



SPEECH BY DR MICHAEL PULCH
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROME TREATY
RECEPTION ON THE ITALIAN NAVY FRIGATE ‘ITS
CARABINIERE’

Singapore Cruise Centre

March 16, 2017, 6.30-8.30

Senior Minister of State Mrs. Josephine Teo,

Your Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you on board this striking frigate, on this momentous occasion to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. I would like to thank in particular Ambassador Paolo Crudele and Commander Francesco Pagnotta for making this event possible.

In my remarks I would like to touch on where the EU comes from, where it goes to and what that means for this region.

I.

Being here today on-board the ITS "Carabiniere", a European Multi-Mission Frigate, is quite symbolic: The European Union was born to end the cycle of wars that ravaged our continent.

On 25 March 1957, 6 countries decided at a history meeting in Rome to pool their economic resources to safeguard peace, liberty and independence.

Europeans would henceforth settle differences at the table and unite around common values. Removing trade and other barriers paved the way for a democratic, prosperous and united Europe of currently 28 members.

To illustrate the changes:

When we started, only 12 of our present members were democracies. The continent was divided by an iron curtain. Today, we have overcome that division and the EU has become the largest union of democracies in the world.

At the same time we have witnessed the longest period of peace on the continent.

The free movement of goods, services and people has allowed the European economies to blossom. The internal market continues to boost our industries, thereby creating more jobs.

During these 60 years we have reached an unprecedented level of prosperity. This allowed us to support new members after the fall of the Berlin wall. It also made the EU the largest donor of development aid worldwide.

To be sure, Europeans know that they owe these achievements also to the unwavering support from the United States to the European projects throughout these decades.

II.

This 60 years celebration is also the moment for the EU to open a new chapter of its development – this time without the United Kingdom - as a European Union at 27.

The achievements of the past can inspire us – but we need to outline a new vision.

The President of the European Commission Juncker has presented in a *White Paper on the Future of Europe* the challenges ahead for the EU. They will test the collective resilience of Europe and the durability of the European project.

He has set out different scenarios for the next phase of the European journey. We are privileged to hear from French President Hollande later this month his views on the future of Europe, as he will come to Singapore right from the joint celebrations in Rome.

III.

A stronger EU internally is also a stronger EU on the global stage. Last June right after the UK referendum the EU has adopted a "Global Strategy" that defines Europe's objectives in foreign and security policy.

Open trade within the EU has improved the livelihood of European citizens. It has also opened up opportunities to develop a network of bilateral and regional trade agreements, as we do with Singapore and ASEAN at large. The Rome Treaty has made Europe a better and safer

place and created a Union that can advance common goals at a global level.

We stand for a rules-based international order, free and fair trade, open societies that address the many challenges from terrorism to climate change. And in that regard we have in Singapore a like-minded partner.

We are also here to move forward with our friends in Singapore and ASEAN as we mark this year 40 years of EU-ASEAN relationship.

Let me conclude by saying that in these uncertain times, we know one thing: collaboration, multilateralism and unity are more important than ever. As the saying goes “Europe has always been at its best when we are united, bold and confident”.

Thank you.