

Launch meeting of the Forum for the Future of Democracy

Warsaw, Royal Castle
3-4 November 2005

Speeches delivered

Directorate General of Political Affairs

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Preface

The 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland, in May 2005, established the Forum for the Future of Democracy so as to “strengthen democracy, political freedoms and citizens’ participation”.

The forum, which is based on the principle of annual meetings, upon the invitation of a Council of Europe member state, “shall enable the exchange of ideas, information and examples of best practices, as well as discussions on possible future action”. The forum will contribute to enhancing, through its reflection and proposals, the Organisation’s work in the field of democracy.

The Launch Meeting of the Forum for the Future of Democracy was held from 3 to 4 November 2005, on the invitation of the Polish Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, in the same place as the 3rd Summit – the Warsaw Royal castle . It brought together representatives of government authorities, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society from Council of Europe member states to discuss the theme of citizens’ participation. Lech Wałęsa, former President of Poland, delivered a keynote speech at the opening of the meeting.

Opening addresses

Lech Wałęsa

Honorary Chair

Ladies and gentlemen,

I humbly thank you for inviting me here today to address such a distinguished audience.

As most of you no doubt know, I am a politician. I am here at this meeting today, in this magnificent room, as a result of a series of events that have some highly practical connotations.

The way I view democracy may therefore differ from the way you view it in Europe. But I will develop my ideas on democracy a little later.

What I want to say to you right now is that I hope that such a group as yours will be able to consider two very simple postulates.

The first is based on the observation that the late 20th century was a period when the world resembled a jungle, where people were aggressive towards one another. We have managed to move on from that state of affairs thanks to technological development and evolution. We have come through a period of information technology and globalisation. By adopting a pragmatic approach to life, we have changed our outlook and the mistakes of the past have no place in our new world.

We must therefore discuss these matters in order to improve our understanding and develop structures which are relevant to the world we live in, with a very noble purpose in mind. This will help us to build bridges into this new age of Solidarity where each individual will have an essential role to play in peace, development and growth. This will only be possible if we are able to develop these new programmes and structures.

If, on the other hand, we fall back on our old attitudes and approaches, which we observed during the elections in Poland and in Germany, we will be taking a different tack altogether. So it is essential that when we launch new ideas we follow them through in practice and pursue the corresponding goals.

We expect a lot from democracy, it is true, but when we start thinking about democracy in practical terms, we are not always able to put these expectations into concrete form.

What I have to say to you has to do with how I got into politics. The path I followed was a rather unusual one. As you know, there are times and places where people accumulate a certain experience, where people become aware of the opportunities open to them and realise what can be done. I come from one of those places – Warsaw in Poland.

It seems to me that what we propose, what we have to offer, is not always enough. We must go even further and find even better solutions.

By the end of the 20th century democracy had become a caricature of itself. All politicians wanted was to win the elections. There were no real statesmen anymore. No statesmen with a vision. We see them on television, in the public eye, but what have they got to say for themselves?

The way things worked in the 20th century no longer applies in the 21st century, be it in economics or in politics. In the past there were no computers, we lived behind borders, with border controls.

An individual could start up a political party. That party might win the elections, then people would be disappointed when it failed to live up to its promises.

My generation now has to find new solutions. Every individual, regardless of whether they belong to a political party, must be considered as a fully fledged participant in the democratic process.

I made proposals when I became president of Poland. The country was politically divided, the Left on one side and the Right on the other, each with its own political agenda: state ownership and atheism on the Left and religion and private property on the Right. It is often difficult, how-

ever, to know exactly what lies behind these two parties. On another level, there were populist parties which appealed to the masses.

I believe it is time we moved away from these divisions. With all the information we have at our fingertips, we must no longer really reason in terms of nation states, but rather in terms of continents and the world. What place do these political divisions have in this new context?

We live in the age of the computer and we must now move on to a higher plane of structural organisation. We, my generation, must seek more intelligent solutions. Democracy must be based on proper structures. You can topple a dictator overnight and try to set democratic structures in place, but you still have to teach the people how to make the most of this democracy.

The Americans failed in Iraq. They probably thought they could just go to Iraq, introduce democracy, organise elections and there would be democracy. Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

I am not sure I am right, but I sincerely think that this generation must start to think in global terms, on a continental or, even better, a world-wide scale. We must find the right solutions for the world we live in today.

We all arrive at the same diagnosis. We can see that democracy is not faring too well, but what is the treatment? It is true that everything was simpler in the days of nation states, when things happened inside territories delimited by borders. Today, however, we all know what is going on everywhere in the world.

We all saw what happened in Ukraine. I was actually there at the time of the Orange Revolution. There was an opportunity to elect a president and a parliament and the people had to seize that opportunity.

We must be very wary of the dangers of oligarchy. We saw what it can do in Ukraine and the same thing could happen elsewhere on our continent.

We must also think about what foundations we want for democracy. The new constitution guarantees freedom, particularly freedom of association and freedom in economic activities. It also stipulates that spiritual

things are a private matter, which is a highly interesting concept, but one which belongs in the 20th century. In my opinion, the more developed our technologies, the greater our need for spiritual values.

So the first question we must ask is: what are the foundations of what we are trying to build? Is it simply freedom? I think not. Nor is it a question of placing five policemen behind every politician to make sure they are not corrupt. It is a question of educating people, congratulating them when they do the right thing and punishing them when they do wrong.

I also want to tell you about the Solidarność experience, the movement I led in the early days.

It has been said that Poland betrayed the cause in 1949, when the communist system was imposed. In Solidarność we were the only ones to protest, the only ones to say this is not the real solution. But this system was imposed on us and for decades we fought against it, until a general fatigue set in and nobody wanted to fight anymore.

Why this lassitude?

There were 200 000 Soviet troops in Poland, most of them deployed along the Polish border. We talked to the heads of state and government of the free world, but not one of them believed that we in Solidarność could win. Before 1981 none of them thought it possible! Then something quite unexpected happened: a Polish man became Pope. And the new Pope roused the nations. He roused the Polish nation. And we succeeded in combining the material and the spiritual.

Now, if we succeed once again in combining spiritual things with the proper political structures, we will no longer need to fear the consequences of globalisation for the European Union. If we follow that course, if we teach our young people to follow it, we will succeed. But if we refer only to freedom, if we forget God, if we forget freedom of conscience, we will have no chance of achieving genuine revolutionary changes. Yet such changes have taken place in this part of Europe. So many generations have fought for a united Europe!

In the days of Solidarność we were able to seize this unique historic opportunity. We must also seize the opportunity before us today.

Structural solutions are needed. We must learn from our successes and our failures and draw the proper conclusions.

As I said earlier, the late 20th century was a jungle. Our behaviour as people and as nations was determined by the law of the jungle.

If we want mankind to survive in the 21st century, however, we need values based on solidarity. Only through solidarity will we be able to solve our problems. If we choose any other way, we will pay the price.

I wish you every success in your work. I am sure you will be hearing some very interesting ideas from Professor Garton Ash and the other speakers.

It is not placebos we are looking for. Mankind progresses by great leaps followed by periods of calm. We know this very well from our experience in Solidarność. We made a great leap forward in 1981 and now we are progressing at a much slower pace.

What we need now is to find the right treatment, the right solutions that will make another leap forward possible.

Ambassador Joaquim Duarte

Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe

Chairman, minister, ladies and gentlemen,

On 16 and 17 May, the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe was held here in Warsaw Castle. At the close of that decisive meeting for our Organisation, Poland handed over to Portugal the Chair of the Committee of Ministers, which I am honoured to represent here today.

As you are aware, my country has made the implementation of the Warsaw Summit decisions its priority, and we will be conducting an initial review of what has been achieved at the Ministerial Session on 16 and 17 November.

Against this background, I should like to pay tribute to the commitment and generosity of the Polish authorities. Not content with merely hosting the Summit in May, six months later they are now chairing the launch of one its key initiatives: the Forum for the Future of Democracy.

The venue is very symbolic in this respect: the idea of the forum was born here in this castle, which has both witnessed and suffered the price which Poland had to pay for human madness under the two totalitarian systems of the 20th century.

