Transcripts

J.E. Ramiro Cibrian
Dear Mr. President, Ladies, Gentlemen, Dear Guests,
It is a great honor for me to represent the European Commission at such a gathering of distinguished guests. As you know, we have reached a key period in the process of enlargement. Following the completion of accession talks and the signing of the accession treaty, this process will be put through a crucial test of public opinion in the June referendum. In Malta, Slovenia, Hungary and Lithuania, the vast majority of people embraced further European integration. All indicators suggest that the response will be similar in the Czech Republic. I would argue that Czechs have already grabbed onto the greater opportunities that the process of enlargement has brought to them.

I think we will all agree that the creation of a pluralist and lively civil society in the Czech Republic was an integral part of this process. A society can only be rebuilt and reformed from below. The best foundation for democracy and the rule of law that a state can have is an open civil society.

In this respect, I would specifically like to praise President Václav Havel and the work of the Forum 2000. By giving the country a clear leadership and direction after 1989, you have provided a model for attaining open democratic society that so many of your fellow countrymen strived for. By setting an example as a playwright and president, together with your work for Forum 2000, you have shown the necessity for the moral rebirth of the individual as well as of the whole society. With your work and public speeches you have also demonstrated the power of clear language as an instrument of clear thinking.

Let me quote a few words of yours from 1999, because I believe that they contain an important truth. You said, I quote: “It is a very important realization that the only politics really worth doing is politics preceded by conscience.” I think that these words can serve as a motto for the Europe we are trying to build.

Dear friends, this is of course a highly serious gathering, but please allow me to tell you a couple of not-so-serious remarks. Of course, Europe, and the European Union, is very important but I think we should never loose sense of humor. This will be my only contribution to today’s debate. They are two anecdotes and I promise I will not take the floor any more during the whole debate. The first of these not so serious things is real. It really happened. When some years ago a new member state arrived to the European Union, then there was an Ambassador and then his assistant – by the way, his assistant today is the member of the Commission – so much I can tell you without giving the names.

So, the assistant asked the Ambassador: „Ambassador, of course, we receive instructions from the capital on how to vote and different issues but what happens when we have to vote about a particular subject and we don’t have instructions from the capital?“ And then the Ambassador gave a very interesting advice: „Look, there is absolutely no problem. Look at how a member country X, any country, is going to vote and just vote the opposite. And you should be sure of one thing: if you and a country X vote in the same way, one thing is absolutely certain – one of the two has made a mistake.“

So, I mention this because this puts a certain barrier on our debate today. Because sometimes I see views against the European Union coming from very radical extremes of the political spectrum, both opposing the European Union. So opposed, so antagonistic world views, etc. I also keep saying to myself, one of the two is probably making a mistake, maybe both.

The second anecdote is not historic. It’s not actual. But it’s also very interesting because it is also relevant to the European Union membership.

A couple of British ladies are invited to – sorry, I have to be more concrete here because this only happens in United Kingdom – an aristocratic party. One of the two is criticizing absolutely everything – she says: “You know, this castle is really of bad taste – the decorations, the cutlery…” And after a while the other lady, who probably has a little bit more of common sense, tells her: “Yes, my dear, and on top of that, the size of the cake is also very small…”

Anyway, I think this also applies to the membership in the European Union. When I hear such a number of critics saying: “This is wrong and this is wrong…”, I also think that on top of that the size of the cake in the European Union is also small… In any case, this is all from my contribution. I don’t have anything more to add and now I give the floor to more serious and important contributions…

Jan Urban

In the name of us all I thank His Excellency Ramiro Cibrian for a very pleasant and light introduction to our panel discussion. Before introducing the next speaker, let me recall yesterday's issue of an unnamed newspaper, in Cyrillic, which published a lengthy debate about the fact that a majority of the population of a certain European city refused to celebrate the 750th anniversary of the city's founding, because at the time the city was German, and now it is different. Here, too, some dead people count more than others, despite the fact that all the dead are dead…dead Europeans. Quo vadis, Europe? How will Europe be as a home? How will Europe be from the outside, and where is it going?

The next speaker is Václav Havel, whom I do not need to, and do not want to, introduce. Mr. President, your ten minutes…

Václav Havel
Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests,
As someone who has overseen the inception of Forum 2000 many years ago, and who is most sincerely moved by the fact that it has existed for so long, let me welcome you here at this debate.

Thank you, Mr. Cibrian, for your kind words toward me. I have not prepared any speeches. I will try to recapitulate several thoughts that I have expressed many times before on various other occasions. It will be four to five thoughts. Should I happen to talk for too long, Mr. Urban has promised to jog me.

First thing: Is Europe one political body, one political entity? Or is it not? I have the impression that thanks to thousands of historical occurrences, events and circumstances, Europe is, in fact, a single political body. Maybe this is related to the fact that it is comparatively small in size, but is at the same time connected with the enormous Asian and African continents, and with the ocean on the opposite side. And when one group of people fled from another, or searched for a new location, they ended up in Europe and could not proceed any farther. This might be why Europe has such a rich history, such a complicated structure of various spiritual traditions, a complicated structure of various nations and cultures and customs, and so on. It is an exceptionally heterogeneous space, while at the same time being densely populated with people and, lets admit it, it is essentially too small a space.

Inevitably, then, it always had to have been one political body, even if it was a richly structured one. If we look at European history, it's a history of attempts to build smaller or larger empires, which took over a part of the continent, or which may have even tried to take over the continent as a whole. It's a history of struggles between these empires. And there have been many respectable attempts to transform this one political body into a single state, or into some type of entity. But all of these attempts had one thing in common—they were more or less based on violence and domination. The stronger ones have effectively organized Europe for the weaker ones—to a degree, they governed them and, to a degree, they imposed their ideas on them.

Considering this historical background, I view the European Union as the first attempt, and it really is a gigantic attempt, respectable and full of risks, the development and outcome of which we cannot exactly foresee. It is, in my view, the first attempt to organize this political body through negotiations, in a peaceful and democratic way, and to base it on the principle of mutual respect, on democratic mechanisms. Since the emergence of European integration after the Second World War, despite all the dramatic developments, the division of Europe and the bipolar division of the world, we have witnessed a relative peace in Europe. Integration has probably had a large share in this.

