

Tokyo, 6 February 2008

Speech of the President of the European Parliament at Keio University: "The Lisbon Treaty and the Future of the EU"

Thank you for this very kind introduction.

It is a great pleasure to speak to you today and an honour to address such a distinguished audience. Although you are still at an early stage of your academic careers, you are all surely destined to play a crucial and valuable role in the future of Japan, and the world.

The University of Keio is one of the most prestigious institutions of this country and it is well known that, since its creation 150 years ago, this University has provided Japan with an important share of its intellectual elite - in all areas, from the political to the business sector all the way to the artistic and creative field.

The founder of this University of Keio, Yukichi Fukuzama, was in many ways a modern visionary and, as a European, I can fully identify with the motto that was given to this institution: "Calamus gladio fortior" ("The pen is mightier than the sword"). It is through peaceful means and by signing treaties - through words and not by war - that we can best live together and prosper to the benefit of all. This is what the European continent has achieved after the devastations of World War II and so also the motto of Keio University reflects perfectly the fundamental idea behind the entire European integration process.

Last year the European Union celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the founding Treaties of the European Union. In gratitude we look back to the achievements of the last fifty years in building a peaceful, prosperous and united Europe. This process has brought freedom, security, prosperity and ever increasing chances for all the citizens on our continent, and especially new opportunities for the younger generation. And we accept our responsibility to continue on this path into the future, further consolidating our achievements and working together for the benefit of all our citizens.

I deliberately chose Japan as my first destination for an official visit to Asia as President of the European Parliament, because your country is a vibrant democracy: We share fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, human-rights and freedom of expression. Moreover, Japan is a powerful and important partner in the region.

Japan and the European Union have developed long-standing and warm relations. The political dialogue in which Japan and the European Union are engaged since 1991 reflects the partners' mutual desire for international stability, as well as for the promotion of negotiated and common solutions to global challenges. Both Japan and the European Union are putting into practice the motto of your University, the pen is mightier than the sword!

We have learned so much from one another over the years – the first interparliamentary meeting between the Japanese Diet and the European Parliament took place nearly 30 years ago in 1979. Since then, Europe has changed: the European Union has become a global actor on world scene, and the European Parliament developed since its first direct election from a largely advisory forum into a fully-fledged branch of Europe's legislature.

Japan also has changed: once mainly an economic force, Japan is now an international player in every field, a major contributor of development aid, an important partner in ensuring peace and stability not only in Asia, but also elsewhere in the world –for instance on our continent in Kosovo.

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### xxx The EU, the Treaty of Lisbon and the European Parliament

The European Parliament is directly elected since 1979. I am one of six members of the European Parliament who have been there from the very beginning. I started then as a young back-bencher, and in that time I have witnessed spectacular changes in European politics and economics of a kind which would have deeply impressed the Founding Fathers of the European Community.

If somebody had told me back in 1979 that today we would be part of a political community and decision-making process that would include three nations that were occupied by the Soviet Union - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - as well as Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia) and the Warsaw Pact countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and Hungary, as part of the European community of values and members of the European Union, and indeed that Germany would be united - if somebody had told me in 1979 that it would come in our lifetime - my answer would have been "this is a hope, this is a vision, but this is unfortunately not something that is likely to happen in our lifetime". Today we are in a situation where Slovenia, a former communist country, less than 20 years after the fall of communism, holds the six-month Presidency of a European Union of 27 Member States.

Today our European continent is reunited and shares common values of peace, freedom and democracy - and totalitarian systems have failed. This was a great victory for our community of values. This is something which is terribly important to understand about our recent past. I believe that what did happen has something to do with the concept of European integration.

Today we have a politically integrated European Union which has made war inconceivable among its participants, which has the largest single market in the world, and which engages in common policies across a huge range of areas of government. Many European Union member states have already adopted a single monetary policy and a common currency, which has rapidly become one of the strongest in the world – 15 Member States now share the common currency following the adoption of the Euro by Cyprus and Malta at the beginning of 2008 .

The European Union has not only grown in number from originally six Members to now 27 Member States, representing nearly 500 million people, but also in its ambitions and responsibilities, notably by responding to the wishes of citizens, who called for the European Union to be active in areas such as security, foreign policy or climate change.