A few hundred kilometres from Auschwitz and very close to what was the Warsaw ghetto, the "never again" on which the Council of Europe is based takes on its full meaning. Here – perhaps more than anywhere else – the vital need for democracy is absolutely clear.

It was also in Poland 25 years ago that the future of democracy in this part of Europe was decided. In the shipyards of Gdańsk, the flame of freedom lit up again behind the then Iron Curtain when a handful of brave members of Solidarność defied the regime. It was thanks to determined defenders of freedom like Mr Wałęsa – whom we have just heard – that Poland was able to free itself from the oppression of its

totalitarian regime. It was from this long-suffering country that democracy spread right across Europe, while freedom triumphed over oppression and the law over force.

At a time when democracy no longer seems to be mobilising the public, it is particularly appropriate that we draw attention to the abuses to which totalitarianism can lead.

Europe is currently faced with a paradox: while democracy has never been so widespread – even to the extent of gaining ground in countries which never experienced it before – the democratic ideal no longer seems to be capturing people's imagination in countries that have enjoyed democracy for half a century and more. As if people had become so familiar with democracy that they had forgotten the price...

This is now also true in the countries which were long called the “new democracies”, where the euphoria and the thirst for democracy of the 1990s have gradually – and, in some cases, even quickly – disappeared.

Of course, tremendous challenges like terrorism, corruption, human trafficking and organised crime are now destabilising democratic regimes. At the same time, lack of transparency in the political process, lack of dialogue and the gap between what is said and what is actually done is generating a divide between governments and the people they govern.

But the worst enemies of democracy are indifference, egoism and a lack of commitment among citizens. We need to ask ourselves why there is such disaffection and how its true meaning can be restored to democratic citizenship at every level. We must work out how to get Europeans involved again.

This was the objective set for the Council of Europe by its heads of state and government last May, when they decided to set up the Forum for the Future of Democracy, so no better theme could have been chosen for this launch meeting.

A desire was expressed at the Warsaw Summit for the Council of Europe to be refocused on what it does best and to work on the 3rd pillar of the European project, “democracy”, alongside “human rights” and the “rule of law”. In this endeavour, the Council of Europe is not starting from scratch, and, in particular, has at its disposal an invaluable network

of protagonists in democracy: government officials, members of parliaments, elected local representatives and representatives of civil society.

I shall not detail here all the initiatives taken over more than 50 years by the Council of Europe to strengthen democracy. With us here today are the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr van der Linden, and the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Mr di Stasi, who will be able to tell you better than I can how the Council of Europe acts at parliamentary and local level to invigorate democracy. Where the inter-governmental side is concerned, I shall simply refer to a few of the most significant activities, such as the defence of freedom of expression and association, the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of parity.

The Council of Europe is continuing such activity today, working on what is commonly called electronic democracy. The aim is to ensure that, as modern information technologies make possible new means of communication and interaction between voters and their elected representatives, between those who govern and those who are governed, the resulting debate and democratic life are richer, more open and more transparent, steering clear of the dangers of populism and false pretences.

This forum will certainly provide the opportunity to discuss these issues. But the Council of Europe, and the Committee of Ministers in particular, do not just want you to hold a theoretical debate about democracy.

We have set our hearts on something quite different. In our view, this forum must be an opportunity to identify practical lines of action for breathing new life into the democratic debate and adapting it to the context and challenges of the modern world. And these lines of action will have to be a source of inspiration not only for all of its 46 member states, but also for the Council of Europe itself.

So the proposals, and even recommendations, made by the forum will be presented to the next session of the Committee of Ministers, in mid-November, and will, as early as 2006, be able to be translated into specific activities by the Council of Europe and its institutions.

I shall now therefore conclude by expressing my hope that the two days of the forum will culminate in concrete conclusions.

René van der Linden

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a democratic politician, I am honoured to speak after Mr Lech Wałęsa, who played such a central role in the fight to bring democracy to Poland. I have been in politics for almost 30 years, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly for more than 15 years and its President since January. It is therefore only natural that I am excited by this Forum for the Future of Democracy and honoured to address its launching meeting, especially since the forum itself was originally an initiative of the Assembly. My colleague Mr Wielowieyski, who has dedicated himself to creation of the forum, will be representing the Assembly in the closing session.

The Royal Castle, where we meet, was also the venue for the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe in May. The Warsaw Summit gave renewed focus and vigour to the Council of Europe, but this forum is faced with an even greater and – dare I say – more important task. I would describe this task as not merely talking about the future of democracy; it is more urgent than that. We are here to help ensure a future for democracy in Europe. We need, therefore, to assess the quality of our democracies.

Winston Churchill once said that “democracy is the worst form of government except for all those others that have been tried.” I would conclude from this that democratic government is a basic social necessity.

It is therefore all the more important that, as the world changes, democracy remains relevant and alive. Because it is only democracy, when coupled with respect for human rights and the rule of law, that can ensure the conditions for economic growth and the material well-being of our citizens.

Democratic government is not just about constitutions and institutions, however, it is about process and participation. Democracy therefore

needs freedom: freedom of information and expression, freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of assembly and association, the freedom to vote in free and fair elections, and, of course, the freedom to disagree.

And if democracy is truly to mean government of the people, by the people, for the people – as Abraham Lincoln intended – then these freedoms must not be illusory or dead-letter law. They must be exercised, and exercised with enthusiasm. Democracy must be part of everybody's everyday experience.

People need to know that their participation counts. They need to know that it is worthwhile to follow debates, to take an interest in election campaigns, to vote. For politicians to represent the people, persons from all walks of life must be inspired to join political parties and to stand for election to public office. If not, a gap emerges between the electorate and the politicians. There is growing concern about this gap in many European countries, and we must find out the reasons for it.

Politicians and political parties alone however, are not enough. Democracy needs a strong, pluralistic media and a diverse and active civil society, free to organise and agitate. Civil society must be an integral part of the democratic process, systematically providing constructive criticism and new ideas.

Increasingly, politicians are not exercising leadership, with the result that the political process lacks credibility. We must involve citizens in political life, in order to restore an effective decision-making process. Equally, we must reinforce democracy, human rights and the rule of law as an inherent part of the education system. How to achieve this should be an issue in your discussions.

I am making the development of contacts with civil society a central theme of my Parliamentary Assembly presidency. I am therefore delighted that the topic of "civic participation" is at the very heart of my activities today.

This is the forum's launching meeting, and so you will have to make some decisions on what you intend to do, and how you intend to do it. Please do not take this as an invitation to become obsessive about for-

malities and procedures! I have no time for bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake. Nevertheless, there are some basic points on which I would like to comment.

The composition of the forum is a crucial issue. The Council of Europe already has a committee of national civil servants, in the form of the Ministers' Deputies. Whilst civil servants will have a role to play, the forum must ensure that it remains something more than that. If not, it risks becoming redundant.

Equally, the Council of Europe already has a Parliamentary Assembly, a Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and a Liaison Committee for the international NGOs that enjoy participatory status. These bodies do not need to be duplicated. On the other hand, they must be involved. The Parliamentary Assembly, for example, has established a sub-committee devoted to the forum that will play an active role in your work now and in the future, by taking initiatives and making proposals.

What distinguishes the forum is its focus on a specific issue. I believe it will address this issue most effectively by bringing together the widest possible variety of parties with a real and immediate interest: civil society, journalists, academics, politicians, civil servants, and so on. There must be a proper balance between these groups, in order to achieve genuine, pluralistic representation of society as a whole.

I would like to thank the Polish authorities wholeheartedly for having organised this launching meeting so promptly and enthusiastically. Nevertheless, in future, the forum will need as much autonomy as possible, with the role of national authorities being to create a free and open space for discussion. You should begin thinking about how to be proactive in organising your own work, and not just wait to be convened by national authorities.

I would recommend that you avoid anything that might lead to stagnation and repetition. With a diverse composition, you may not need a permanent secretariat, which could help your work to remain original and innovative.