It is, thus, a great and important attempt, and it seems to me shortsighted and insolent to even contemplate not becoming a part of it. I simply cannot understand that. It can always, from a thousand different angles, only turn against us. That is the first thought.

The second, and hopefully related point: Of course that this strange entity—which I personally am wary of calling a federation, a confederation, union, or by using any other traditional term, because it really is something new—no matter how it will develop, it should always take extra special care to respect the identity of its individual constituents. Because that is precisely the trick of the entire process, that only one body is forming, but one that is richly structured and based on mutual respect. This means that decision-making and the structure of the individual organs must take into account not only how large and how economically and politically strong individual countries are, but also their identity, even if it is an identity of a small and an economically undeveloped state. I have already elaborated this thought into various specific ideas about the structure of European institutions.

A second comment: One often hears about the so-called loss of national sovereignty. This matter always gives me a slight smile. In deed, we basically do not have any sovereignty. In this globalized world—and

here I do not at all intend to analyze or evaluate the equivocality of this civilizational movement we are witnessing—I am simply stating that in this globalized world, a state that lies in the center of a developed environment such as Europe cannot have a total sovereignty.

Consider, for example: A politician who wants to demonstrate his patriotism will say that he is driving a Škoda, but he will not add that it is actually a Volkswagen. We do not know whether the pipes that bring water into our bathrooms do not belong to some Arab sheiks—which does not matter to me at all as long as the water that comes out is clean. We're building industrial zones, where, like a whore, we are offering a piece of our homeland, our land, our country, to some interested strangers. Instead of improving the existing industrial areas, we infringe further and further upon nice land, we build water pipelines for whomever who will then operate here. Or the ice-hockey players, for example: One no longer knows whether they are playing for Gambrinus, Škoda or Coca-Cola, against whom they are playing, and even to whom they belong. To speak in such a world about a proud state sovereignty and about not delegating certain competencies elsewhere seems to me slightly absurd. We must take the world into account, reflect upon it and find in it a dignified place for ourselves. To pretend that the world does not exist is absurd. Even the most isolated dictatorship we can imagine is a part of this world, and even there someone else owns the most important businesses.

I believe that everything that can be solved in a setting larger than the state should be solved there. We should not be worried about the question of sovereignty. We should rather be worried about the dignity of our own behavior, about our own confidence. And I see pitifully little of it—and the lack of it won't be compensated by a macho talk about national sovereignty that evil Brussels wants to take away from us.

For several centuries already, there has existed quite a strong attachment to the idea of the nation state. To a certain extent, however, this idea is becoming something of a cult on the one hand, and an antique on the other. I have the impression that the era when the greatest value of all was the state is slowly coming to an end. Of course, democratic states exist and will continue to exist—let's hope that they will flourish and that they will be democratic. But in the multi-level human society that exists on this planet, they form only one level. There is the level of the community, the level of occupation, region, as well as many other levels, including some supra-state regions. We can observe how, in response to the process of globalization, larger regional units are being created and are increasing in importance, and some of the decision-making competencies of the nation states are being delegated to them.

There are, however, other consequences as well. I remember how I have used an expression in the Canadian Parliament that was quite successful. I said that the state is the work of humans and that humans are the work of God. I wanted to emphasize that there may be certain extreme situations, in which the respect for human rights and freedoms will override the respect for states. That was another point.

I do not like it when problems that are convoluted and complicated are being simplified through 'ethnification'. The whole of Americanism is, in essence, a shorthand type of thinking. It is a simplification, because it is easier to understand that way. The ethnification of all supra-national problems—the word "supra-national" itself suggests that it does not only concern the American society—global problems, the enormous dangers, the conflicts that exist, to blame America for everything seems to me very dangerous. What we criticize as Americanism, in fact, exists across the whole world. The very beginnings of the modern technical and scientific boom do not even come from America, they come from Europe. It is just a developed part of our Europeanism, and all of it spans the Earth. We can see people wearing identical jeans and listening to identical music sitting on the ground floor of identical skyscrapers in Singapore, Hong Kong, or Los Angeles.

Similarly, I think it is the same simplification to say that the European Union is the source of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy annoys me and bothers me, whether it is Czech bureaucracy, or European, or American or whichever. Again, it is a part of the overall development of our civilization, and it is its very dangerous part. Notice, for example, the increasing numbers of those who create nothing, but instead constantly mediate something. Bureaucracy and institutions connected to bureaucracy are among those. Again, it is a more general problem. For example, to orient oneself in the web of Czech laws may possibly be more difficult than to orient oneself in European law. Again, this is a simplification similar to blaming everything on America.

Now my last thought—it concerns global development: If its very origins indeed come from this part of the world, Europe—and have gradually grown into a Euro-American civilization, the so-called West, and then shaped the rest of the world, and if it has dangerous elements, its equivocality—should not the upcoming task for Europe be to be the first one to reflect, rather than export to the rest of the world using violence, as Europe has done during the colonial era, when it violently exported its culture and its religion to other

continents? To set an example? To be an inspiration by showing that one can respect nature, that one can respect the environment, that one can prioritize the quality of life over quantity, that constant growth of gross national product is not as important as people living comfortably in comfortable cities. There are a thousand and one things that can be done better—and not succumb to the horrible dictatorship of consumerism and advertisement—learn how to save energy, etc. This is all possible. And who else should start if not the one who stood behind the origins of these equivocal historical developments. Is this not—I'm posing the question—Europe's big task for the next millennium?

Thank you for your attention.

