

## Europe Day Address - EU Ambassador Marie Anne Coninx - 9 May 2016

Monsieur le Ministre Dion,

Messieurs et Mesdames les Ministres et Secrétaires Parlementaires.

Mr. Speaker of the House, Sénateurs et Députées,

Chers collègues, représentants du monde diplomatique

Chers invitées,

Bienvenues à la célébration de la fête de l'Europe !

Cette célébration coïncide avec le 40ème anniversaire de l'Union Européenne en Canada (et de notre coopération formelle), que nous célébrons durant toute l'année 2016.

Pourquoi nous célébrons le Journée de l'Europe ?

- Ce n'est pas vraiment « une fête nationale » comme la fêtent les états nationaux pour différentes raisons: soit pour commémorer la date de leur indépendance, l'acte de leur constitution, d'une révolution ou réunification.

- Dans le cas de l'Union européenne, c'est différent. Pas seulement nous ne sommes pas un Etat, mais surtout parce que nous célébrons une idée, une vision extraordinaire - qui menait à la création de l'Union Européenne, une idée qui changeait le destin de l'Europe, et j'ose dire, celui du monde entier.

Cette idée était inspirée par la détermination d'assurer la paix, la sécurité et la prospérité sur notre continent, un continent qui a été dévasté par 2 guerres mondiales.

C'était Robert *Schumann*, le Ministre des Relations Extérieures Français, qui proposait dans une Déclaration du 9 mai 1950, de mettre la production de l'acier et le charbon - sous l'égide d'une autorité supranational - afin de garantir une paix durable entre les ennemis historiques. « L'acier et le charbon » parce que c'étaient les industries de guerre en son temps. *Coopérer au lieu de se battre.*

Cette idée était à la base de la naissance de l'Union européenne, d'un processus d'intégration d'une communauté économique de 6 pays fondateurs, à une Union Economique & Politique de 28 Etats membres avec plus de 500 millions de citoyens.

And that is why Europe Day - for us Europeans, not only is a day of celebration, but also a day of to pay tribute to a great idea and to remember its historical background, why it has been created.

A day also to bear in mind that this European project is simply far from being finalised. It is a project that is in constant working progress. It has solid foundations, but it also has to face many turbulences. A project that cannot be taken for granted.

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That we can succeed together - that it is possible to work united in diversity, is demonstrated by the extremely successful cooperation of the **European Union and our host country Canada** in the last 40 years:

- Recently on 18 February, we celebrated - in the presence of the Canadian Prime Minister *Trudeau*, the 40th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic mission in Canada and 40 years of formal cooperation.
- These 40 years have been and are so successful, because both partners have worked together on the solid basis of mutual trust, common goals, and firm solidarity.
- We are closest allies, likeminded partners because we share so much experience, have so much in common, common values and principles.
- Our friendship has opened the door to the strongest economic ties.
- On this firm basis it will be possible this year, to sign two important new "generation" (golden standards) agreements: The Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic Trade agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).
- These agreements will allow even closer cooperation to combat climate change, to defeat terrorism, to promote peace & security globally and manage global migration.
- In brief, the current state of our relationship is excellent, and the future - that we are building together, looks very bright.

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The same values that we cherish in our cooperation with Canada, are needed if we want to successfully cope with the biggest challenges the European Union is currently confronted with.

Today the European Union faces a decisive test of its unity. We are indeed going through a crisis of solidarity and our shared values are under attack.

But, our experience demonstrates that we are able to handle major challenges:

- Without the solidarity of the European Union, there would have been no reunification of Germany.
- Without the historical responsibility and support of the then EU Member States, the enlargement of the Union by 8 States from Eastern Europe, would not have succeeded.
- Without the solidarity and the firm conviction that we can succeed, the EU would not have been able to address successfully the effects of the global financial crisis in Europe.
- And only on the basis of solidarity - which cannot be a one-way street, it will be possible, to cope with the flow of thousands of refugees towards the European continent.

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Therefore Europe Day - when we remember the great idea of European integration:

- We have to remind ourselves where unlimited self-interest of nation states can lead us.
- We have to remind that whenever we Europeans were divided, consequences have been disastrous; and whenever we stood together, it has brought better times for everybody.
- We have to remind that only a solid community of freedom, security and justice will continue to secure peace in Europe.
- We have to remind that upholding our values is needed - not only when it is easy, but also, when it is hard.

Therefore Europe Day also should remind us to be confident and to be proud:

- To be confident that forces that bind Europe together, are ultimately much stronger than those trying to pull us apart.

- To be proud in all what we achieved. And to add what President *Obama* said recently: ***Perhaps you need an outsider to remind you of the magnitude of what you have achieved ... Your accomplishment ... remains one of the greatest political and economic achievements of modern times.***

Finally, we must realize that the world needs a strong Europe more than ever. We have a responsibility to our own citizens, and also to the rest of the world. It is part of our global responsibility.

We are very pleased that this vision is also shared by Canada, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pointed it out in his speech on 18 February:

***"An effective European voice in the world is vital. The EU is a unique partner for Canada, and Canada has a direct stake in a strong and united European Union ...."***

Allow me to conclude with the words of the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, (once said about Europe in 1954):

***"European unity was a dream of a few. It became a hope for the many. Today it is necessity for all of us."***

This was true then, as it is now.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Il est maintenant un grand honneur et privilège de donner la parole au Ministre des Affaires étrangères du Canada, Stéphane *Dion*.

Minister, you have the floor.