Concerns spurred by the challenges of globalisation have encouraged the European Union to continue to move forward. The existing rules and instruments were not adequate any more to enable the enlarged Union to act efficiently and to react swiftly to the needs of European citizens and the requirements of the international environment.

Reforming the European Union to make it more efficient and democratic was the main aim of the draft European Constitution adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2004. Unfortunately citizens in two Member States, namely France and the Netherlands, rejected this Constitution in a referendum, thus bringing about a considerable setback. This in itself was nothing new for the European Union to experience, as the process of European integration has gone through several cycles of crisis and self-doubt during its last fifty years, but has always emerged strengthened as a result. For example, when the European Defence Community failed in 1954, it subsequently took less than three years to reach agreement on the Rome Treaties.

So whilst the difficulties encountered in securing ratification of the draft European constitutional treaty in all member states were certainly a setback for the European Union, the recent German and Portuguese EU presidencies managed to broker an agreement among all Member States on a new reform treaty, which preserves the substance of the constitutional treaty and includes the essential principals that the European Parliament has constantly stood for. This marks an important success in securing our common European future. With the new treaty, named the Treaty of Lisbon after the capital of Portugal, where it was signed on 13 December 2007, a line has been drawn under two years of crisis and doubt.

The Treaty of Lisbon opens new perspectives: It provides us with the new basis we need for our work by giving the European Union the means to act and add value to the actions of individual Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon will enable the European Union to live up to its potential, to rise to the big challenges of tomorrow and to assert its position in global affairs.

The Lisbon Treaty enhances democracy, legitimacy and the protection of citizens' rights in the European Union. Firstly, it recognises more rights and freedoms for European citizens by giving binding legal force to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which sets out a catalogue of rights that all citizens of the Union shall enjoy. The Charter was solemnly proclaimed in the European Parliament on 12 December 2007, one day before the signature of the Treaty.

Secondly, the Lisbon Treaty makes the 'co-decision' procedure, which gives the European Parliament power as co-legislator on an equal footing with the Member States, the general format of legislation in the European Union. This further reinforces the dual legitimacy of the States and peoples, which is the hallmark of the European Union.

The advent of 'co-decision' between the Parliament and the Council with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 has changed in many ways the decision-making processes in the European Union and given the European Parliament a more pivotal role, with a considerable extension of its functions.

What we have been witnessing with this development is a shift in the balance of power in the European Union towards the European Parliament and thus towards a democratisation of law-making procedures.

Today the Members of the European Parliament share law-making powers with the Council of Ministers, which brings together the representatives of the Member States, in more than two-thirds of European policy areas.

Whether it be in shaping European environment policy and limiting carbon emissions, in liberalizing transport or financial markets, defining corporate law, setting product standards or protecting consumers, establishing common visa and immigration provisions, the decisions of the European Parliament are now as important as those of the Member States in shaping and developing the European Union of tomorrow.

Increasingly, the European Parliament is becoming the place in which the decisive political compromise in Europe is struck on any matter subject to co-decision. We saw that phenomenon clearly on two very major pieces of legislation – the Services directive and Chemicals directive (or 'REACH'). On both proposals the key deal was agreed not in the Council of Ministers, or between the European Commission and the Council - as it would have been in the past - but within the European Parliament itself. It was in effect the major political groups in the Parliament which decided what would happen. The Parliament has truly come of age.

In recent years, the Members of the European Parliament have shaped and advanced European integration in many fields. This tendency has, as I said, now been strengthened with the new Treaty, which transfers the lion's share of the European Union's legislative competences to the co-decision

procedure. This includes, not least, areas such as the European Common Agricultural Policy or the protection of intellectual property, two topics that will have a crucial impact in the World Trade Organization negotiations.

Some have said in the past that the European Parliament was a mere talking shop, a democratic fig-leaf. In my opinion this never has been true - and has lost the last shred of any meaning today, as today the European Parliament has become a legislative powerhouse. The European Parliament has a crucial role for democracy in the European Union and a strong practical impact, through legislation, on the everyday life of European citizens.

