

Statement by the High Representative/Vice President on Europe Day

On 9 May 1950 Robert Schuman called on the nations of Europe to unite and make war on our continent impossible. 65 years later, his *message of peace and unity is as relevant as ever*.

Schuman's appeal to overcome age-old divisions just five years after the Second World War laid the foundations of what has become the European Union. Over the years our Union has grown from six to twenty eight to become the world's largest peace project. The dreams of our founding fathers have become a reality.

But peace and prosperity - based on a deep commitment to fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law - *cannot be taken for granted*. It is a constant work in progress, something that must be nurtured and protected.

As the spectre of war has returned to our continent, our unity continues to be our greatest strength. When international law is broken and human dignity is treated with contempt, we have a *responsibility to stand up to protect the fundamental values and interests* that we share with peoples around the world.

This is the first Europe Day we celebrate with a new leadership at the helm of our Union. From our very first day in office we have been *dedicated to working as a team* and to spreading the message of unity in Europe and around the world.

The European Union is an everyday peace project. Every member, big and small, old and new has a *seat at the table and an equal voice*. Building unity from diversity can be cumbersome, but constant cooperation and patient negotiations lead us to a consensus that is rock solid. Today this is what we need to achieve globally. We created the European External Action Service to work with partners around the world - in Africa and the Arab world, in the Americas and in Asia - towards that aim.

Ending war is about overcoming divisions and uniting former enemies. It is also about *giving young generations a stake in their future*. This is why we are United in fighting extremism and organised crime; tackling the negative impact of climate change and securing our energy future.

We work to raise global standards so that everybody can drink clear water and breathe clean air; enjoying the high standard of life and quality products we have in Europe. We also work with partners around the globe to invest in education and innovation to open a world of opportunities even to those who are born into poverty and conflict.

The European Union is *a project for the future*. So today we celebrate Europe day to remember, but also to look ahead. I hope you will join us around the globe to work with us for a world where people, no matter who they are or where they live, are free to shape their existence and strive for their dreams.