Jan Urban
Thank you, President Havel, for more than the four thoughts that you have promised. There can be no better speaker to follow Václav Havel than Professor Graham Avery, who—I hope he forgives me—is himself a sort of an antique. There are only a few people in Europe who have worked with the European Commission since 1973. But this is, naturally, not his only quality. As you can read in your programs, he now works in the Robert Schumann Center at the European University Institute in Florence, and is one of the longest serving advisors to the European Commission on anything pertaining to the complex process of European Union enlargement. If the state is the work of humans, and humans are the work of God, as Václav Havel has said, then Graham Avery is the best author to say whose work is the European Union. But please take this as a joke. Let me invite Professor Graham Avery to begin his ten minutes.

Graham Avery
Thank you for inviting me to speak here at the Forum 2000. Yes, I have worked in Brussels since 1973 and in fact I first went there before then as a very junior member of the British negotiating team to join the European Community. So, I have been on the outside front of gate just like you. I've had the privilege to be involved in the successive stages of the enlargement of the European Union. And the last year I escaped form Brussels to Florence to the European University Institute where I helped Wim Kok, the ex-Prime Minister of Netherlands, to make a report on enlargement. This report which is available to all of you at the back of the conference room. In fact, Wim Kok was here during the process of making this report and he had some very interesting discussions, here in the Czech Republic.

Let me say one or two things about my identity. I want to say that my nationality is not English but Welch. My passport is British and my citizenship is European. And these three identities are not conflictual, they are complementary. I don't represent Great Britain in the European Union, in the institution. But what I bring to Brussels is my experience and my knowledge of the country where I was brought up. I don't work in Europe against Britain because I believe very strongly the good European policies are in interest of my country. So, that's about my identity. And if you want I can say a few words in Welch which might cause problems with interpreters.

What I want to say is that each enlargement, each and every enlargement of the European Union has been accompanied by a profound debate about the big questions about Europe, the existential questions of European integration. Those questions which, in the normal life of the European Union, we sometimes want to put on one side or even forget. And the big questions are these: What do we, the Europeans, what to do together? That's the question about the policies we want Europe to conduct. How do we want to do it together, with what institutions, by what constitution? And there is the third question, which is normally posed on the occasions of enlargement – with whom do we what to do it? How far can this never-ending expansion of the European Union continue? And I can assure you that this lively debate is taking place now in all the institutions of the Union.

Let me touch briefly on these three points and let me say some words about the „how" of the enlargement of the European Union, the institutions and the constitution. Of course, we have the Convention on the future of Europe which is discussing these things, a fascinating experiment the first time we've tried to modify our constitution. The previous efforts to inter-governmental conferences produced results of diminishing importance and we have high hopes of this convention – it remains to be seen what will come out in a couple of months. I want to focus in my remarks briefly on two things: first, the role of the Commission and secondly, what I call the non-hegemonic nature of the European Union.

Let me begin with Commission. It is a wonderful organization. It has an almost mythical status. The power-hungry face-less bureaucrats. It's such a good myth – I sometimes think the Commission is like the Devil or God. If it didn't exist, it would have to be invented. Well, here I am. I am not face-less. I am, like other senior employees of the European Commission, more open to the public debate than many senior administrators in the national administrations. Look at my friend Ramiro Cibrian, he is a household name here in the Czech Republic, you can hardly escape him in the press and on the television. And I'm not

power-hungry. I don't want more power for the European Commission. It has practically no power anyway but its role is not, in my analysis, to have power.

We have three important institutions in Brussels: the Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the Commission. Parliament represents the people, the Council of Ministers represents the states and the European Commission is supposed to represent the European interest. The Commission's role is not to take decisions but to be the motor of the European policy, to make proposals and not to decide. Someone's remarked that if God was president of the European Commission, we wouldn't have ten commandments, we would have a draft regulation with ten articles to be discussed for two years in the Parliament and in the Council. And this is the precious role of the European Commission to identify the European interest which is not the same thing as the sum of the national interests and to make the good proposals at the good moment. We have no army, we have no police force in Brussels. The only force we have is the power of ideas. But as you know, in politics and public affairs, nothing is more powerful than a good idea, which is launched at the right time. Now I accept that for you who are still outside the European Union, the face of the European Commissions has sometimes been a little been different. The Commission necessarily has to defend the position of the European Union, to defend that great thing we call the Acquis Communautaire. And it's been your privilege interlocutor during the accession negotiations. From time to time, the Commission has been a friend. Of course, to tell you, the truth is sometimes not pleasant to hear. But I want to reassure you that when you join the European Union, the Commission will become to you, as it is for the other member states, not the master of Europe but the servant of the Europe's citizens.

Let me turn to my second theme, which is what I call the non-hegemonic nature of the European Union. Since the beginning, since the original six members, the Community interest is to balance interests of small and big states. This is the magic, sometimes the incomprehensible magic of the European Union's institutional structure. But there's always been a certain tension between the big and the small states and naturally this has come more into the open at the time of the present enlargement for the simple reason that it brings into the European Union many smaller countries and some very small countries.

In my view it is profoundly important that in the future of the European construction, we keep the balance between the bigger and the smaller states. The two World Wars or as we can call them the two European civil wars in the last century were both detonated by events in small states related to the wish of the bigger states to be boss, to be hegemonic. And there's one interesting question you can ask about the European Union „Who is in charge?" – well whatever answer you give to that question, it's not a state. It's a system of balance between the states. And I want to say that this balance requires an effort of mutual comprehension between both, the smaller and bigger countries.

Let me begin with smaller countries. I think that the smaller countries, such as the Czech Republic, accept that even in the enlarged Union, the majority of the population lives in the bigger states. Nevertheless, the system of the European community, called the Regressive Proportionality – which means that you have a bigger vote in the Council and more representatives in the Parliament – then, according to the size of your population this bias in favor of the smaller states helps to give you the confidence that your interests will be properly respected. But it doesn't mean that the big states and small states are naturally equal.

The second remark is that the big states have to be careful about the smaller countries. If the smaller members of the European Union are dissatisfied, then the European Union will not work. If the big boys try to fix things in kind of directoire, it means two or three or four, or five or six of the bigger countries, then the system will not work. The smaller countries will not accept or should not accept the dictates of a larger group.

