I am proud of that but what we do at sea with that military operation, a EU military operation, endorsed by two United Nations resolutions unanimously adopted - a miracle for our diplomacy - is also that we are trying to dismantle the criminal organisations that are trafficking human beings and we know very well that saving lives only will never be enough. We have to build the conditions for people to travel safely, legally, not in the hands of criminal organisations and also which means opening legal channels for migration and giving hopes. So I believe also this time I could be also outside of the room demonstrating because I believe we are in the same side. My strong feeling and I am sorry I will go back to my speech – but my strong feeling when I came into office exactly two years ago maybe because I am Italian was this shame I felt on Europe that was seeing that people dying both at sea and at desert without reacting thinking that this was just some countries business. This is for all of us together, this is the European thing. And we are maybe starting slowly to come together and Germany is a country that knows something about that.

[inaudible] where our support to the security hard power goes together with trade policies that try to foster economic growth and job creation for young people which is half of the population of the country and goes together with the political support that is needed to strengthen the democratic institutions and the public space for political participation.

So, Martin, indeed two years ago I made a promise to the European Parliament first to work together but this is not something difficult for me. Actually I have to thank the European Parliament because having been for seven years a Member of the Italian Parliament I was missing the Italian Parliament too much so it is a great opportunity for me to be part of the heated parliamentary debate in Strasbourg and in Brussels rather than in Rome.

But I also made another promise during my parliamentary hearing before being confirmed, I remember very well, I told our colleagues in the Parliamentary Committees that our foreign policy has an impact on our internal policies, all of them, and it has to move beyond the traditional domain of diplomacy. And I promised that issues like trade or migration or culture, climate change would become an integral part of our foreign policy and I am proud that two years later migration is at the core of our external action not only through our Operation Sophia but also for instance through the Migration Compacts that we are developing with Africa and with the major Investment Plan that will mobilise up to €44 billion to accompany private investments in Africa. This is the way we are trying to change the face of the world.

And for the first time ever, we have set up a strategy for cultural diplomacy and for the first time ever we are working on an European economic diplomacy together with Vice-President Katainen and we have played a crucial role in negotiating and concluding this historic

agreement on climate and turned into force thanks exactly to our ratification. This is also foreign policy and this is the European way to foreign policy. There is no other power in the world with so many strings in its boat. Europe is a super power. Every time I say this I see people looking around a bit disoriented. It is. But we have to believe in ourselves.

I think the mayor mentioned the self-confidence. That is the key. Make full use of our potential, demonstrate that we are up to the challenge and when I say we, I don't mean us in Brussels. This kind of speech does not work only for Belgians. It does not mean us in Brussels; it means us all as Europeans. Because we all have to take responsibilities and the old game, very fashionable in these years of blaming it on Brussels apart from Belgians will not lead us anywhere.

There is no distance between Brussels and the national capitals. This is very clear to me. Having been a national minister, I know that when I gather the national ministers around the Council table is not something that in Brussels taking decisions is the same ministers that then return to their capitals. It is us. Europe is us; the European Union is us all. And the European Union is what we make of it so we have a big responsibility.

And when I look around me of what we have making of our Union there are many things, as I mention, I am proud of but there are also many things that I am not proud of. Let me borrow a quote from a great European of our times and constant source of inspiration for me– the former President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano. And once he told me that he believes European general health is good so the states of health of the Union, he told me you know the European Union is in good shape after all. The heart works fine, the lungs work well, the muscles are strong. The European Union has indeed one problem and that is a nervous breakdown he told me and I think this is a perfect picture of our state of mind, of our state of health.

Let me put it in another way. To me it seems that Europe is going through a sort of teenager crisis. We feel insecure, we feel that we don't realise really what we have, who we are. We don't realise that we have grown up somehow. But if you look ahead in just a few months' time in March, in Rome we will celebrate our sixty anniversary. So we are grown up.

And I have the feeling sometimes that Europe has lived for decades struggling with our own perception of our age, not as individuals - indeed I was perceived as very young, let me tell you, I know a woman should not tell her age but I guess it is public being 40, now 43 you are not really young in the real world and in some countries you are actually quite... And by the way, [Barack] Obama was President of the United States at my age. We have a problem also on that in Europe that sometimes we are young until we are in pension basically and then it is too late. But collectively I think Europe has lived for decades struggling with our own perception of our age as a continent. We have always been the old continent and yet we have often felt as being junior partners for instance for our American friends. After the world wars for sure our continent was in shock. Germany is the best example of that. And it is true we put our trust in the 50s in the United States, as a child does to another brother.

And indeed I believe we must always be grateful for that help, for the support and the protection we have received from the United States. Being an Italian, speaking in Germany I think there is no doubt about this. But in that sense of strong ties, we will never die in this side of the Atlantic for sure. But also maybe sometimes we also got stuck in the logic of the Cold War. And now maybe we have the opportunity to realise we have grown up and that we can enter into a mature, adult, friendly cooperative but independent relation. Not as a child, not as

a parent, but as a partner. And this is a big opportunity, I think. Without changing history, without changing the way in which we work, without changing the friendship but maybe realising that our age, as a Union, is more close to the 60s than to the fifteen and we have responsibilities that we have to take.

So being adult does not mean that we can go back to the dark age – because we have also dark ages as well as Europeans, think of colonialism or when Europe imposed its strength on other parts of the world or when we had a power struggle inside of Europe. Nor does it mean that we will try to carry the weight of the world of on our shoulders alone. I think we have learnt our lessons well, inside Europe, in our region, from the Middle East to the Mediterranean and you know we have to share and this is the only way to succeed.

The path Europe needs to follow is similar to the path – seems to me - taken by the German foreign policy in the last few years. Being mature, being adult, and being aware of your age, of your strength, of your limits in a balanced way means that we must acknowledge our own strength, free from complexes and fears - confident, not overconfident, but confident and cooperative. At the same time, we need to recognise that we need each other. Our strength is our friends and our partners and our neighbours' strength and we can measure our strength on how strong our friends, our partners and our neighbours around the region are. It is like if our strength was wasted if we don't invest it in a cooperative effort.

So to conclude only if we truly understand this, I believe, – if we understand our strength and also our need for unity which is the basis for our strength – Europe will be then a real super-power. And when I mention this people will not look at each other a little bit lost. We can be – I believe we are somehow - the indispensable power the world needs and the Europeans need. We can be a force for peace, democracy and cooperation in a difficult but also exciting world that is open for a lot of potential and also for us.

So it is time, I believe, to leave behind our teenager crisis, the nervous breakdown and fulfil all our potential. And we know very well that we can do this only together. I often say something that normally I say mainly in countries that are not maybe the size of Germany but I feel brave enough to repeat here the European Union has to kind of Member States: the small ones and those that have not realise that there are small in the world of today. If I survive saying this in Bonn, I am fine. I think our strength is our unity. I thank you very much. Vielen Dank.

And I believe that is very important these days when everybody is a bit confused, scared but also again look at the possibilities we have in front of us and work together as a true Union, as true Europeans. I thank you very much. I am honoured. Thank you.