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60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome: Foundations and Prospects of the
European Integration Process

Institute of Security Studies Islamabad

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Honorable Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the Institute for Security
Studies Islamabad, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

- Let me, first of all, thank you for the invitation to speak in your premises. It is a real honour for me to be here today.
- As you may know, the 25th of March, just 3 days ago, was a very important date for the European Union. In 1957, sixty years ago, the Heads of State and government of Belgium, Italy, France, Germany Luxemburg and the Netherlands, gathered in Rome to sign a document that laid down the foundations of Europe as we know it today.

- Twelve years before, that same Europe was going out from one of the darkest time of its History. Six years of war had ravaged our continent, destroyed our cities and killed over 60 million people, approximately 2.5% of the world's population.
- In a Europe torn apart by hatred and ready to fall back in a climate of revenge, some voices raised against the absurdity that nationalist rivalry had led to. Personalities such as Jean Monnet, Paul-Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer or Alcide de Gasperi, "the founding fathers" of Europe came with an idea, a project, a dream, that back then sounded like wishful thinking. But actually it marked the beginning of the longest period of peace our continent Europe, has ever known.
- This very idea was embodied in the Treaty of Rome: a process of regional integration by the establishment of a common market in which people, goods, services and capital can move freely, creating conditions conducive to the stability and prosperity of European citizens. Sixty years have passed since that challenging journey began. Since then, the European "Communities" became a "Union" and enlarged from 6 to 28 Member States which have all known wars, adversity, disasters; for which Europe was not only a project but also a dream. Along the way, the European Union has created its governance system and institutions. Since then, it has deepened its competences and widened considerably the spectrum of its policies.

- "Europe will not be made at once", declared Robert Schuman in a famous speech on 09th May 1950. "It will be built through concrete achievements which create a de facto solidarity". Solidarity, a positive spill over which defines the very purpose of the European integration process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- On the occasion of this 60th Anniversary, I want to reaffirm that the European Union remains the dynamic project that our founding fathers had in mind, to reaffirm our commitment to the values and objectives on which it is built but also to take pragmatic and ambitious steps forward.
- The European story is one of peace, democracy, solidarity among European countries, among European peoples. A story of freedom, prosperity, equality and well-being for its citizens. Certainly, there have been setbacks, difficulties. It has not been a smooth ride and it will not be in the future either. Today, future challenges ahead of us can sometimes appear even overwhelming. This is why a period of dialogue and reflection is needed: taking stock of our achievements over time can become a useful start. At this particular juncture in History, it is worthwhile remembering our shared successes and the principles that unite us as Europeans.

- The European Union is and will continue to be a strong, cooperative and reliable power. Our partners - you in this room more than any other - know what we stand for. We stand for multilateralism, for democracy, for human rights, for international and regional cooperation. We stand for sustainable development, inclusive societies, the fight against all inequalities. If solidarity is part of our DNA, it is also a smart investment in our own security and prosperity.

- The European Union is the world's largest financial donor of humanitarian and development aid in spite of economic and budgetary constraints. We have been instrumental in putting together the UN Sustainable Development Goals and are already implementing them. The EU development aid goes to around 150 countries in the world, including Pakistan, and increasingly focuses on the poorest places in the world. In the period 2014-2020, about 70% of EU support will go to countries which are often hit hard by natural disasters or conflict, making their citizens particularly vulnerable.

- The European Union will continue to stand for better global rules, rules that protect people against abuses, rules that expand rights and raise standards. It is thanks to our engagement – the Union together with its member states – that the global community has set up innovative agreements like the SDGs I just mentioned or the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- In a world of re-emerging power politics, the European Union has an even more significant role to play. As a Union of medium-to-small size countries we have a clear shared European interest in facing the world together. We know that our countries will be stronger united to tackle the always more complex challenges of climate change, migrations, unemployment, instability at our borders or terrorism. We believe that it is by sharing parts of our national sovereignties that we can better defend our common interests, favouring cooperation and solidarity instead of dispersing our forces in a highly competitive world.
- We also believe in our strengths as the world's first global economy, the largest global market and the leading foreign investor. On the basis of its own history, the EU continues to play a key role in removing the barriers to trade and share this approach worldwide. The General Scheme of Preference (GSP+) status given to Pakistan in 2014 is the perfect example of this ambition. But the EU economy is not a blind one: we are bound by a development model capable of producing about a quarter of the world's wealth while striving to limit its CO2 emissions. We are also committed to sustain our social market economy which strives to reconcile economic efficiency and social cohesion as no other region of the world so far.