Thirdly, the Treaty of Lisbon entrusts the European Union with a clear responsibility and legitimacy to meet key challenges. People want to live in a safer European union, a Union which is able to take decisions more easily and more quickly in areas that matter, that affect their every day life: jobs and growth, cleaner air and a better environment, human trafficking and illegal immigration. A key objective of the reform was indeed to enhance the EU's capacity to act and to be a "Europe of results".

This is also why it is essential that the reforms enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon enter into force as timely as possible, this is on 1 January 2009, and at the latest before the next elections to the European Parliament, which will take place in June 2009!

Three countries have already ratified the Treaty: Hungary at the end of last year, Slovenia and Malta last month and two days ago (4 February), the French Congress voted on the constitutional reform that is required for the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

Once ratified, new possibilities will be opened for combating crime, guaranteeing freedom and security in Europe and world wide, fighting against climate change, and ensuring energy security are identified as specific objectives of the European Union.

Responding to the challenges of globalisation is both a main reason for reform and a core element of the Union's political agenda. That is what I would like to talk to you about now. As young people, these challenges will mainly impact on your lives and you will need to address them in the decades ahead.

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xxx Facing the challenges ahead of us: Climate change

Among the manifold challenges facing our societies, fighting climate change is perhaps the most pressing of all. On the European continent, we have managed to create lasting peace between our countries, now we have to tackle the huge task of creating peace with the planet we live on.

I have chosen to deal with the particular topic of climate change, because it is going to affect your generation even more than it is already affecting mine. It is surely the biggest long-term environmental, social, health, economic and even security challenge facing mankind.

Global warming is taking on alarming dimensions, it is man-made and accelerating - a fact which has been confirmed by the fourth report issued by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published last November.

His Excellency, Prime Minister Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, whom I had the privilege to meet yesterday, made a key speech on that matter at the World Economic Forum in Davos, in which he insisted on the gravity of the matter and the urgent need to take action to prevent serious physical and economic damage.

If we do not manage to put a brake on the current trend of global warming, our prosperity could be reduced by up to 20 percent. A consistent and comprehensive strategy against climate change could be achieved with a considerably lower input of around one percentage point of our wealth. The cost of failing to act would by far outweigh that of the measures now required. Hence, fighting global warming is also an imperative of economic rationality.

There is a general consensus on what our common goal should be: if we want to have a realistic chance of averting the most dramatic impact of global warming, we must limit the temperature rise to not more than two degrees above the temperatures prevailing in the pre-industrial period. Concretely, this two-degree goal implies that we have to cut by half the global emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases.

The European Union has demonstrated its willingness to tackle climate change. At the European Council in March last year we achieved a first, significant breakthrough by agreeing on ambitious unilateral targets for fighting climate change and for promoting a common sustainable energy policy. The agreed Action plan aims at cutting 20 % of our greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 - even 30% if an international agreement can be achieved - and increasing to 20% the share of renewable energy.

The European Parliament has played an active role in the process and demonstrated its commitment to dealing with this matter. When addressing the Spring European Council as President of the European Parliament last March, I called for a 30% cut in emissions - without any conditions attached. Moreover, the European Parliament has established a special Committee on climate change, which with the exception of the British "Joint Committee on the draft climate change bill", is the only parliamentary body worldwide exclusively dealing with climate change and is entrusted with the development of our position with a view to a future Post-Kyoto climate regime.

On 23 January 2008, the European Commission presented its proposals for European legislation to meet these targets. The proposals cover a range of measures on emission cuts, renewable energy sources, carbon capture and a revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). An expansion of the ETS is essential to meet our goals. These ambitious proposals aimed at driving low-carbon energy are based on the conviction that, with market-based mechanisms like emissions trading, fundamental change is within our economic reach.

In essence, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, in his speech in Davos, insisted on the need for international cooperation to combat climate change, and in particular, on the importance of reaching a fair and effective post-Kyoto agreement. I very much share his view on this point and fundamentally believe that the European Union and Japan have common aims in this matter.

The first important step in combating climate change at a global level started in Japan with the signature of the Kyoto agreement. Japan has therefore a major responsibility in ensuring the future of the successful pursuit of this legacy.