I would also suggest the greatest possible flexibility in working methods, varying according to the issue and the expertise required. The forum

could become one of many hubs of an informal and evolving network, whose development should be guided only by the principles of effectiveness and independence.

In short, I believe that the forum must become:

- diverse and representative, a bridge between different groups in society;
- autonomous and proactive;
- flexible and creative.

But ultimately, these decisions must be your decisions, and I wish you imagination, inspiration and every success in your work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a democratic politician, I do not exempt myself or my colleagues from criticism. Democratic politicians must represent the people, not bureaucratic government. We must be independent and open to citizens' concerns. Politicians must fulfil their responsibility to be close to the people, by knowing what they have in mind and taking clear positions that take these views into account. The future of democracy depends also on this.

Giovanni Di Stasi

President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Mr Chairman, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address the Launch Meeting of the European Forum for the Future of Democracy, and not only as the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. It is also an honour because I was personally involved in the project which eventually brought about this forum – the Council of Europe Integrated Project “Making Democratic Institutions Work”.

This was an ambitious and audacious endeavour which resulted in several important papers – the papers that, in the form of brochures, the forum organisers distributed to us. The introduction to one of them, on the future of democracy, begins with a rather provocative quotation of Karl Popper, who said: “Democracy is the word for something that does not exist”. This quote was chosen deliberately, of course, to stress the challenge facing us, and the results of the referenda on the EU Constitutional Treaty highlighted this challenge with a vengeance. This is why the decision of the Council of Europe heads of state and government to establish a forum for the future of democracy, taken at their summit in this very Royal Castle last May, can only be described as timely and wise.

Today we are asking ourselves if our democracy is undergoing a crisis – a crisis of confidence of our citizens in the democratic institutions, a crisis caused by their disenchantment in politicians and indifference towards democratic processes. A recent public opinion poll in France, for example, showed an approval rating of barely 20% for politicians. Approximately 80% of those polled said that politicians did not know about the problems of the people.

This is a stark reminder of the need to adapt constantly our democratic model to the evolving demands and expectations of our populations. It is

natural because democracy is not a status quo but a process, which Alexis de Tocqueville – the author of the 19th century's landmark book *Democracy in America* – called “the most uniform, the most ancient and the most permanent tendency that is to be found in history.” This year marks the 200th anniversary since Alexis de Tocqueville's birth – an excellent occasion to look at democracy in Europe and reflect upon its future.

It is clear that what we need today is a significant shift in the national-local balance, a shift from the central government towards regions and municipalities which are playing an increasingly important role in delivering public services and good governance at the level closest to the citizen. In the Congress, we believe that if representative democracy is to function properly at national level with broad public support, there is a need for strong and lively local democracy based on what the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, John Prescott, referred to during the Warsaw Summit as “sustainable communities”.

Local democracy and sustainable development go hand in hand, and local democracy is also the first democratic experience for our citizens. It comes as no surprise that local and regional elected representatives are among the most popular politicians in the eyes of the public. Territorial communities are also taking on a growing importance with regard to economic and social development, as our national borders disappear and economic competition shifts from the national to inter-territorial level, making possible, for example, the creation of Euroregions in which our Congress has been actively involved. The rising force of civil society and its impact on the citizens' engagement in democratic processes is also best felt at the local and regional level.

This is why we at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, a representative body of more than 200 000 territorial communities, look forward with great interest to contributing to this forum and advancing our work on democracy. In fact, the theme of today's launch meeting – civic participation – is stressed in our basic document, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which speaks of the need to engage citizens in public and political life at local level. The Congress has done a great deal of work on participatory democracy, ranging from the participation of foreign residents and migrants to the

participation of women and young people. Some of the results of this work are made available to the participants of this meeting – such as, for example, the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. Next week, at its autumn session, the Congress will be debating a brand new recommendation on public participation in local affairs and elections, and we are also preparing a report on ways of enhancing public participation through the use of modern communication technologies.

However, we will not break the chains of indifference and revive public democratic activism without restoring trust in public officials and elected representatives, starting at the level closest to the citizen. Our Congress is paying particular attention to the public image of local and regional authorities and has adopted the European Code of Conduct for the Political Integrity of Local and Regional Elected Representatives, available here.

I would like to conclude by stressing that, if we are to succeed in our mission, we must make sure that the *acquis* of the national and even supranational democratic development are combined with a vibrant and vigorous local democracy of sustainable communities where every citizen feels empowered and included. Let us make a “Europe of inclusion” a reality. Let us make sure that democracy is the word for something that does exist.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

“The people should fight for their law as for their city wall”, said Heraclites in 5 BC. The problem is that, 2000-odd years later, many of them do not seem to be really willing to do so. Electoral fatigue, which is on the increase in many of our member states, disillusionment with politics and politicians, and the growing lack of trust in democratic institutions, are certainly not the only challenge of the forum we are launching today, but they may well be the ones that must be tackled most urgently.

Our societies are faced with a widening gap between, on the one hand, individualist and consumerist attitudes, which are on the increase, and on the other hand the diminishing interest in the exercise of civic responsibilities. Moreover, political parties, parliaments, local authorities, and governments are, on the whole, perceived as too distant and even disengaged from their social basis.

We are legitimately concerned that such trends may eventually undermine the legitimacy of democratic governments. Indeed – as I pointed out in my speech at the Barcelona Conference on the Future of Democracy a year ago, over the long term, the very foundation of democracy – the permanent control of democratic institutions by citizens and these institutions’ responsiveness to citizens’ needs and concerns – may be eroding. A failure to react could lead to a gradual sliding of democracy towards oligarchy composed of institutions such as public administration, the legal system, the police, the army, and a multitude of regulatory agencies operating without democratic control and accountability.

This is the situation today. Problems abound, but they are not yet dramatic. The current state of democracy in Europe should not be a cause for panic, but for concern and action.

The heads of state and government who met here in Warsaw six months ago gave the Council of Europe a clear mandate to protect and promote democracy in Europe. If the 3rd Summit told us what to do, this forum should help us to define how we should do what is expected from us.

Our starting point must be the considerable Council of Europe *acquis* and the activities which are already in place. It is no exaggeration to say that the promotion of democracy is a priority for virtually all Council of Europe bodies and affects virtually all Council of Europe activities.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has been dealing with challenges to democracy in Europe for years, if not decades. In its 2003 report on the future of democracy, prepared by Mr Wielowieyski from Poland, the Assembly called for greater openness; the introduction of more direct elements of democratic decision-making; and the development of civil society based on an increasing role for citizen participation in social activities and democratic decision making. It also stressed the need for citizens to be adequately informed about matters to be decided upon, as well as about the democratic decision-making process in general. The Assembly clearly expressed its belief that the Council of Europe should reinforce its activities on education for democratic citizenship.

The work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe makes an important contribution, as the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs is most directly exercised at the local level. The Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level also opens the exercise of this right to non-nationals.

The preamble of the European Convention on Human Rights emphasises the interdependence of effective democracy and human rights. The Council of Europe notion of “democratic society” has also been validated by the European Court of Human Rights.

The Venice Commission is providing intelligent constitutional advice to member and non-member states alike, and its highly successful work is based on the simple, yet often overlooked, fact that law without democracy is a dictatorship and democracy without law is a farce.

Council of Europe intergovernmental co-operation has resulted in over 190 Council of Europe conventions, many of them directly aimed at promoting democratic practices and good governance. They form the body of the Council of Europe standards in democracy. Besides the continuing standard-setting activity, a substantial effort has gone, especially since the enlargement of the Organisation, into assisting applicant and newer member States to adopt and implement the Council of Europe *acquis*. Now that Council of Europe standards forms part of our member states' national legislation, we inevitably focus more on tackling what I can describe as the cancer of democracy – corruption and organised forms of crime. And, more and more, intergovernmental co-operation is dealing with the elusive goal of creating a genuine democratic culture.

Social cohesion is the objective of our action in the social field – a concept inspired by our values, but its implications are tangible and measurable in social, political and economic terms. A socially cohesive society is not only fairer, it is also more stable, more secure, more efficient, more prosperous and more democratic.