Let me turn to the next thing which is what we want to do together in the enlarged Europe, the policies of the enlarged Europe. Here I have to confess one of the problems which the British have with Europe is that the British don't have a written constitution. Therefore they don't sometimes understand why the other Europeans spend so much time discussing the constitution, the treaty. They sometimes suspect that this is an alibi for not discussing the things that really matter to the citizens: the policies Europe should deliver – economic and other policies. It's true that the Convention on the future of Europe is discussing all sorts of things, even God, I believe, but as far as I know, they haven't discussed the agricultural policy. And that's after all an activity which represents nearly half of the European budget. So, I simply want to encourage you in the Czech Republic to use the time between now and your membership, between now and next May, to have a lively and informed public debate, also about the policies of the European Union. After all the most important thing you gain when you join the European Union is not the money from the budget, it's not access to the structural funds, it's a vote and seats in the European institutions. So don't wake up on the first of May next year – when you have this precious prize of your vote – not knowing how to use it. You need to decide and have a debate here about what is in the Czech interest. After all, the only solid basis for

negotiation in the European Union is the interest of your people. And don't forget, as perhaps some member states do, to temper with need for alliance building and compromise in the European interest.

Yesterday I read with interest some policy papers published here by the Czech Institute for European Policy who among others are trying to generate the debate on Czech policy in the enlarged Union, debate on employment, regional policy and so on. And I encourage you in that direction. For example – how do you want the agricultural and rural policy in European Union to progress? And after all, you in the Czech Republic are in relatively advantageous position – the work force that you've employed in the agriculture is near the European average, unlike some of the other new members who still have a very large force in agriculture.

More generally, this enlargement is the occasion, as Wim Kok is using in his report, for the European Union to review all its policies, budgetary and non-budgetary, to ensure that they respond to people's needs.

Let me conclude by some brief remarks on the question of with whom we want to do these things. People are discussing the question of the future limits of the enlarged Union. It's clear that this enlargement is not the last. We will increase to 25, to more than 30, I don't think we will reach as many as 40. And here I want to make two simple remarks. First, clearly on the agenda for joining the Union are three groups of countries: those who are already in the accession process, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, then those who want to get in the process, the Balkans – Croatia has just applied for membership – and thirdly we should never forget the forgotten enlargement: Norway, Iceland and even the last great island of Europe, Switzerland which one day will join us. Others, too, want to join – Ukraine, even Russia – people sometimes discuss the membership of Russia. For these countries I think we can't say "yes" but perhaps we shouldn't say a definite "no"… Although I confess that in case of Russia joining the European Union that would be the case of European Union joining Russia.

China has for generations, for centuries, had a centralized, continental system and the Chinese now are trying to reorganize themselves in such a way that they empower their regions, to give their regions the flexibility and liberty for economic development. We in Europe have the opposite phenomenon. Europe has only existed as a name for the last 2000 years and finally we are beginning to try to organize it, to empower properly the European institutions. The new constitution that we've worked out will not be the last. We will continue to have a balance between the inter-governmental and the super-national. But we must proceed slowly, we have to build in Europe democratic legitimacy for institutions. I'm conscious that in the Czech Republic you're sometimes being a bit frustrated at the delays and the time it's taking you to the European Union. Let me say that you're now joining at the right time – when you will have your word to say in constructing Europe with us. Thank you.

Jan Urban
Thank you, Professor Avery. The next person to present on this panel is Václav Bělohradský, who is said to have been an European long before he had to emigrate from communist Czechoslovakia in 1970. He is certainly among the best educated in his generation—may I put it this way? A philosopher, sociologist, journalist, publicist—we will hear many other good qualities of Václav Bělohradský in the next ten minutes.

Václav Bělohradský
Thank you for the opportunity to express in front of such an European audience my deep pessimism about the historical chances for Europe today. And I will try to explain my pessimism. The foundation of my pessimism is that since 1992 Europe has become the last great communist project in the sense that it works with the terms 'base' and 'superstructure'. So at first the euro is introduced for people to get used to it. There was no debate about the introduction of the euro, there were no referenda. Similarly, a skyscraper is built in the center of Brussels called Palais de Justice, but we know very little about European justice. And the only judges who work there are those who control the expenses for the construction. Loads of money were spent on the construction.

I do not believe in the sturdiness of buildings constructed on the Marxist distinction between the base and the superstructure. I do not believe that the historical role of consciousness is to chase after a superstructure built by some enlightened minority. And if we should learn any lessons from our history, then consciousness has always rebelled against a base that was constructed in such a way. This is the foundation of my pessimism: With Maastricht, Europe has become the last great project based on the distinction, on the difference between the base and consciousness and on some type of deep belief in the base.

In the eighties we used to love Václav Havel's expressions "the intent of life" and "the intent of structures" and the struggle of the structures with the intents of life. And we know that in the end, the intents of life

have in some way triumphed, and that only those structures are legitimate which are the expressions of the intents of life. I have the impression that Maastricht has led to the acceleration of the project of European unification, however at the expense of conviction. That we have accepted some type of Marxist ideology about faith in the base. And this is why the enlargement is not occuring at the expense of European unity, but of a deepening of European unity. It is like when a family, which feels unstable, a couple that is not sure about their own relationship, decides to have a child. That by enlarging the family they will somehow dilute the problems they have. The weakness of this strategy became clear in the very moment when Europe fell apart in response to the crisis in Iraq.

The breakdown runs very deep, because it is not possible to speak of the punishment of France, of the punishment of one member state, without there being some solidarity toward this state. There is, in fact, no such solidarity. The foundation of my pessimism, therefore, is that one idea has dominated since Maastricht, and that is the idea that we will be building the base, we will be creating the euro and the consciousness of the people will follow. But people's consciousness does not like to run after the bases. It typically just leaves them to rot.

I would now like to express…in one of the most Central European novels, "The Man Without Qualities" by Robert Musil, one of the politicians, count Leinsdorf, says that Austria-Hungary was a school. True, nobody went to that school, but still, it was a great opportunity. By this he captured one of the basic functions of the modern nation state, which is that the nation state is a school. It preceded the creation of a nation, which was created by the states. Nations did not exist, nations were created by modern nation states.