Japan has played a constructive role in the emergence of a deal at the Climate Change Conference in Bali last December - to which a number of strong emitters signed up - and had a crucial part in getting also the United States of America on board. We can and must be partners on climate change. I believe that we should have a co-leadership on global action in this field. Japan and the European

Union should work together and seek to take the others – China, India, the United States – with us in building an international consensus within the framework of the United Nations.

A clear timetable has been set in Bali. Yet, the magnitude of the challenge for the upcoming negotiations is substantial. We therefore have no time to lose. The forthcoming meeting of the G8 in Hokkaido Tokayō will be a crucial follow up meeting after the Conference in Bali.

Like Japan, the European Union believes that the post-Kyoto agreement must be fair and comprehensive. A new global climate regime must be based on the principle of shared responsibilities, whilst reflecting differing circumstances and degrees of development. Industrialised countries, including those that have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol, will need to shoulder most of the global burden of reducing pollutant emission over the next 10 years and commit themselves to reducing their emissions by 30 percent by 2020.

But fair contributions by other countries are needed. The early involvement of industrialising and developing countries - backed by technology transfers - is essential, since even before 2020 the emissions of these states will outstrip those of industrialised countries.

In this context I wish to welcome the efforts made by Japan, not least with the creation of a global fund for new technologies, to help developing countries in getting environmentally-friendly technologies.

This is where Japan has a crucial role to play: You hold the key to ensuring that any post-Kyoto agreement will be both mandatory and comprehensive. You are the bridge between the main emitters among industrial countries, namely the United States and the European Union.

Together, we need to push for effective commitments. We must also do everything possible to ensure that we meet the deadline of December 2009 in Copenhagen for the conclusion of an international agreement under the auspices of the United Nations.

The fight against global warming is vital for the safeguard of our planet. But time is not on our side. Therefore, we need to make the necessary choices soon and especially to combine all possible means and instruments to ensure tangible results. This is in our common interest.

A new industrial revolution is in the making and it is vital that Japan and the European Union build a strong partnership in fighting this risk to mankind and to our planet. This is an economic imperative for both regions, but first and foremost a moral responsibility towards future generations.

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xxx The role of the European Union in the world

Before concluding I want to shortly touch upon the increasing role of the European Union in the world. The European Union has long been an economic giant and a political dwarf. But the EU's foreign policy has evolved, and the Union is increasingly taking on global responsibilities.

In its half century of existence, the European Union has managed, next to being an economic powerhouse, to establish a stronghold for fundamental values and is now in the process of becoming a foreign policy actor.

It is important to remember that the European Union was instrumental in ensuring peace and reconciliation between the countries of the European continent, which had been at war over and over again for centuries.

The achievement of our generation in Europe was to enable a life in peace and democracy on our continent, and to work together at the European level in friendship and solidarity. It is our duty to project our values and to enable reconciliation experiences in EU-neighbouring states and elsewhere, by fostering peaceful coexistence in tolerance and cooperation.

### xxx Defending human rights

The European Union and Japan share fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights. The belief in these values, and the strong conviction that every human being has an inviolable dignity, has significant consequences on the external action of the European Union. Promoting our values, human rights and democracy, and above all the respect for human dignity, is the hallmark of the European Union's external relations.

To underline the priority given to the defence of human rights, the European Parliament every year since 1988 has awarded the Sakharov Prize to personalities or organisations that have shown particular courage and commitment in defending our common values of freedom of thought and human rights

As a consequence of its strong commitment to the defence of human rights and human dignity worldwide, the European Union stands up for the abolition of the death penalty in the forum of the United Nations. We, in the European Parliament, are utterly convinced that the death penalty is irreconcilable with our common values and principles.

Twenty five countries worldwide still effectively maintain the death penalty, four of which are democratic countries. This continued practice of the death penalty contravenes the United Nation's call for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

### xxx Promoting and building peace

In our future Summits, peace-building will continue to be a central point of our political dialogue. In this respect, both the European Union and Japan have fundamentally increased their contribution to building peace worldwide. In the past decade, the European Union has been able to consolidate its Common Foreign and Security Policy and to emerge as a crucial actor in peace building and crisis management.