Education is of key importance in developing a democratic culture which, in return, is essential for the normal functioning of democratic institutions. Democracy cannot function if people are unable to make informed choices and do not have the necessary skills to participate in public life. This is becoming increasingly important with the rapid development and use of new information technologies, which are both a challenge and a huge potential for positive change, but may also carry some risks for the future of democracy.

To exploit this positive potential, and find responses for possible risks, the Council of Europe is working on the Integrated Project “Good Governance in the Information Society”, and will be making a contribution to the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, in Tunis.

Youth is another sector which can make a meaningful contribution to the preservation and promotion of society. Young people are among those who are among the most sceptical with regards to traditional forms of democracy, but they are also the quickest in finding answers to new questions. One of the principal aims of our activities in the youth

field is to encourage young people to take an active part in public life. The key element of all our youth-related action is that we are not conducting activities for young people but with them. This is a critical distinction which is also reflected in our work concerning children and the three-year Action Plan endorsed by the Warsaw Summit has a telling name “Europe for and with children”.

Culture is another of the Council of Europe priorities which has a value in itself – but it is also a means to promote mutual understanding and tolerance. Intercultural dialogue, together with legal co-operation and the protection of human rights, is one of the three pillars of the Council of Europe contribution to the international combat against terrorism.

This is where we are today, even if the list of relevant Council of Europe activities is far from exhaustive.

Democracy will never be perfect, because it will always remain embedded in an imperfect, contradictory and changing environment. But democracy should always strive to become better while preserving its fundamental purpose, its principles and its safeguards.

If we want to ensure a long and flourishing future for democracy in Europe, we do not really need to reinvent the wheel, just adapt it to the highways of the 21st century. Democracy itself is not in a crisis, and people are probably readier than ever to “fight for their laws”. What they do not want to do is simply go through the motions without having any real impact on the decisions which are taken. It is not really important if this feeling of alienation and powerlessness is based on reality or false perceptions – either way, we must do something about it. People want democracy – they just do not always trust its institutions – and our task should be to find ways of restoring this trust.

“Panta Rhei”, said Heraclites, to express his belief that everything flows – nothing stands still. Democracy is certainly no exception to the rule that change is real and stability is an illusion.

But what we need to do is to make sure that this inevitable change of democracy will be a change for the better.

Keynote speeches

Europe, democracy and civic participation

Timothy Garton-Ash
Oxford University

It is a very great pleasure to speak here immediately after Lech Wałęsa. His wonderful remarks reminded me of that great festival of democracy which was Solidarność in the years 1980 to 1981. It is also a great pleasure to speak here in this room in the Royal Castle. As you know, Poland, even before the partition, was a country so democratic that they even elected their kings – a condition which we in Britain have not yet attained. Though we may yet do so. Give us a little more time.

More seriously, it is a real pleasure to speak at the opening of this Forum on the Future of Democracy. I myself think, if I may say so quite frankly, that the Council of Europe is a somewhat too little known and underrated institution compared with the EU, and even the OSCE. It is, of course, the oldest European institution and the one in which the words “Europe” and “democracy” have always marched together. And so I think it is very suitable that you should have a forum on the future of democracy.

Our subject today is civic participation and I shall be speaking, participating simply as a citizen, as an ordinary citizen representing no government, no organisation. And I want to talk, to say a few words about three things: Europe, democracy and then participation.

Europe

One can tell the story of Europe in many ways. One way in which one can tell the story of Europe over the last 65 years is the story of the enlargement of freedom and democracy. If we look back 65 years ago, to 1940, there were only, depending how you count, four or five

countries in Europe that were fragilely free. At the moment of the founding of the Council of Europe in May 1949 there were just 10 member states, democracies, all of them in western or northern Europe. Parts of southern Europe, all of central and eastern and South-Eastern Europe were unfree. In the 1970s, those countries of southern Europe that were unfree: Greece, Spain and Portugal, found their own ways to democracy and it's not for nothing that Samuel Huntington in his book *The third wave: democratisation in the late 20th century* dates the beginning of the third wave to Portugal in 1974 and the Revolution of the Carnations, so that by the 1980s all of western and northern Europe was composed of free countries, but central and eastern Europe were still unfree.

Then we have that extraordinary springtime of peoples in 1989, a decisive moment in the history of the Council of Europe, after which central Europe became a region of democracies and over the next 15 years, *pas à pas*, other countries of South-Eastern and eastern Europe joined the European community of democracy. So that today we can say that only four or five countries in Europe are not, in some significant sense, free countries. Some 65 years ago, only four or five countries were free; today only four or five countries in Europe are not in the full sense free. What an extraordinary story! What an extraordinary story of progress! What an extraordinary success story!

And my first point, ladies and gentlemen, because as our Chairman said we want to be practical from the outset and not just at the end, is to ask how many schoolchildren in Europe know that story? How many schoolchildren in Europe would take that to be the story of Europe, or at least one of the stories of Europe? I suspect not so many, because that story is not clearly and imaginatively and vividly told to many of our schoolchildren, and certainly not in my own country, and so perhaps one of the things this forum could think about is about education. I observe from my calendar which I have just found that this is the European Year of Citizenship through Education. I must confess that is the first I had heard of it, and we are now in November. That's no doubt my own desperate ignorance, but it is certainly a very good idea.

This is not to say that we should put in the place of our own national mythologies a European mythology, which is a simple fairy story of the progress of Europe towards freedom and democracy. The story has to be

critically told by historians, but the story should be known. A person without a memory is a child. A nation without a memory is not a nation, and Europe without memory will not long remain Europe.

That's my first part about Europe and its story of freedom.

Democracy

Ladies and gentlemen, I think it is a sad fact, and I speak here quite freely, that the language of the promotion of democracy in today's world is for most people above all an American language. It is above all the United States which is associated in most people's minds with the promotion of democracy, particularly in the second term of George W. Bush, where the Bush Administration has made this the central theme of its foreign policy.

Now it seems to me that's a very positive development. I am an unashamed neo-Kantian. In the spirit of Emmanuel Kant, I do believe that the only long-term guarantee of security, of peace between nations, and within nations is liberal democracy. And I think that we should want that liberal democracy, not just on our own continent, but in our wider neighbourhood, in the wider Middle East. But it is undoubtedly the case – and I say this with all possible sympathy for the United States – it is undoubtedly the case that if the only voices heard promoting democracy in the world are American voices and in particular the voices of the Bush Administration, that will not always necessarily be helpful to the encouragement of democracy in other parts of the world. To put it even more sharply, President Bush occasionally risks giving democracy a bad name. For example, if we are asked to believe that the occupation of Iraq was itself just a form of the promotion of democracy. Think what you will about Iraq, we can talk about that in our discussions, but it was not simply the promotion of democracy, and therefore in this context, and I would hasten to add that I have not an anti-American nerve in my body, but in that spirit, I think it would be extremely important that the voice of Europe be heard loud and clear, embracing the value of democracy in partnership with the United States but, if you will, also in friendly competition with the United States.

And I would say that we have to start at home in our own continent and therefore to be quite specific. I believe it should be a specific concern of this forum of all European democrats to do everything in our power to help the citizens of Belarus to achieve a genuine democracy in their own country. Belarus is the last dictatorship in what is conventionally held to be Europe, let's make no mistake about it.

It is a desperately painful situation and we should have no embarrassment about promoting democracy in Belarus, supporting democrats in Belarus. And I'd like to add just a word from my experience of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine last year. I will never forget the moment when, during the Orange Revolution, at a critical moment in the packed Independence Square in Kiev, suddenly we saw a great phalanx of European flags being brought into the square. The applause echoed across the square. People around me had tears in their eyes as the European flag was brought into this square. Incidentally that phalanx of European flags was carried not by delegations from the European Parliament, but by delegations of Poles who had come by train to Kiev to bring the European flag. That was an incredible moment.