In those schools, in their nation states, European nations have learned: One, what national unity means—public space was created, communications, nations were unified; two, nation states provided the framework for participation. All the nation states in Europe in the end arrived at some type of participation in power. Three, all nation states incorporated their nations into some kind of international division of labor. Four, they solved social problems. Only those states in Europe that failed to be such a school—to solve those four basic questions—have developed into some form of totalitarianism.

Today we use the word 'globalization' to say that these national schools—or rather kindegardens these days—are no longer capable of fulfilling this pedagogical function. They are no longer able to unite, to fulfill these roles. The welfare state can no longer be just a welfare state. And so we believed that some kind of a global civil society will emerge, based on multilateralism, that the UN will become the basic instrument for solving problems in the post-national era. In reality a new political phenomenon emerged before us, which we call an empire—American empire as something that follows this era of multilateralism…

The word 'empire' in the dictionary predominantly means a superior, dominant power, predominantly a military power. All other powers are but otestas, or local powers. But an important issue in an empire was the difference between within the borders of Rome and outside the borders of Rome—'imperium inter pomerium' and 'imperium extra pomerium'. Within Rome, the empire was limited by the competencies of other institutions, but outside the borders of Rome, meaning extra pomerium, it presented itself only as a military power, centralized, an unquestionable military power. What is absolutely fundamental about our situation today is that Europe has found itself extra pomerium. Europe finds itself beyond the borders of Rome, outside of the empire. As Henry Kissinger correctly put it in the discussion we had yesterday, the West has fallen apart in this respect. In the sense that Europe has found itself extra pomerium, beyond the borders of Rome.

Does Europe know how to respond to this situation? Is the European Union capable of responding to the fact that it has found itself outside the borders of Rome? Is it capable of acting as some kind of an alternative? Of building a new unity of the West? My conviction is that no, that on the contrary, by expanding, Europe's capacity to respond has decreased. Europe has fallen apart, it has fallen apart politically because it believes in the base, and that the consciousness will catch up. What became clear is that something is missing, something which we could call a unifying political culture, a unifying intent of Europe, a unifying idea of Europe. And this situation is, in my view, the greatest crisis that Europe has faced since 1989. And according to an unfortunate contemporary habit, the severity of the crisis is being quite camouflaged—the severity of the fact that Europe has found itself extra pomerium and that it is not ready for it.

Allow me to conclude this pessimistic reflection with two questions. One, can Europe really still attempt to be a global player? Is it not too late for something like this? The only legitimate task for Europe is to reconstitute the unity of Rome, the unity of the West, to reinstate some kind of a dialogue, or to recreate a framework for a dialogue, to rebuild a dialogue in our political decision-making. But the insistence that through unification, Europe will be a global player, seems retarded to me—Europe, in this respect, is just as

outdated as the nation state. Europe cannot be an instrument, it cannot be a global player who can compete with, lets say, China or America. The only thing it can strive for is to unite the logic of post-industrial societies and their development.

In conclusion, I would nevertheless like to try to formulate some kind of idea of Europe and European situation in which we find ourselves. Throughout the Cold War, the term “open society” was used, which was formulated and famously propagated by Karl Popper, who had received an honorary doctorate in this city, in Prague, and who had visited Prague prior to his death. The question is, what is open society? Open society is more than a competition. Open society in the European sense is exactly that constant struggle between the intent of life and the intent of structures, that open space in which literature, for example, plays a large role. Europe has never accepted the simplified American culture, which has many merits. But still, what belongs to Europe is the constant problematization, the unification of high culture, problems of high culture in the public space.

Open society in the European sense is the ability to ask oneself questions about historical background, to understand one’s history. It is the ability to act according to oneself, the ability to see the historical origin of our ideas and their historical limitation. In this respect, Europe is a type of a cultural hegemon. Only in Europe, in European public national spaces does literature, and what literature teaches us, play such a massive role. In the same sense as when Solzhenitsyn, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, said that only literature teaches us to live in real unity and feel a mutual solidarity of a kind. So, there exists some kind of uniqueness about Europe, and that is this open society, which does not only mean competition between products, but which is an attempt to act according to oneself, not to believe in consciousness that catches up with the base, but to believe essentially in its independence and priority over all else.

Thank you.

Jan Urban
I thank Václav Bělohradský for a provoking reflection, and for the discipline with which he managed to fit into the given time slot. During his political career in Slovakia, it has been said about our next speaker Pavol Demeš that his main problem lied in the fact that Slovakia was too small for him. His friends used to say that he was bigger than Slovakia. He has now been working for several years as the President of the German Marshall Fund for Central Europe, and he belongs to the most insightful experts not only on non-governmental organizations and their problems, as well as on the problems of open society in Central Europe, but he is also an expert on Central Europe as whole. Pavol Demeš and the question „Quo Vadis, Europa?“

Pavol Demeš
Thank you very much. I am sorry that I will break the rule that the discussion languages of these meetings are Czech and English only. I will speak Slovak. A second thing before I reflect on the topic of today’s gathering is that my remarks will be influenced by the fact that I am a Slovak and that tomorrow, we’re having a referendum about Slovakia’s entry into the European Union, and that absolutely nothing else besides this is being discussed at home at the moment. Another remark is my apology for not being a theorist but a biologist by training. Together with Alexander Vondra, I have graduated from the Biology Faculty of Charles University, and after the Velvet Revolution I occupied myself with the development of international relations and the non-profit sector. What I will say will therefore be influenced by these two basic facts.

I would like to touch upon two themes in my contribution: Using the example of Slovakia, I would like to show the importance of European integration, and the second theme is the importance of trans-Atlantic relations to European integration.

Slovakia is one of the youngest countries, which have only for the past ten years experienced something they never had throughout history, that is, their own state. They have always been a part of larger units, and now, after ten years, we are again having a debate about how to deal with this sovereignty, considering that next year, if the referendum turns out well, we will again become a part of a larger whole.

