



SOPOT DECLARATION 2017

Sixty years after the Treaty of Rome was signed, Europe has become an area of cooperation. We, Europeans, live in peace, enjoying freedom and the benefits of the single market. We no longer notice the borders which until recently divided our continent.

Indisputably, the Union has turned out to be the best possible project for Europe. It is our shared success. We cannot waste it!

Yet fears and criticism are rising, due to factors such as the migration crisis, terrorist attacks, the changes in technological, social economic dimensions, as well as a sense of injustice as to how the success of common Europe is shared. Populism is growing, nationalist and protectionist sentiments are on the rise, and the very sense of the existence of the European Community, its values, and its legal order are all coming under a challenge.

Only a joint effort can ensure Europe's security and development. There is no other way in the light of the current power structure. That is why the future of Europe requires striking a balance between the three areas that constituted the central themes of the 7th European Forum for New Ideas: globalism, bilateralism, and economic patriotism.

In terms of supranational issues, for instance the global trade system, the awareness of global processes is a pivotal issue. If the European Union wants to affect them, all member states have to engage in close cooperation.

Bilateral relations are the second pillar of a stable Europe. Firstly, the single voice of all member states renders bilateral free trade agreements possible. Secondly, the member states' policies aiming at developing direct relations with other countries strengthen the position of the entire continent. Strong international economic and political relations offer the best guarantee of growth, security, and peace.

The third pillar of the European Union are strong member states. Each country has to learn its lesson and move towards radical civilizational, social, cultural, technological, and economic advancement. We cannot wait for the EU institutions to do that for us! Let us cease putting the blame for our own mistakes and failures on



the EU. Let us instead uphold its authority and positive image in the member states. Let us teach solidarity, tolerance, openness, and shared responsibility. Let us demand respect for the law. Let us create the best possible conditions for business activity in our own countries. Economic patriotism is a vital element of the European project. It must not be identified with nationalism, protectionism, or egoistic concentration on one's own interests at the expense of other members of the community.

Reconciling so many complex interests requires effective dialogue, predominantly with those who express a different opinion and different visions, and who often subscribe to values other than our own. This is also a task for the business community. Let us not leave Europe to politicians alone!

Here is our appeal to all Europeans: let us take responsibility for our European Union. Let us participate in the debate on Europe's future, let us propose and carry out reforms.

Europe is us!

Sopot, 29 September 2017

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