

Between Tradition and Modern Times

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Former President of the Republic of Poland
- **Cardinal Renato R. Martino**
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
- **Marek Belka**
Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
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*The XXI century must be a century of solidarity, a century of values. It must be a century when the human being is most important. Today, when we talk about globalization and, earlier, continentalization, our thinking about Europe must change diametrically. Because fate has presented our generation with greater challenges – says Lech Wałęsa, former President of the Republic of Poland. According to Cardinal Renato R. Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *liberty in connection with solidarity signifies engagement in the truth and righteousness, in both politics and society. There is no freedom without solidarity. Moreover, freedom has a high price. It requires nobility of the mind and, at the same time, the spirit of sacrifice.* Marek Belka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, adds that Europe must put in order its economy and its place in international politics, and answer the question: What is its international responsibility?*





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We must be aware of the fact that the collapse of communism and, above all civilizational progress, are the driving force of change in our generation. In my opinion, we were living in the age of the earth until the end of the XX century. That is why we fought for the earth and moved borders. Man was often a wolf to his fellow man, and inflicted cruel laws.

Technical progress has led us to the age of intellect, information, the Internet. One can obtain everything through these products of the intellect. There is no need to fight. No earlier generation had the chance of such development and truly global peace. Wars are not profitable in the age of intellect, the age of globalization, as we may call it finally. However, our tragedy is that everything we encountered in the period before the end of the XX century, did not respond to the challenges of the age of globalization.

The tasks for Europe are quite simple. The first is to balance, at least partially, the level of development in separate countries. The second is to plan development properly, but not as in the case of communism.

The challenges at the beginning of the XXI century are much greater. Where should we look for a solution? Should we look at the proposals in the European Constitution, that is liberty of human beings and economic freedom? They were appropriate for an earlier age, and were always destined to come to an end when there were borders, blocs and systems. However, the higher the development, the more we need values. Everything should be built on them – the economy, politics and social action.

The XXI century must be a century of solidarity, a century of values. It must be a century when the human being is most important. Today, when we talk about globalization and, earlier, continentalization, our thinking about Europe must change diametrically. Because fate has presented our generation with greater challenges.

Is liberty the single most important thing, or do values have greater significance? They are the only foundation on which we can really build a great world. More and more people

think that we are living in the age of solidarity, and we must focus on the human being, rely on values and the fact that the earlier, more cynical, time does not suit the interests of Europe and its security.

My faith comes from a practical perception of the world. It is not optimism. If we continue to be driven by an egoistic approach to development, we will not live even a century. We need justice and solidarity, and we can achieve them with the use of modern technologies. Otherwise, development will end in failure. There is no other way.

Card. Renato R. Martino

President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

During the past few years, the Economic Forum at Krynica has led to very intensive and important actions that consisted in interpreting the social, political and economic challenges that were confronting Central and Eastern Europe. That is why the Forum has been one of the most meaningful and important events that have taken place in this part of the European continent.

I would like to remind you of the main questions, which were so often asked by the great Pole, His Holiness John Paul II: "Can Europe achieve real progress regardless of its rich heritage of Christian and spiritual values? Can Europe play a role in the development of new humanism if it does not draw from its Christian roots?" Answering these questions, I must give a reason for my answer. Among numerous reasons one can mention the liberating role that was played by Christianity and Christians in the events that took place in Europe in 1989.

The issue of truth will become more and more important in the future of Europe, even the most proximate future, due to a dramatic question related to the sense of life posed by the challenges raised by technology. The issues related to it appear in three areas. These are the area of politics, where we face the risk of technocracy, the area of the manipulation of life, because people trust blindly in biotechnology, and also the area of communication, with the dominance of communication technology.

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Card. Renato R. Martino
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Vatican

There is no doubt that the future of Europe and eventually also the future of the whole of humanity will depend, at least partially, on the development, either proper or improper, in these three areas. The problem of truth in relation to technology appears in the following sense: If there is no reference to the truth – meaning a complete view of the human being, complete respect for the human being and recognition of human rights – democracy may be transformed into merely technical procedures.