I think that using the example of Slovakia and its desire to integrate into the European Union, it is possible to observe that European integration has been, during the past ten years, a basic modernizing factor in Slovakia’s development. I think that the European integration, or Slovakia’s preparation for the European Union, has, above all, led to a cultural-political maturation of the country, in that institutions and the government, political and civil institutions, have had to adjust to something which is European. For Slovakia, the European integration has primarily delivered a foreign policy maturity—searching for relations with neighbors, asking questions about what Europe actually is, and what kind of place should such a small

country have in it…I think that it is also possible to say that the vision of the European Union, or the vision of Slovakia's membership in the European Union, has brought about an increase in the citizens' confidence and civil dexterity. These are the main factors in the internal dynamics, and we can use the example of Slovakia to illustrate how the vision of integration into the European Union has facilitated the country's modernization.

Furthermore, it is possible to say that in the past ten years, the idea of European unification, or of Slovakia's entry in the European Union, has been the topic with the highest consensus in Slovakia. Practically everyone will agree on this issue. In Slovakia, there exists no relevant political or cultural entity that would have formed and clearly articulated a concept of euro-pessimism, of why not into the European Union. This does not mean that we always know what integration means; however there is no relevant political party in the parliament or some sort of cultural organization, which would we capable of articulating an euro-pessimist concept in Slovakia.

I think that we have arrived at this point in Slovakia thanks to the specific developments in November 1989. For two years, we led debates on state organization—whether to be together with the Czech Republic or not. In the end, this discourse has led to a parliamentary division of the state, however afterwards we had something that other Central European countries did not, that is, a strange political phenomenon called 'Mečiarism'.

Through the democratic process, a group of people came to power in Slovakia who simply started breaking the rules of the game. This was a sort of a great school for learning about democracy—turned upside down, vilified and shown from different angles by many politicians…. but put simply, we knew that for eight years, we were not developing democratically. We knew exactly what it entails. We went through a stage of state terrorism that other Central European countries have not. We have somehow had to fight for freedom again.

Perhaps that is the reason why the question of European values makes more sense to the Slovaks, because we have had to study a strange brand of literature called the demarche. We used to receive demarches from the European Union, from the European Commission, from the Parliament—saying that we have deviated from that which is European, democratic, and what could disqualify us from membership. In this respect, we had to attempt a correction.

This period was also one of education about relations with neighbors. Thanks to the vision of the European Union, I think, the Slovak-Hungarian relations are solved. It cannot be said that they used to be easy before and that today they pose no problems, and that they are not discussed as a problematic issue that could disturb something.

Another theme that Mečiarism has allowed us to understand better is the interference in internal affairs of the state. That is, prior to the elections in 1998 or even prior to last year's elections, many countries, the United States and the European Union, have helped us in many ways—by providing critique and finances—they helped in countless different ways to point out the main dangers for Slovakia's invitation or lack thereof. In this respect, we have had to ask ourselves many times what our sovereignty means, and to what extent someone can tell us what to do. Finally, this period has also helped us better understand the role of the state, political parties and civil society in the political process at home as well as abroad.

Because this period has caused certain retardation, in that the Czech Republic and other Visegrad countries began to negotiate two years before us, we simply had to muster up more courage and start catching up. The catching-up phenomenon simply meant that we had to catch up with the Visegrad and other countries that are now ready for entry. So that we could ensure a harmony with chapters, conditions, etc.

Using an athletic metaphor I can describe it as "after a boxer, a marathon runner"—one who, together with the entire political and civil garniture, managed to bring the whole country so far that we are now at the doorstep to the European Union. In this respect I think—the referendum begins tomorrow and it will last for two days, and one has a sort of a pre-start fever, but my sleep is calm.

Now, transatlantic relations—briefly. The speakers before me have already mentioned that the world has changed after September 11th, but I am convinced that the importance of transatlantic relations, meaning relations between America and Europe, is key for European integration. I think that it is an inevitable precondition for us to come to terms with many problems we are facing in Europe—in the Balkans, in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Without cooperating with the United States, Europe alone has a very small chance of coming to terms with these problems, as well as with many other problems that exist on

the European continent.

The Iraqi crisis has shown and in many ways highlighted that everything is much more complicated and that integration will not be as easy as we had imagined. Problems appeared even within current member states and accession states. I think that there are many tasks ahead of us in order for Europe to reach a state of equal relations with the United States, mainly in the name of its own interests and its peaceful development. But also in the name of transatlantic cooperation, globalization and worldwide situation developing in a peaceful, not in a critical manner.

A very last remark. If we are speaking of visions, then my vision is that the transatlantic alliance is a source of new impulses and ideas. I am convinced that the countries of Central and East Europe who become members have a great chance of becoming the catalysts of the dialogue between the European Union and the United States, and that thanks to their drive, these new countries will bring new topics and ideas to the European Union, and somehow set it in motion. I think that for the Czech Republic and Slovakia this will be the case at least with teaching it how to play ice hockey.

Thank you very much.

Jan Urban
Thank you, Pavel. The next, second to the last speaker is Jacques Rupnik. Let me remind you that it was he who in the eighties thought about, spoke, and made dramatic documentaries about a different Europe. Europe changed in front of Jacques Rupnik's eyes. It allowed him to film a sequel, and I will now ask him in the name of us all—quo vadis, Europa?

Jacques Rupnik
Quo vadis, Europa? First of all, thank you for the invitation. And I have one apology to make: Previous meetings of this Forum have been conducted in English, and I have thus taken notes in English on my way here. Forgive me for the English, then. However, I will of course use Czech during the discussion.

That was the easy part. I mean the so-called EU-enlargement process behind us. In that process we talked about everything, the 30 chapters, etc. except about the essential question—what shall we do together? It is never too late to start, though the current circumstances are not the most favorable for us to look forward.