The vote for democracy was a vote for Europe in Ukraine and the vote for Europe was a vote for democracy. But if you ask which of the established liberal democracies in the world did more in the run-up to the Orange Revolution, directly to support the NGOs that were working for democracy, the students who were working for democracy, the election monitoring, who supported the crucial independent exit poll, the answer is: the Americans! The Americans! Some individual European countries, some individual European institutions played a significant role, I wouldn't understate it, I don't want to generalise, but the Americans did more through direct support, and anyone in Kiev will tell you that. I, ladies and gentlemen, find it a rather shaming fact that we Europeans did not do more to support democracy on our own continent. I hope in the case of Belarus we will learn a lesson from that.

But our promotion of democracy should be the promotion of democracy, so to speak, "European style", with a European face, and let me suggest a few elements that I think are important there. One is that we know ourselves that our own democracies are extremely imperfect and so our promotion of democracy should, I believe, be self-critical. It

should not start from the premise that we already have perfect democracies which simply have to be exported, nor indeed that there is a single model of democracy because what Europeans know is that there's no single model of democracy. There are essentials of democracy which are common, but then there are many different models of democracy. We should know about the pluralism of models of democracy and approach this with some humility.

Secondly, I believe and perhaps the Council of Europe can support this, that we need a discussion about the norms for the promotion of international democracy. We have a highly sophisticated literature and discussion on the norms for humanitarian intervention. We have almost nothing on the norms for democracy promotion. What is legitimate for other states and other organisations outside the country to do? Support the promotion of democracy inside the country? Yes! Monitor elections? Yes! Support NGOs? Yes! But what beyond that is legitimate and what is not? And may I suggest to you that the Council of Europe might be a very good forum for that discussion, not least because Russia, for example, is a member of the Council of Europe and this is a discussion we need to have, in my view, entirely openly and frankly with our Russian colleagues, friends and others.

Thirdly, the European way of promoting democracy is about process. Amongst the many anniversaries we celebrate to mark this year are the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War; the 25th Anniversary of Solidarność; and the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The Helsinki Final Act actually initiated something that was new in international relations, namely the multidimensional monitoring process in relations between sovereign states. And I think that the process of democracy promotion should be, and I know the Council of Europe has thought about this a lot, something in some sense analogous for developing the Helsinki process, a process of constant monitoring according to norms and benchmarks.

Fourthly, the European way of democracy knows that democracy, liberal democracy, is multidimensional; that democracy is not just a matter of having elections. You can have elections and still not be a democracy. You can't have free and fair elections without many other elements.

I would like to suggest to you that after 1989 we, and I speak also for myself, we and what we then called the West, had a slightly simplistic “triptych” for the post-communist world. The “triptych”, or tripod, was electoral democracy, market economy, civil society. All three are necessary but they are not sufficient and what we have discovered in the last 16 years since 1989 is that for a full liberal democracy you need at least three other elements. You need first and foremost the rule of law. This has been one of the greatest deficits in the story of post communist democracies. I sometimes think that we should have put the rule of law before civil society in our list of what was most important. You need good governance and you need, last but not least, independent, fair and accurate media. Without them you will never have a fully functioning liberal democracy.

All our democracies are tele-democracies, as President Wałęsa just said. Democracy is about what happens on television. And so the table of a full liberal democracy has not just three legs: electoral democracy, market economy and civil society. It has six legs, the other three being good governance, the rule of law and independent, free and accurate media. Ladies and gentlemen, there is an old joke from the period of the Cold War which is: What's the difference between democracy and people's democracy? – which is of course what the communist dictatorships in eastern Europe were called – I think the difference between democracy and people's democracy is the difference between a jacket and a straightjacket. Liberal democracy is a six-legged table; a three-legged table tends to fall over.

So that's what I wanted to say about democracy, and the promotion of democracy which I think should be a central concern of this forum and of the Council of Europe.

Civic participation

Let me now turn to today's subject – civic participation. You have before you an excellent background paper by Dr Jacek Kucharczyk of the Institute of Public Affairs which starts, I think, quite usefully in thinking about how we can improve our own democracies.

That's what I am now turning to, having democratised our democracies, as Mr Severin put it, by focusing on the issue of electoral turnout. One has to be a little careful here because of course it is the case that historically one of the greatest democracies in the world, the United States, has had very low turnouts and it has still been a pretty good democracy, so electoral turnout is not a perfect measure of the degree of democracy, otherwise Australia would be the most perfect democracy in the world because, of course, as you know Australia has compulsory voting, so the turnout is very high. But the trend of turnout is a very important index and the trend in most of our countries has been declining alarmingly.

We're sitting in a country, Poland, which has just had its parliamentary and presidential elections. Even in the dramatic run off of its presidential elections turnout was just 50%. So of half those entitled to vote didn't turn out, which is pretty depressing. Let me also add that we are also sitting in a Europe where in the Eurobarometer polls the question is repeatedly asked: Do you think EU membership has been a good thing for your country? And the European average for a number of years has been running around about 50%. The new accession countries, the new democracies, came and actually lifted the average above the 50% mark. But it's hovering around the 50%. In other words, we are living in a Europe where half our people don't think it's worth turning out to vote and half our people don't think Europe is a very good thing for their country. I'm not there reducing Europe to the European Union. I am saying that those attitudes tell us something about attitudes to Europe altogether. That's a pretty depressing fact: half of our people are not voting, so half our people don't think much of Europe.

There is one positive way of looking at this phenomenon, ladies and gentlemen, that is to say that it is at least in part a reflection of what has been called the end of ideology, of the fact that we no longer live in a world which is divided between great clashing ideological systems, which has to make great systemic choices between fascism, communism and democracy. And so, to some extent, the fact that people turn out and don't care so much is a reflection of our success in that the choices in politics on the whole are actually much less dramatic choices. We are basically talking about choices between varieties of democratic capitalism or capitalist democracy. Indeed, in some of our countries people feel

that the choice at an election is almost like the choice between one board of management for a company and another. So that's in a way a good thing. But that's the only good reason I can find for lower turnout.

Let me now turn finally to the bad reasons for this phenomenon, and these are, I think, the reasons that we need to address as we think about civic participation in our own countries.

First of all, and the paper says this very clearly, there is widespread disgruntlement with and distaste for the political class in almost all our countries, and we have to be very clear about this. This is a Europe-wide phenomenon.

If you talk to "ordinary people", if you talk to students, if you talk to young people, they have a very low opinion of politicians. They resent their privileges. One hears it very often in Poland by the way, but not just in Poland, that they regard politicians as just being out for themselves, out for the next ministerial chair, out for the privileges of office. They regard politicians often as being in the pockets of big business. They are very worried about corruption, which is a major concern in all our countries, particularly in post communist democracies. And they say: why should I turn out to vote? Why should I care about politics? The politicians don't change anything anyway. The real power is somewhere else. People often believe in large corporations or larger forces in a globalised world. Giovanni di Stasi mentioned a poll of trust in politicians.

One small thing we might do in this forum is to gather systematically the polling of trust in institutions throughout the 46 member states of the Council of Europe. It would be a very interesting exercise to see who comes top in all our countries and who comes bottom. I know that in Britain, for example, journalists come very low on the list and estate agents are bottom of the list altogether. But politicians come very low indeed. And I think you would find that in all our countries politicians come very low on the list.

So there is a real problem of disgruntlement with our political class.

And I think we have to look very carefully at the issue of standards in public life which should be a concern of the Council of Europe and is a concern of the Council of Europe at the ethos of politics.

Why is it that people go into politics? In what spirit do they conduct their politics?

Then you have to ask, amidst this 50% who don't vote, who don't care, who don't think much of Europe, who are the most important groups? We have with us a very distinguished Polish sociologist and pollster, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, who may tell us more in the discussions.

But I would like to single out three groups for your attention. First of all, it is a very depressing fact that the disgruntlement with democratic politics and the disgruntlement with Europe are found in significant degree amongst young well-educated Europeans. Young, well-educated – not old and less well-educated – young, well-educated Europeans. I have a lot to do with students from all over Europe. Very few of them would think of going into politics. Most of them are contemptuous of conventional politics. They will go into business, they will go into the media, they will go into NGOs – they love NGOs – that is, if they have a democratic and idealistic engagement. They'll go to Greenpeace, to Amnesty International, or to Human Rights Watch. Not into politics.