The European Union currently has 70, 000 troops deployed in various peace missions across the globe. It provides the backbone of the international community's presence in trouble spots, such as Lebanon or Kosovo, and is actively engaged in crisis management operations in Africa and in the Middle East. Both Japan and the European Union are deeply involved in Afghanistan.

Some of the innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty will help respond to the ambition of the European Union to promote its values and interests around the world. The Reform Treaty will introduce institutional changes which will allow the EU to speak as a single voice in the world.

Firstly, there will be a new role and status for the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The High Representative will be responsible for conducting the Union's common foreign and security policy. He or she will, at the same time, be a Vice-President of the European Commission with responsibility for external relations, and the chairperson of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This will put an end to the current overlapping roles of the current function of the High Representative and the Commissioner responsible for external relations and will 'put a face' on the Union: it will be much easier in future for the Japanese Foreign Minister to decide whom to call in the EU. Moreover, the European Union will establish a European foreign service and develop a structured cooperation in the area of defence.

Finally, the European Council will have a President elected for 2 ½ years, bringing more coherence to the Union's actions and increasing its visibility.

### xxx Intercultural dialogue

Let me turn to another very topical issue which profoundly affects your future and in which I also believe passionately. This year, 2008, has been designated European Year of Inter-Cultural Dialogue. This European Year is the visible expression of our ever stronger political commitment to incorporating intercultural issues into European Union policies.

The European Parliament attaches great significance to this initiative. Peaceful coexistence between cultures and religions, both in the European Union and on the other side of the Mediterranean, in the Middle East, is possible and of the utmost importance for the future, not solely of the European continent.

Although inter-cultural dialogue embraces all cultures, it is Western-Islamic relations which are perhaps the most pressing and concerning. The implications of mutual misunderstanding are both domestic and international. If we can find a way to appreciate and respect each other better, and live and work together, this can contribute gradually to helping resolve some of our most difficult international political problems - whether Israel-Palestine, Iraq, Iran or the threat of terrorism at home and abroad.

At the same time, there is a lively and growing debate in our own continent about European values - and how we ensure that our values and those of other cultures can interact as constructively and positively as possible. The issue is how we engage in an active dialogue of cultures. We have to face the fact that the relationship between Islamic and Western societies is going to be increasingly central to life in Europe, and to politics in the wider world, in years to come.

I believe that peaceful co-existence between cultures and religions both around - and within - the European Union is of absolutely central importance to our future. Our long-term aim should be to build an intellectual and cultural bridge across the Mediterranean to the Middle East and beyond - a bridge whose foundations would consist of mutual understanding and shared values. As young people, looking forward to a lifetime of civic engagement, I ask you to commit to that process too.

The idea of a confrontation between Islam and Christianity is simplistic and misleading. There need be no 'clash of civilisations'. Certainly we often witness a clash of understandings, but dialogue and discussion can do a great deal to overcome these misunderstandings. By holding a constant and regular dialogue of this kind, we can and we will get to know each other better, improve our mutual understanding, respect each other's diversity, and hopefully work together as strong and trustworthy partners.



## xxx Conclusion

In the age of global challenges, the value added effect of united action at the European level is more apparent than ever. In the European Union, we are working together and responding to the concerns of citizens with policies and a global strategy that will meet these challenges head on. The new Lisbon Treaty is a vital part of this agenda. Modern, streamlined institutions will support a more effective policy-making process. But institutions without policies will not solve our problems.

Fifty years after the Treaty of Rome, the European Union is counting on this new Treaty to continue in the 21st century the work accomplished during the 20th. It is time that we recognise further that as Europeans, we have a shared interest in taking joint action and a common desire to shape the process of globalisation according to our European values.

It is great to see so many young Japanese people with such interest in the affairs of the European Union. I can only encourage you to follow the example of the founder of the University of Keio, Yukichi Fukuzama, and come over to Europe and experience first hand the complexity and diversity of the European continent. Yukichi Fukuzama, was a pioneer and came to Europe on three occasions - at a time when overseas travel was an enormous hardship. You are our future, and the future of this country. We want to develop ever closer relations with Japan.

I really hope to have the pleasure of welcoming you in the European Parliament in the near future!

Thank you for your attention!