The issues are well-known, the way sovereignty is being re-defined in the 21st century, the relationships between sovereignty and democracy, the articulation between the nation state and the European Union. Secondly, is there a shared European social and economic model which would be worth preserving and which would survive in the competitive context of globalization. And thirdly, is Europe going to emerge as a political actor on the international scene? Or is it facing the prospects of decline and marginalization?

I will of course not propose a vision, let alone a blueprint. I can't believe that visions think – as Bush-father used to put it to futurologists. I'd propose rather looking briefly at three scenarios for the not-to-distant future, scenarios and not forecasts. They are nearly used as comparative tool to help us think about some of the options of the future. The good, the likely and the ugly, if you want.

The first, not so likely, scenario, and I stress – not so likely – assumes that after the enlargement of the European Union, gradually comes a stage of unification. The shock of enlargement leads Europeans to confront the dilemmas of cohesion or marginalization. It provides the impetus for daring constitution changes and no less-demanding economic and social reforms required if Europe wants in the future to become one of the centers of the multiple world, along with the United States, China, India, perhaps Russia. This would require at least three conditions.

It requires, first of all, political will – which nowadays seems rather unlikely. It would require, particularly, to give substance to the idea of the twin-pillar concept of the transatlantic alliance in matters of international security. It would secondly mean to adapt future-oriented policy as opposed to conservative, corporative reflexes – to confront the technological, demographic, economical challenges. That must today be clear to all of us. It would thirdly – it is a scenario based on the assumption, this is most important, that the European model of governance through norms can be extended or influenced in a decisive manner with international system. If it is not global governance through norms but nearly the logical power, then the actors will be largely the great powers, nation states – the United States, China, Russia, and Europe would remain side-tracked or marginalized. This confronts Europe with question it wanted to avoid for half a century, that of political and even military capability. No single European state could play this role on its own.

The second scenario, much more likely and not very attractive. That is a scenario of Europe not seeking unity as a political power but the Europe that extends its liberal order to the whole continent, through the rule of law, democratic polity and the single market. It builds a security community, to use Karl Deutsch's formula, instead of the vain pursuit of unification and power, it opts for developing what it does best – extending to rest of the continent its concept of peace and freedom, through interdependence and permanent negotiation. It means a process of extension to 30 – 35 countries with high degree of diversity inside and openness to the outside world, less tension inside and less exclusion outside. If this were to succeed and include in the next 10, 15 years, the Balkan, the Ukraine, Turkey and others – that would in itself be a major achievement.

This would be a network Europe or – if you want, what I have to call – an imperial or post-imperial model for managing stability at the periphery through varying degrees of integration and interaction. Europe for the European Union, in that case, for the whole of Eastern Europe as a kind of substitute for the Empires of the past, the substitute for the Habsburg Empire. What was the purpose of the Habsburg Empire? It was at first to neutralize tensions between the central European nations and nationalities and secondly, to create a balance between the small East-European nations and Germany. In some respect you could say, that the EU could be a substitute for a lost empire.

This scenario raises several questions. The process of stabilizing peripheries through inclusion raises the question of what are the limits of such expansion. We are told that Turkey is a candidate, well, if we expand to the borders of Turkey, we put the European Union on the border with three countries: Iraq, Syria and Iran. I'm not now discussing how well this would go down with our democratic public opinion but obviously we have there a shift, expansion, from middle Europe to the Middle East. And this might be very topical nowadays and democracy-building is one way of doing that and in a way the Atlantic alliance is going in that direction. And the question is whether if the Atlantic alliance is doing that, why not Europe? So, this raises this question – from the middle Europe to the Middle East.

Secondly, this scenario of Europe as a liberal order might be inspiring to other parts of the world but it supposes that Europe has no ambition to be a political actor, nearly a support or companion to the U.S. in a unipolar concept of the world or at least of the West. This is likely to be the dominant view and it is likely that some European countries will not resign themselves to such an exit from history. And we will see, at least for the part of Europe, to remain a political actor – hence the ID of a poor political core within broader, prosperous liberal order of more the less Europe.

I'm running out of time and therefore the last scenario, it is the most unpleasant, the least desirable and therefore it will be short. It is the scenario of unraveling and fragmentation. And Jean Paul Sartre used to say that he likes to read science-fiction because it gives him the exact measure of how much we are afraid of ourselves. Well, that's the purpose of pessimistic, of catastrophic scenarios.

In short, what I was going to describe is not the monster, the danger of federal super-state that we are presented that this is the danger of today. This has no chance in Europe enlarged to 30 countries. You are beating the dead horse, those who are struggling against it are beating a dead horse. This has no chance to achieve in an enlarged European Union. The real danger is the one that I would put under the heading that Václav Havel has mentioned. He talked about the intentions of the life versus the intentions of structures. Yes, the European Union is a project that has been built on the idea of primacy of reason over passion, over the intentions of life, if you want, and the containment of power. It would be very easy to dismantle the European structure. Neither better, nor worse of those of the nation states.

We should also be prepared to face that and the consequences. For those who like imaginations, several history books can be provided. But I am not necessarily saying that we are going back to the future in that way. We might be simply going back to the common market. And have, you know, a large free-trade zone. But that means that the erosion of the political bond on which the European project has been built means that the idea of solidarity and re-distribution – that has been included in the European project – vanishes or is being eroded at the same time. It means that such an enlarged European Union in this concept would not do for the East and Central Europe what has done successfully for the southern Europe, in terms of its transformation, modernization. I mean, this can never be repeated again and again. Anybody who has visited Spain, Portugal, Greece 20 twenty years ago and today – Spain would not be the actor which is today internationally without the European Union. I can tell you that.

I've run out of time and therefore I'd conclude, saying that Europe is at crossroads. It is symbolic, at the moments of its unification it is also very deeply divided. The scenarios I've suggested are nearly tools to think about our future, not to choose the blueprint, the scenario we want but at least to choose a scenario

that we want to avoid.

Thank you for your attention.