If you look at the French “No” vote, on the European Constitutional Treaty, roughly speaking, the older the voter was, the more likely to vote “Yes”. It was the young, not the old, who voted “No”. That's an extremely worrying fact.

So we have to think very hard about how we appeal once again to the young, angry students. The Internet has been mentioned. E-democracy: this is an area which I think we have to think a lot about.

Secondly, the unemployed: the EU official figure is that there are over 19 million unemployed people in the European Union alone. If, however, you consider those people who, for example in the United States, would be working, namely older people and women, you already reach a much larger figure of those who might be working but are not.

It would be very interesting to know, perhaps someone here has it, what the total figure for unemployment is in all member states of the Council of Europe. But I bet it is very large. This is a group, too, which, very clearly from the evidence, is profoundly disgruntled with democracy and disgruntled with Europe and very often doesn't turn out to vote.

Of course, the best answer for this group would be to find jobs, to find employment – the agenda of economic and social reforms. But that's not our subject for today. But I think we have to think very carefully about how we might increase civic participation, or the sense of civic participation, among the unemployed. Here I want to take up something Lech Wałęsa said: even to those for whom we cannot find jobs, how we can demonstrate solidarity, not just through the institutions of the state, not just through benefits, which is the European welfare state, but through social solidarity, *Solidarność* in that original sense? How is it that we can demonstrate to the unemployed that they remain full citizens and fully European?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is a group to which we have to pay an enormous amount of attention: immigrants.

We're talking here a day after the anniversary of the murder of Theo van Gogh in Holland; we're talking here a few months after the London bombing on 7 July perpetrated by young Britons who were the children of Muslim immigrants; we're talking here as the outer suburbs of Paris, the *cités*, are burning in riots because of the deterioration of relations with particularly Muslim immigrants.

This is a dramatic moment and the problem is that we have many millions of people, immigrants, particularly Muslim immigrants, who live in Europe, to use the ancient Greek term, not as citizens but just as “denizens”; as inhabitants without the full rights of citizens. Or, to put it more dramatically, as a Moroccan immigrant told me in Madrid, “I live like a wolf”. And those who are forced to live like wolves may end up behaving like wolves.

We have, according to official figures, some 12 to 14 million Muslims in the European Union today. But in the course of the next 10 to 15 years we will have many more, both through immigration and through the enlargement of the European Union to the Balkans, and I hope one day to Turkey. Here I think the Council of Europe might be a pioneer. Because, after all, you're there already: you have in the membership of the Council of Europe by my reckoning upwards of 100 million people.

Can you perhaps start thinking about how immigrants, particularly Muslim immigrants really can be made to feel that they are full citizens participating in European democracy?

This is a field where we have no right in any shape or form to feel superior to the United States. Because the United States is simply much better than any European country is at making immigrants feel at home, feeling fully citizens of that country. Hispanic Americans, Vietnamese Americans, feel themselves to be citizens in the way that Moroccan Spanish or Pakistani British or Algerian French just do not.

How do we do it ? I want to pick up one point that was made earlier. We talk a lot about national democracy and that is clearly important to achieve a sense of participation, to have members of parliament, candidates for parliament, from these immigrant communities.

But I think two other things are very important. One is local government, one of the great strengths of American democracy. There are many communities in our countries, where Muslim immigrants, or, in fact, any immigrants, are in a clear majority. It is so important to strengthen local democracy in these communities so that people can have a sense of participation, if only in local democracy.

Secondly, Europe-wide democracy. It should be the case, ladies and gentlemen, that immigrants to Europe feel fully European. It is not yet unfortunately the case. Someone who comes from Vietnam to the United States will within a few years identify themselves as a Vietnamese American, and feel fully a citizen.

We have people who have lived here for 30 or 40 years and who still cannot fully say "I feel myself to be a Turkish European, or Pakistani European or Moroccan European".

It is simply vital for the future of European democracy that people in future should be able to say not just "I am a European Muslim", but "I am a Muslim European and a full citizen of a European democracy". On that, I suggest, the very future of European democracy may depend.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's what I wanted to say. I've laid out for you a few ideas about what we might do. It only remains to work out how we do it. And for that I turn this over to you as a simple citizen, and in

the spirit of this forum. I am now going to leave the stage so that we can have an exercise in elementary democracy within this forum.

Global governance, good governance or human dignity

Gesine Schwan

Rector of Viadrina University, Frankfurt-on-Oder

Allow me first to thank you for your kind invitation. I am sorry I was unable to attend from the start of this meeting.

However, what I have heard has been extremely interesting. I do not find it easy to offer you my conclusions. Nevertheless, the organisers have asked me to make a short closing address and I will do my best.

Having undertaken studies in political science, I think I am in a position to say a few words about democracy.

Allow me first to address you in Polish.

I have called my talk "Global governance, good governance or human dignity".

First let me say a few words on global governance and good governance. I should tell you from the start that I shall take a very specific moral position. Above all, this involves a clear understanding of human dignity, as it appears in the German Constitution and those of other western democracies.

When considering the wide gamut of governing arrangements, we must determine what are the elements of good governance, in other words democratic governance. These are the elements that enable the greatest number to live the lives of their choice, thanks to political decisions that help to strengthen security and solidarity. This is what I mean when I speak of good governance.

Some of you will say that I am perhaps naive. I believe, though, that naivety is something that enables us to be creative. For me, there is nothing negative about naivety – indeed it is a totally positive phenomenon. Anyone who follows the centuries of development of political thought will find that naivety has often been the cradle of new ideas.

I am a member of that school of thought that believes in the co-existence of different cultures. Democracy is a way of life that has existed since ancient times. Democracy is traditionally associated with quite specific geographical locations with necessarily limited areas, to allow for universal participation.

In the 20th century, one of the great challenges has been the onward march of globalisation, in which much that was once confined to limited and specific geographical areas has become global in scale. This has been facilitated by the development of information technologies and much greater ease of travel. A distinction now has to be made between very specific issues and challenges pertaining to limited geographical areas and ones like the fight against terrorism, respect for human rights and preservation of the environment that apply to the entire planet. This restricts individual states' capacity to act, as indeed does the impact of global capitalism, which seems to absorb all other creative forces and also has an effect on political development.

When I think of what happened in 1968 in my own and other countries, where students challenged many of the post-war values, adopted Marxist ideas and started to ask new questions, one particular criticism was that decisions were being taken by global capitalism. We always supported the post-war democracy. We always believed that through its impact on economic activities capitalism could help to promote social policies, to the benefit of all. A comparison of the economic policy of the then Federal Republic with that of the 1920s and the Weimar Republic shows that it cannot really be criticised.

Today, however, 60 years after the war, we have to modify our approach. The unemployment rate is rising and there are large disparities of wealth. This is undermining our democracies, which are losing ground. The threat does not come from particular individuals or groups, but is the consequence of economic systems that belong to the past.

We have no ideas about how to replace the current system with another that functions better. There is a dynamic at work that is forcing the world to develop in a way that appears absolutely inevitable. Political creativity faces a series of major obstacles.

We are also witnessing a real process of instrumentalisation, reflected in a growing dependence of citizens on the market economy. It appears that they can only play one role at a time, that of producer or that of consumer. Governments have no effective response to these processes because they are subject to the same pressures as producers and consumers.

Our rich countries believe that they are under pressure from economically less well-off countries. Under the circumstances, it is also quite understandable that the attention of the "old industrial countries" is focused particularly on costs of production. In the newly competitive countries, these issues arise less frequently. Social protection is less well advanced and production costs are therefore lower in these countries.

The point is often made in public debate that the only option is to lower production costs, in other words reduce social security coverage and relax employment regulations. Otherwise production will have to be switched to countries where costs are lower.

The European Union countries face the threat of a certain decline. It is a dangerous sign when, as in Germany and other western countries, societies react pessimistically and fear the future and there is no economic growth at all, or economic growth which is attributable solely to an increase in consumption.

