

Mr. Constantin MITSOTAKIS (Prime Minister, Greece)

(interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, in this splendid hall, a fitting venue for one of the most remarkable meetings of our century, we can feel that as participants we have sat at the same table as history itself.

In this hall, Europe is forging history just as history is forging Europe.

Our Europe, which has known two catastrophes that left its plains and mountains scattered with so many dead young soldiers and dead young hopes, which has known the pain of a confrontation which was cold but not with the cold light of reason, it is this new Europe which today is experiencing the warmth of entente and of a common will.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after the striking intellectual and artistic renaissance which around the sixteenth century gave the world and humanity such a legacy of wonders and marvels, our Europe is now in the throes of making its political renaissance a reality.

In fact, we have all had a hand in creating and participating in a tremendous shift in world political currents.

In the past, of course, there have also been meetings which were thought of as prestigious, yet there is one aspect in which most of them were very different from this Meeting. Most of them were meetings of victors and vanquished, whereas at this Meeting there are only victors.

We now all believe in human ideals.

Empires of States are giving way to the empire of the individual, the individual's rights and the individual's freedoms.

Our actions, our decisions and our expectations are inspired by the great ideals of democracy and freedom.

Mr. Mitsotakis

We condemn brutal invasions, arbitrary action and violations of the rights of nations and all plotting against integrity and independence, wherever these arise or persist.

We respect our neighbour on a mutual basis, while at the same time we will exercise our national rights and pursue our goal which is to guarantee them by demanding that they be respected by all.

We turn our backs on violence but not on honour and not on the right to defend ourselves.

In our political environment, national frontiers are inviolable boundaries and not lines of confrontation.

We are not simply hoping for a new Europe. For the new Europe is here before our eyes.

This new ray of light is shining forth in a city that is justly known as the city of light, in this magnificent French capital which is hosting this Meeting with the impeccable welcome which comes so naturally to our hosts.

Mr. Chairman, 22 of us have signed a text of vital importance and a declaration which is tantamount to shaking hands across frontiers.

Here in Paris we have given birth to the Treaty on the reduction of conventional armed forces.

But this is only the starting point which will be followed by improvements, additions, extensions in scope and in amplitude and finer tuning.

On condition, of course, that the implementation of the Treaty signed on 19 November is carried out consistently, with goodwill and in good faith.

We seek to enhance the awareness of real security for all member States, and not only for member States but also for those who are not yet participating States. A security which will not simply be collective security, but national security as well.

The efforts which have led to the signing of this text will not have been justified unless the Treaty succeeds in achieving this fundamental goal.

This in its turn, of course, depends on those 22 countries which signed the Treaty and, in particular, on the way in which the Treaty is managed and implemented now that we are moving forward to its application.

Greece intends to play its part in all good faith and honesty while remaining insistent that we should have the right to defend our national interest within the framework of the Treaty, just as we intend fully to fulfil the duty of honouring the new set of important CSEMs which today become a part of European reality.

And all this because optimism, good intentions and euphoria in the face of success should not give rise to feelings of complacency or make us want to rest on our laurels. On the contrary, our optimism should lead us to intensify our efforts, especially since we know that these visions could become reality within our own lifetime.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there still exists in our world and in Europe discordant notes which are all the more clear in today's climate. It is the duty of all of us, not only of those who have a stake in this, not only of those who have been victims of violent injustice, it behoves all of us to play our part so that international law and justice, which have made advances since Helsinki, should be applied to the most recent European drama, a drama which has lasted for 16 years now.

Because this is the only way in which we will gain credibility in the eyes of our people and international public opinion, which has every right to judge us.

How long, Ladies and Gentlemen, are we going to close our eyes to the question of Cyprus?

Mr. Mitsotakis

How long are we going to refrain from courageous political action and continue to take the easy way out by placing the problem of Cyprus low in our list of priorities?

If in the twentieth century all things seem possible, why do we not concentrate harder on applying the rule of law and on re-establishing international legitimacy with that sense of purpose that will guarantee success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the completion of our work will be sealed by the signing of a text which both describes and defines a whole world of facts and ideas, the European world. This world is not purely a geographical concept, since it vaults the ocean to embrace the North American continent as well.

Democracy and fundamental principles are our subject here. That democracy and those fundamental principles which, since Helsinki, have been safeguarding freedom of conscience, freedom of expression and of faith, freedom of choice of government and of the way of life of all our peoples.

Our subject here is the rule of law, which is both nurse and child of democracy.

And we are tackling all these issues, not simply "in order to cultivate beauty and the things of the mind", but because of our profound inner convictions.

The only tangible proof of all this will be the full implementation of these texts and of all the words that have been spoken about them.

This is not a Platonic venture. The work that lies before us is the institutionalization of the process giving rise to the noblest of commitments, a commitment that goes far beyond politics: a moral commitment.

Let there be no more needless victims. Let there be no more cries of despair and humiliation caused by injustice. Let there be no more sound of gunfire or whistling of bullets.

May the force of law triumph in the future over the force of violence.

The responsibilities which we have assumed are heavy and future generations will be our judges.

We do not have the right to swim against the current and disappoint these future generations. We do not have the right, if I may put it this way, to betray those future generations.

We have had reason recently to note that however solid the basis on which statues stand, the statues themselves are easy to topple and to break. So let us stay where history has put us.

Greece, as we have already stated, will always do her duty and do it fully.

The land of Greece which established the peaceful institution of the Olympic Games and the Amphictyonic agreement, this country which I have the honour of representing would like to extend the hand of friendship to all.

Greece is leading the way in entente and rapprochement in our own region.

And I would like to turn at this point to Albania, who is here as an observer without participating and express the hope of seeing Albania received into the fold of Europe, but let her not forget that that fold is a democratic one and therefore it is Albania's duty to herself to speed up the process of democratization.

I would also like to turn here to our other neighbours. My request is that they should respond to our goodwill and put themselves in the service of the cause of our common interests.

We are firmly convinced that the principles which we share and which we all proclaim could form the basis for resolving the problems that beset our region.

Mr. Mitsotakis

Ladies and Gentlemen, the historic nature of this moment urges me to stop here. However, before I finish I would like to salute Germany, Germany that now has one heart and one capital, and to salute the fact that the will of the people has prevailed.

I should like to express my thanks to all those who, in whatever way, have made this Meeting here possible.

Above all, I should like to thank the President of the French Republic, his colleagues and, last but not least, the city of Paris for all the support which they have given us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.