Jan Urban
Thank you. Our last, but certainly not the least, as they say in Great Britain, important speaker is Professor Larry Siedentop from the University of Oxford. There are a few authors whose books become compulsory readings at most universities in the world already during their lifetime. In the case of Professor Siedentop, poor students have to study not one, but several titles—I will not name them all here. However, Democracy in Europe is probably really at the very top of the most compulsory ones. Professor Larry Sidenetop and his reply to the question, “Quo Vadis, Europa?”

Larry Siedentop
First, thank you for inviting me. Secondly, I’d like to stir difficult course between optimism and pessimism.

It seems to me the European Union has neglected its constitutional identity and its right to begin to address that question. My fear is that it will now become too ambitious and try to do too much too quickly. And in that sense, I think, new member states will join at a marvelous opportunity to shape that process.

Perhaps to move my remarks it is best conveyed by one of my favorite examples of Oxford graffiti. On a wall of a pub opposite the Bodleian Library some years ago I’ve read this: “God is alive and well, and working on a less ambitious project.” I think this could apply to the European Union.

European Union has paid high price, for identifying itself largely through an economic agenda in the past. One can see the consequences at two levels – one level a public debate and secondly popular attitude. Public debate has tended to be pluralized between those urging the economic advantages, further integration, getting rich together and those opposing falling back on the category of national sovereignty, rather sterile category, I think, as President Havel has suggested.

What’s lost in that pluralized debate seems to me is the crucial question, that is, the question of self-government. What is the future self-government in Europe, what are the conditions of self-government in a democratic society on anything like continental scale? That’s what matters. And it seems to me that the object ought now to be creating Europe of citizens, not just consumers. What Europeans should see themselves embark upon is this great experiment of self-government and not just creating a large supermarket.

So I want to pose three questions. What does this involve, what is required for this? Secondly, how do we get there? And thirdly, why should we want what we want?

Well, first ‘what’? I think there are at least three parts of this desirable goal. One is, what I may call, the liberal demos or public opinion across Europe. A citizenry that is aggressive, active, determined to defend their rights. Secondly, the beginning of the fusion or partial fusion of national political classes into a kind of trans-European political class. And thirdly, developing or beginning to develop a constitutional sense across Europe, that is a sense “who should decide what”. Well, these things, these goals, have to achieved in tandem, together and this makes a huge difference between the European scene and the American scene at the 18th century when the American colonists have inherited in a sense all three of these things, at least partially. There was an inherited constitutional sense, for instance, the colonies have never been fully sovereign – the ghost of the British government at the Philadelphia Convention. So Europe has this particularly difficult task of fostering a constitutional sense at the same time when it is creating the institutions.

How do we get there? Well, first, as far as the vigorous liberal demos or public opinion is concerned, I think, a Charter of Rights, a rights-based political culture is crucial. My fear here is that a competition between two charters of rights, and particularly if the latest European Charter of Rights is over-ambitious, will not serve the cause of building a rights-based political culture across Europe. I think all the evidence is, short charters of rights are more effective than long charters of rights. When one wants to be able to remember one’s right, it helps if one’s asserting them. I don’t think anti-americanism is enough to produce this kind of sensibility and I really think that the inflation of the language of rights does a service to it.

Secondly, I think as far as beginning to fuse national political classes together, sooner or later Europe will have to consider bi-cameralism. I’m myself strongly in favor of the European Senate which would be elected indirectly and consist of leading members of national political classes who retain their national political roles and their national audiences. Alas! I think the existence of European Parliament has up to a

point served as an excuse for national political classes to distance themselves from the European project and I think the European Senate could help to overcome that.

Thirdly – developing a constitutional sense. This can only be done slowly, very slowly, I think. The first step which, I hope, the Convention will take is to assert a right to exit from the European Union. I mean that would immediately make a difference between the European Union and American federalism, which since the Civil War has not allowed its member states to secede. It establishes the voluntary character of the European Union and that's fundamentally important. Secondly, and here I go back to my proposal for the Senate—the Union has to balance a population principle or majority principle and the territorial principle, not least to educate public opinion. Then, subsidiarity has to be given teeth and I think the Senate can play an important role in that.

I know the time's running out, so I should now turn to 'why', the third question. Well, "pseudo-democracy" is the enemy, the top-down "pseudo-democracy", technocratic democracy. And the first thing to be noticed is also a matter of language – what Europe is doing in the process is certainly creating a new political form, something which isn't quite like a classical confederation, nor anything like American federation. We don't have a word for it yet. That's alright, that doesn't matter. But it suggests that we shouldn't rush to finalité too rapidly. And that is exactly the fear I have about the Constitutional Convention. If you go to federal systems, Australia or United States, people don't refer to the "state". Federalism is in a sense alternative to the state. And that's very important in defending those matters, the linguistic use is just very important for defending the European project.

Well, we should be very careful, I think, looking for and assessing calls for Europe speaking as a single voice. I'd prefer Europe that speaks with many voices. It's more consistent with the history of Europe, which is a history of competition and only allows enforced unity. If unity is going to develop and be essentially voluntary, the goal of speaking with many voices is more desirable. After all, it's only when the United States speaks with the only voice that it begins to look rather menacing. And finally, I think, it is rather important. It isn't just the Bush administration, it isn't just the Iraqi war. What's happening in the United States, is the shift away from the liberal north-east which has dominated American political life since 1945, a shift of people, influence and wealth to South and West into a more populous political culture. I mean, what Europe is going to be confronting for the foreseeable future is a more populous form of American democracy. And it seems to me that having itself received an enormous injection of re-invigoration of liberal democratic principles from the United States at the end of the second World War, it behooves Europe now to go in for a kind of a reversed Marshall Plan, not so much material, as moral and intellectual. And if Europe can become a peak liberal democracy, that sense of a multiple world is entirely endorsed.

Instead of worrying perhaps too much about the size of the European defense budget, here I speak as finely as an academic – I think one of the shocking things about Europe since 1945 is this neglect of its universities. And you can think of the extent to which American universities have become leaders of the western world, I find it shocking. And it seems to me as vigorous and self-respecting for a liberal and democratic Europe to do something about that.

Thank you.