In these circumstances, it would appear that entrepreneurs are the only real driving force, but conversely they take no account of the impact of their decisions on the environment. They do not take the various elements into consideration. This will continue to be the case for as long as we fail to establish a system that imposes the same constraints on all economic agents. If we do not, it will be very difficult to create new jobs in the old industrial countries.

What sort of body could offer such safeguards? The most important economic agents in the market economy would have to participate. One solution might be to establish a global state. However, this is unachievable, since it would be impossible to bring together all the cultures of the world.

Perhaps we no longer need politics, and the economy is sufficient. There are many who have thought we could be liberated from politics through economics.

I would remind you that Marx studied the German system closely before formulating his theories. Would humanity be in a better state if the market operated uncontrolled? There might be other aspects to prevent it from functioning.

Another great thinker, Adam Smith (I mention all the great thinkers because I am a historian of philosophy) supported the free market. He considered it necessary to establish a system of government to protect peace within countries and control frontiers, and a legal system to ensure good relations between the various parties involved. He also argued that the invisible hand of the market would operate to the benefit of all. Initially, he specialised in morality, in its philosophical sense. He believed that there were moral values that were absolutely necessary and that everyone must adhere to in the common interest.

Co-management is based not necessarily on the same interests but on the same political rules, on a common economic infrastructure. Everyone must be able to develop his or her capacity to feel sympathy for others. Otherwise, the invisible hand cannot function properly. In the case of national communities, it is more visible. Yet, history has shown how difficult it has been to regulate the market.

We therefore have to ask how we can expect to make progress at international level. It is already hard enough on the national scale. This is one of the most important political and theoretical challenges to face us in the coming decades, or even centuries.

Intergovernmental conferences and organisations, NGOs, the private sector, the international legal system and international courts – all of which come within the scope of what we term world governance – should together present a highly flexible sort of order that will enable us to move on to a form of global governance and good governance.

We need good global governance. It is necessary if we are to overcome the social difficulties that exist across the world. It is also important from

the standpoint of environmental protection, and the sharing out of water and other natural resources.

Unless we regulate competition, we will be unable to protect ourselves against terrorism, and we will not be able to develop long-term policies in favour of democratic participation and universal prosperity.

Global democracy cannot be based on repression. The rules must therefore be accepted voluntarily. The introduction of such a system must be based on new ideas that emerge from, and are accepted by, the ordinary public.

National and international NGOs have a part to play in this process, as do today's and tomorrow's political forces. If political decisions can be taken with complete impunity, the various political forces will enter into non-constructive confrontation. I would cite Max Weber in this context, who argued that to be effective, the existing political forces had to establish coalitions and ensure the participation of the different groups and individuals concerned. Like Hannah Arendt, I believe that power must be exercised effectively. Any other form of power is violent, because it is not based on citizen consent. These are not the foundations for good global governance.

Multinationals must accept certain responsibilities and abide by rules. We also need to consider Kofi Annan's concept of a "global pact". This would bind all the world's business community to a code of conduct.

Those who want unco-ordinated action are acting against the emergence of good global governance. What can we do to change this? We must persuade these groups – these power centres – to act in the interests of all. This does not just apply to governments and individuals, but also to a range of groups and other entities.

Governments must also take political decisions that will contribute to the emergence of good global governance. Unfortunately, national political institutions are less and less able to achieve this.

We should not forget that other groups without political legitimacy play an important part in this process. They include the multinationals, which are not democratically elected, and NGOs, which reflect public opinion

but whose members are not elected either. If these organisations take part in coalition formation, their activities will have to be watched closely.

Increasing attention is being paid to good governance. For example, firms found guilty of corruption are no longer allowed to bid for World Bank contracts. Action is being taken, therefore, but such decisions call for a certain political will.

Good governance is not a closed system. It involves the establishment of a certain type of order, based on the protection of human rights and citizen's rights.

These elements appear in the Magna Carta of 1215 which, while settling relations between the aristocracy and the crown, was one of the very foundations of the democratic order. The Magna Carta has been the inspiration for many agreements. Although there are elements of good governance in other documents, it was the Magna Carta that clearly defined certain privileges and certain rights.

This is what is now needed on a global scale. What is possible at the level of the individual state should be possible internationally.

The glorious epoch of the nation state is now past. We must learn to live in a system of values and interests. We must refuse to accept the absence of transparency, in order to combat the negative influences of globalisation and benefit from its positive aspects, in the interests of social development and democracy.

We often tend to focus on the worst possible scenarios. As a political scientist rather than a lawyer, I prefer to take more positive aspects as my starting point.

Conclusions and perspectives

Chairman's conclusions

General conclusions

1. The task of the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy is to promote the strengthening and development of democracy. The forum process, with its annual meetings, should thus support the development of proposals that address the different challenges to democracy in Europe, on the basis of a collective examination of existing policies and initiatives. The forum proposes that the Council of Europe and its member states disseminate information on good practices and other proposals in the broadest possible way.
2. The forum acknowledges that the future of democracy in Europe is intrinsically connected to the legitimacy and efficiency of representative democracy at all levels. Addressing the causes of declining confidence and engagement in representative democracy requires the implementation of policies that aim to increase trust in democratic institutions and the political class.
3. The forum process should therefore provide practical tools for policy makers, practitioners, think tanks and academia, as well as for NGOs working in the field, so that they can interact, develop new instruments, and evaluate their effectiveness.
4. The evaluation of instruments in the field of democracy should be an ongoing process, extending beyond their adoption and implementation. This should be an integral part of policy making and will require close co-operation from the outset.
5. Norms for the promotion of democracy should cover citizen's access to information, and access to the media by the political actors at all levels.

6. The role of the forum should be to provide a platform for an exchange of information on good practice, based on the principle of peer review, to allow the interested parties to compare and discuss the usefulness and effectiveness of policies, practices and institutions which aim to strengthen democracy.

7. The programme of each forum should include a brief report on the work and proposals of the previous forum meeting and its follow-up.

8. Bearing in mind the decisions of the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe, the Forum for the Future of Democracy could help develop closer relationships between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Conclusions on the specific theme of the launch meeting: civic participation

9. For European citizens, civic participation means first and foremost to exercise the right to vote. Electoral turnout thus remains one of the crucial benchmarks of civic participation, the credibility of political systems and their democratic institutions. The forum welcomes all initiatives that can improve the accessibility, inclusiveness and transparency of electoral systems.

10. The forum believes that civic participation has many forms and faces and is of key importance to the future of democracy in Europe. Low or decreasing levels of civic participation, especially among the young, are a reason for concern and call for positive action on the part of governments, civil society organisations and international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe. The forum welcomes ideas and initiatives aiming to expand civic participation, especially through new forms of engagement in public life.

11. Special attention should be given to initiatives which aim to improve participation in public life, including exercising the right to vote, in particular for excluded or marginalised groups. It is of the utmost importance to better integrate foreigners, particularly at local level, who do not feel they are part of the society in which they live. The forum welcomes ideas and initiatives that aim to fully engage all people in public life.

12. The forum affirms that enhancing civic participation requires the creation of conditions (legal and material) for the existence, sustainability and freedom of action of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The governments of member states should develop transparent procedures for civil society organisations to interact with and influence the workings of public authorities. Dialogue should become a cornerstone of civic participation in Europe.

13. Positive action on the part of governments, civil society organisations and international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe, should include – but not be limited to – the modernisation of electoral systems by taking advantage of new communication technologies as well as the reforms of political processes to make them more transparent and accountable to citizens.

14. The forum welcomes policies aimed at increasing citizens' participation in elections and referenda, by modernising electoral systems to make them more voter-friendly, without compromising the security and integrity of the electoral process. In this respect, special attention should be given to initiatives improving access to voting and to information, in particular for the disadvantaged groups of the population.

15. The rise of Internet technologies has created a vast space of opportunity for public deliberation and dialogue through various forms of ICT applications. New technologies for e-voting and e-participation can create a better environment for transparency and accountability of political processes.