- The world is going through a time of great uncertainty: the global balance of power is shifting and the foundations of a rules-based international order are too often being questioned. I believe that the European Union will be an increasingly vital power to preserve and strengthen the global order. We know that the world is not pacified and how unstable our neighbourhood is in Ukraine and Russia, Syria and Iraq, Libya and the Sahel. Confronted with this challenging situation, it is essential for the European Union to unite and develop its capacity to cooperate in response to external challenges. In the context of the crisis of migrants, the European Union considers asylum-seekers as victims, not as threats, and we welcome the efforts made to ensure that our external borders can be effectively monitored in an orderly manner while enhancing our security.

- We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned. This is not the time for uncertainty. We need a shared vision and common action of European level. A more fragile international environment calls for greater engagement, not less.

- This approach is the one of the Global Strategy for the EU Foreign and Security Policy adopted in June last year: it is by acting together with one voice on the global stage and standing by its principles that the EU sustains its strong position and demonstrates its added value as a global actor. It is the best way to ensure the security of our citizens based on our principles and values. The EU will continue to assume its responsibilities in the area of security and defence. The EU must be ready and able to deter, respond to and protect ourselves against external threats. Our Common Security and Defence Policy, embedded in civilian and military operations in the field, will be strengthened to scale up our ambition and strategic autonomy, fostering on peace and security within and beyond our borders. Our objective remains to continue deepening our partnerships worldwide by strengthening the resilience and capacity of our partners to respond to the challenges they are facing and by creating the conditions for sustained peace and stability. The European Union benefits from a unique range of external action instruments that it will aim at using in a comprehensive way. We will continue to promote and support cooperative regional orders and global governance based on international law, which ensures human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to the global commons. Whatever events may bring in the future, one thing is certain: the EU will continue to promote international peace and security, development cooperation, human rights and responds to humanitarian crises, all elements at the heart of our foreign and security policy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- We are European even when we deplore the fact that our internal difficulties absorb too much of our energy. Of course we deeply regret the decision of the British people to leave us. Nevertheless difficulties we faced for the last years have sparked new positive developments, such as the European Banking Union, the European Border Guard Corps or the European Solidarity Corps to name only a few, confirming our permanent ability to deepen our Union, even in challenging times.
- On 01st March the President of the European Commission presented a "White Paper" on the future of the EU. This White Paper was described by President Junker as a new "birth certificate" of a European Union. The document titled "reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025", identifies 5 scenarios on the future of Europe ranging from the less to the most ambitious. Coming back to the sole single market? Carrying on by maintaining the status quo? Going forward toward a federal Europe? Those are among the possibilities put forward by the Commission and on which the member states and the European Parliament have now to decide, most likely by December this year.

- Some European leaders have underlined one of the options put forward by the White Paper, which is a Europe "at multiple speeds". This principle is simple and already used within the EU when it comes to the Euro Zone (19 member states) or the Schengen Area (22 member states). The idea would therefore be to extend this practice to a series of other policies for which some member state seek greater integration. If the future shape of a multi-speed Europe is still unknown and would need clarification from a political and legal point of view, it could represent a solution by moving forward more quickly without hindering others by creating a more structured framework that remains opened to all.
- Depending of this choice will depend important subjects currently debated by EU citizens: the Euro, taxation at EU level, standardization of social benefits to name only a few. They are key issues for the future shape of our Union.
- Whatever the option chosen, we will remain Europeans because we share the same ambition to promote and sustain democracy, the rule of law, gender equality, freedom of religion and belief, and the protection of minorities or the abolition of death penalty: we must be proud of these principles that have contributed to unite us. Our Union reflects a community of values whose respect is not negotiable.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The desire to support a unity in diversity was once again affirmed by our Heads of State and government, the European Parliament and the European Commission in Roma 3 days ago at the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome during which they agreed to give a new impetus to the European integration process.
- Allow me to conclude by quoting the last paragraphs of their declaration.

"We are firm in the belief that Europe's future lies in our own hands and that the European Union is the best instrument to achieve our objectives. We pledge to listen and respond to the concerns expressed by our citizens and will engage with our national parliaments. We will work together at the level that makes a real difference, be it the European Union, national, regional, or local, and in a spirit of trust and loyal cooperation, both among Members States and between them and the EU institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. We will allow for the necessary room for manoeuvre at the various levels to strengthen Europe's innovation and growth potential. We want the Union to be big on big issues and small on small ones. We will promote a democratic, effective and transparent decision-making process and better delivery.

We as Leaders, working together within the European Council and among our institutions, will ensure that today's agenda is implemented, so as to become tomorrow's reality. We have united for the better. Europe is our common future."

Thank you!