

**Remarks by Professor Jerzy Buzek
President of the European Parliament**
"Young European of the Year award - The Young and Wider Europe"
Berlin, 26 May 2011

Dear Speaker Momper,
Dear Mr. Schmitz-Schwarzkopf,
Dear Mr. Ivanovic,
Dear Friends,

When we discuss "*Young and Wider Europe*", it is often important to remember where we have come from. I have just come from the Bundestag. A building which was on one side of the border looking east only 20 years ago. Now I am in a building on the other side of the border looking west.

We can never forget our history.

In our lifetime - or at least in mine if I look at all the young people sitting here - our continent was divided into "Europe" and "non-Europe". Why do I say this? Because Europe is not just a continent, it is a community of shared values. This is my first point this evening. The idea of Europe should not have fixed borders.

To give you one example, I was in Tunisia and Egypt last month after the revolutions. I was struck by men and women in Tahir square who approached me to say "*thank you Europe*".

When they say "Europe" - they mean democracy, freedom, human rights and a chance for a better life. Our European values are universal values. This is what we in Eastern Europe felt during the Communist period. Europe to us was everything we were not.

This is why after 1989 we all worked so hard to transform our countries because we knew what kind of country we wanted to be. A country where we can go from the *Bundestag* to the *Ab-ge-ord ne-ten haus* without passing through walls.

Dear Friends,

I am often upset when I hear the term "enlargement fatigue" when in fact we should be saying "enlargement benefit". This is my second point this evening: enlargement has brought peace, prosperity and stability

to our continent. Like the single market and the single currency, it is a great success story.

It has stabilised democracy after dictatorship in Portugal, Spain, Greece, and in my part of Europe. And the prospect of enlargement has ended a war in the Western Balkans. Croatia will soon be the 28th member of the Union. Perhaps one day Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana will follow?

As we are in Berlin, I will use Germany as an example. Enlargement has also been an enormous benefit to German industry and business. You are our export champion. You will reach €1 trillion this year. And 60% of your exports are to the EU. Enlargement has given 12 new markets to sell your goods to. Creating jobs and prosperity not only in Germany, but also in the new Member States.

I am convinced that future enlargements will also benefit the European Union. Of course not all countries can or should become full members. But by working together

every day on the basis of tolerance, trust, mutual respect and solidarity we also create a model for others to follow. We show that there is always more that unites than divides.

The strength of Europe is that we attract our neighbours to this model. We do not impose because every country has to find its own way. But countries become more similar to us by sharing our laws, our regulations, our standards. And our values.

I see our long term relationship with our neighbours as a ring of ever widening circles. Circles of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Some countries will be closer and others further away. But by sharing these values we create a common space which benefits us all.

Dear Colleagues,

My last related point is aimed at you, Europe's youth. It is important that you remain engaged with our partners to the East and the South.

After the revolutions in North Africa, but also in the East, it is clear that our new neighbourhood policy has to be more dynamic and more flexible. But at the same time it has to be more open. Open not only to trade, but also to people.

I am convinced that this new policy should be about people. We have to help with visa facilitation. We should invest in more scholarships for students. We should support NGO's, civil society organisations and the independent media. This is a long term project. One that we will start and your generation will finish.

Our neighbourhood policy is not a goal. It is simply an instrument. You will determine what the goal will be for your generation. And you will determine what kind of European Union we will live in. An EU of only 28 Member States? Or an EU of more countries? But more importantly how far those circles I mentioned will spread.

I am convinced that for us to guarantee peace in this century, we also need to guarantee circles of prosperity.

Not only in Europe, but also for our neighbourhood. Because only democracy and prosperity brings real peace and stability

This is why the European Parliament has argued that we need to open our internal market to goods coming from North Africa. There has to be a democratic dividend for the man and woman on the Arab street. As there has to be hope for a better future for people from your generation.

Dear Friends,

Before I conclude I would like to personally congratulate Mr. Ivanovic for being elected the "Young European of the Year".

You remind us all that Sarajevo is as much part of our shared community of values as Brussels, Berlin or Budapest. Congratulations, and thank you for all the good work you have done.