16. Encouraging the civic participation of young people requires the serious attention of policy makers and civic activists. This should involve a modification of both the style of politicians and the substance of politics as well as new civic education initiatives, both within and outside the educational system. Special attention should be given to schools, which should become authentic, modern centres of learning about democracy for the young, who, in turn, will be responsible for European democracy in the future.

17. The forum invites the Council of Europe as well as interested member states and organisations to initiate the preparation of a review paper, by open-ended working groups, on the state of civic participation in

Europe. This paper would examine and compare the experiences of different Council of Europe member states and develop proposals, such as drawing up a Code of Good Practice for civic participation. The forum recommends that the Council of Europe should take further action to collect, examine and disseminate the experiences of the member states, with regard to policies aiming to improve civic participation.

The forum as a process: Where do we go from here?

Closing session

Terry Davis

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

First of all, I apologise for the fact that I was not here yesterday.

The reason is very straightforward, as everybody in Poland is well aware, we have this year commemorated the 60th anniversary of the liberation of a lot of concentration camps in Europe. One of the concentration camps was in France. But it was in fact in Alsace, very near Strasbourg. It was a concentration camp to which resistance workers were taken from all over Europe. There were not just French people: inevitably there were lots of French people there, but there were people from as far away as Norway, and indeed Poland, and I am told even some Russians and many people from other countries like the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

So it was very much an international concentration camp of people who had stood up to be counted in the fight against fascism.

Yesterday President Chirac of France opened a special remembrance centre at this former concentration camp in France, named Struthof. As the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, I received a personal invitation to be present to represent all the countries or members of the Council of Europe whose citizens were murdered in that camp.

So that, I hope you agree, was a very good reason for having to miss the first day of your proceedings.

But having been here today from the beginning, I must say I found the discussions very interesting indeed. In fact I believe very much that the Council of Europe needs to increase its work on democracy. I said this in both the contributions I made to the discussions at the summit here in

Warsaw a few months ago and I repeat it now: it is not a case of reducing our work on human rights and the rule of law, it is a case of raising the quantity and volume of our work on democracy to a safe level. Because I believe that democracy is a human right and is extremely important. Therefore, Chairman, I shall read the proceedings of these two days when they are published, with great interest and great care.

I am supposed today to say where we go from here, but I think it would be very undemocratic of me to draw my conclusions before I have had the opportunity of reading all the proceedings. But perhaps I could share with you some preliminary thoughts on where we go from here.

One of the previous speakers, Mr Buchsbaum from Austria, said there should be flexibility in a number of matters, such as participation. I agree with him. He said that it was very important for experts to get together. I agree with him on that too. And also I was very pleased that he did refer to politicians.

And I was especially pleased because towards the very end of what he said, he used two awful words, two words which I hear very rarely when people talk about democracy and the difficulties or the challenges facing democracy. Two words which have also almost become obscenities in political debate and discussions in such fora as these. Because he actually referred to: political parties. To be fair, the European Commission representative, Karen Fogg, also referred to political parties, but I did not catch anybody else using these terrible words. Now, I am a professional politician or at least I was until a year ago.... So political parties, I think, are an inherent part of democracy. Now some people will say "Ah, but we have representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we have representatives of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and that means that political parties are represented." Not so. The people who are here from the Parliamentary Assembly, and I used to be a member, people who are here from the Parliamentary Assembly or from the Congress represent members of parliament. Politicians, that is true. But I think when you are talking about democracy we need to involve representatives of political parties which is not quite the same thing. And so, I think it is very important that representatives of political parties should be involved in any future fora and discussions.

I also however agree about the fact and this again has been echoed by several people, especially, I think Ms Panfilova from the Russian Federation, that what we need is not new structures. We do need structures, but not new structures. Not independent structures. The work on democracy should be a big part of the mainstream work of the Council of Europe and it should be a major responsibility of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. So I agree with them, what we need is structures, not new structures or new institutions.

One area perhaps which has not received much mention – during the discussions this morning anyway, and I apologise if it might have been mentioned yesterday – is that I think the media are extremely important in the functioning of democracy. It is not as simple, but I did pick up that the Chairman in his conclusions referred to the media – but it is not as simple as a fact that the media affect the choices that people make in elections. The media also affect whether people vote at all. Because a constant drip of adverse publicity and criticism of politicians becomes criticism of a democratic process, and that in turn discourages people from voting, in my belief and experience.

The number of people who vote in an election is not an end in itself. I regard the turnout in elections like taking the temperature. It tells you how people feel about their politicians, their political parties and democracy, but it is not an end in itself. It is actually also part of a process. And I can say that because the very first election in which I ever stood, the turnout, the number of people who voted, was 97%! Now President Lukashenko and Saddam Hussein should be jealous. It was 97% of people eligible to vote actually went to vote! They were some special circumstances, I quite agree, but 97% of the people did vote. Not, in fact, a figure I ever achieved again in the other eleven elections I stood in at national level. That was actually a local election, 97%, in national elections, I never achieved that. In fact it could be said I did the opposite, because my majority kept going up and up and up, and the turnout kept going down and down and down.

I think I may have had something to do with that but I agree with Ms Nel van Dijk from the Netherlands who put her finger, I felt, very squarely on a number of reasons why the proportion of people voting in the elections has gone down not just in the United Kingdom but in

many, many other countries as well. She mentioned globalisation and privatisation making – in a sense – voting irrelevant to the matters which affect our lives. I agree with her. She used the phrase, I think: “What difference does it make?” That was a phrase I heard frequently in recent years in elections in which I was a candidate.

I think also there is a problem to do, frankly, with the consensus between political parties. People boast about the virtues of consensus. But if it does not make any difference, why bother to vote if it is all consensus.

And I think actually there is a fact here to do with bureaucracy, which is something we might talk about on another occasion. I have heard this morning, Chairman, quite a lot of references to young people, and I am particularly interested in the contribution by Mr Doorley from the European Youth Forum.

But I will just make two points.

First of all, I do not think that we can ignore the influence of parents. Now I am somebody who keeps that influence in perspective, but it does need to be stated that a lot of young people will not bother to vote because they may be told at school that it is a very good thing to vote and they should vote and have a duty to vote, but at home, they are told by their parents: “It doesn’t make a difference...there is no point...they are all the same!”, and their parents do not vote. So they just treat the teachers as irrelevant. If parents do not vote, and they actually discourage and disparage voting, it is very unlikely that young people will get that habit.

I think also there is a need to look at some other groups. I was very glad that Nel van Dijk referred to some other groups, particularly older people, and I think especially of very elderly people. To my mind, the advantage of e-voting will be that it might make it easier for people who cannot leave their homes to be able to vote. Professor Krimmer referred to people voting as they walked by. The problem is people cannot “walk by”, because they cannot walk out of their homes. And these will be people who are elderly, people who have disabilities, people who may be illiterate. Although you may think: how do you make them e-literate if they cannot read in an ordinary way?

So I think there are a lot of issues here, but I think that's where the particular value of e-voting will come in. Now, some of these ideas are, of course, already in documents that have been produced by the Council of Europe.

But the issue is not what we have done; the issue is what we are going to do. And I hope that this forum process will give us some ideas. But not just ideas, that it will give us some answers to the challenges which face democracy. That we will get an agreement in a period of the next few years – and I mean few – on a series of democratic principles which are shared by the member states of the Council of Europe. In that way we will fulfil one of the key commitments of the Action Plan that was adopted here a few months ago. That key commitment was to develop standards of democracy and good governance. But I hope very much that this forum process will do much more than that.

I hope that at the end of the next five years we will be able to point to higher standards having been put into practice in the member states of the Council of Europe. In the same way that many of our member states can already point to higher standards now than that which existed 15 years ago. All our member states can point to higher standards as a democracy now than existed a 100 years ago. But I hope that in the next five years, we can raise those standards higher still.

And so, Chairman, may I conclude by expressing my hope that in this context the Council of Europe will come to be recognised as a home of democracy in Europe in the same way as I think we can fairly claim to have already been recognised as the conscience of Europe in terms of human rights. Thank you very much.

