



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

Speech delivered by Ambassador Aurélie Bouchez, Head of the European Union Delegation to Kazakhstan, on the occasion of the Europe Day celebration

Astana, 15 May 2013

Mr Deputy Minister, Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we celebrate the 63rd anniversary of what is considered as the birth of Europe.

We all know I think that only 5 years after the WW II, the Declaration of the 9th of May 1950 proposed joint control of steel and coal, which were the most important materials for the armament industry.

The Declaration was aimed at France and Germany but open to other European countries. Common control was meant to prevent any new attempt to fight a war on the European ground. This triggered the creation of the first European Supranational Community called the European Coal and Steel community, by the Traite de Paris in 1951.

Such an approach was aimed at creating common interests between European countries which would lead to gradual political integration, and ensure a lasting peace between them.

The famous words pronounced at that time still ring very relevant today:

"Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity." These words could be applied to each step of the construction of Europe since then – and particularly in our time.

Indeed Europe, the EU continues to build on this legacy.
Let me single out two key recent achievements.

The first one is peace. In 2012, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the EU and the Nobel Committee said that "the EU had for six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and Human rights in Europe."

The second achievement is, year after year, an ever stronger process of union and integration, with in particular the milestone represented by the Lisbon Treaty. The blows inflicted by the global crisis have not put this seriously into question, but shown the necessity of more solidarity, coordination and integration.

In Brussels last week, the 9th of May was an Open Door Day for the EU institutions. In Astana, more modestly, this Residence is all open for you.

And in Astana there is a particular reason to celebrate this date in a special manner: 2013 marks the 20th year of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and the EU.

If one looks back the last two decades, one can only be struck by the impressive expansion of the mutually beneficial cooperation.

The EU is the main investor and trade partner of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan is the main partner of the EU in Central Asia. This is reflected in the current negotiation of a second and enhanced PCA. At a time when Kazakhstan further expands its regional and international role and influence, at a time, too, when challenges may arise in the broader region, it is important that the two partners join efforts in favour of peace, democracy and prosperity.

To mention only recent events, we have seen concrete and successful examples of this, notably in the hosting in Almaty of the E3/EU3 talks with Iran, led by the HRVP; and the meeting of the Heart of Asia ministerial conference on Afghanistan, with a Ministerial EU presence and EU active support.

These positive developments allow for frequent HL meetings, in particular the visit by FM Idrissov to Brussels this year, the visit by the HRVP last November and the upcoming visit by President Barroso.

Indeed 20 years is a beautiful age!

It is also the best age for beauty: therefore we have decided to celebrate this 20th anniversary and Schuman Declaration through art and artistic performances. We will come back on this a bit later.

For the moment, I would like to give the floor to HE the Deputy Minister of FA, Mr Alexey Volkov, and to thank him for being among us tonight.