Biotechnology may change into the production of life and people, and information technology may become simply the creation of virtual worlds. Everyone can see how this may open the way for new forms of enslavement of one human being by another.

Let us consider the issue of freedom. In his historic sermon delivered in Berlin, close to the Brandenburg Gate, in 1996 His Holiness John Paul II presented his vision of a new European home, referring to the human calling to be free, at the same time indicating the profound importance associated with this calling. Freedom – said John Paul II – does not mean arbitrariness; it does not mean that one can do whatever he or she wants. Free people are at the same time responsible to the truth, because in the opposite case human liberty will not be anything specific, but merely a fantasy and dream, vanishing when we wake up. There is no freedom without truth. But not only.

His Holiness John Paul II also said that the freedom of the individual human being cannot be separated from the freedom of other people, from the freedom of all men and women. Liberty in connection with solidarity signifies engagement in the truth and righteousness, in both politics and society. There is no freedom without solidarity. Moreover, freedom has a high price. It requires nobility of the mind and, at the same time, the spirit of sacrifice. It requires vigilance and courage to combat both the external and the internal forces that are threatening it. No one can be exempted from his or her personal responsibility to freedom. There is no freedom without responsibility.

These values – truth, freedom, solidarity and responsibility – are what enabled people after World War II to start building Europe as a continent of peace in accordance with the wishes of the founding fathers. On the basis of the same values, Europe will be able to serve its future role.

When we speak about Europe, we should consider it to be synonymous with openness. Despite experiences that would indicate the opposite, it is a requirement of European history. Europe – wrote John Paul II – is not a closed or isolated territory. It was built in the course of foreign expansion and encounters with other nations, cultures and civilizations, and hence Europe must be an open continent, keeping its doors open also to others. It should continue its development in the process of globalization, but also pay attention to social and cultural growth. These words of John Paul II remain a valid call on Europeans to make a fresh judgment of its history and rethink the future.

Europe must firmly increase the awareness of its spiritual heritage. This old continent, which existed even prior to the religious wars, before imperialism, should present itself in the contemporary world as a laboratory for the peaceful coexistence of solidarity and peace.

Marek Belka

Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

Is Europe experiencing a crisis? Europe continues to be the biggest regional economy in the world. This advantage can be seen particularly in its export potential. If we realize that the German economy, as just one of the economies of the European Union, is the biggest world exporter, and that the British, French and Italian economies are not much smaller, we can see that Europe lives on exports. It is undoubtedly the biggest export power in the world. It is undoubtedly a region of prosperity and stability, and of the highest social standards and the strictest standards of environmental protection.

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Certainly, we cannot, therefore, state that Europe is experiencing an economic crisis. Yet, Euro-sclerosis is often mentioned, and not without justice, as it is visible in a relatively low rate of economic growth and a high unemployment rate.

Is Europe experiencing a political crisis? After the unsuccessful referenda on the constitutional treaty, we are currently not talking about anything else in the European Union. As a matter of fact, it is not the issue of the referenda, or a lack of compromise related to the budget of the EU. They are of minor importance. Europeans, as a matter of fact – and this is the main problem – have not decided if they want integration and what type of it they prefer. The idea of creating one European superpower turned out to be premature and immature, or basically wrong. Today, Europe is simply a close union, but it is composed of independent states. Everything would be fine if the economic decisions made in the European Union, such as one currency, were not forcing the continuous adoption of a common economic policy in different areas of this policy. Tensions, if not crises, will be created between the aspirations of maintaining a Europe of regions, and of creating something supranational.

A crisis of the European Union or a crisis of Europe can be noticed in the dimension of international policy. While the 'iron curtain' existed, Western Europe was in alliance with the United States, and NATO was an institutional part of that alliance – everything was all right. However, the wall collapsed and Europe lost its way.

The bipolar system of the Soviet Union and the West, the Soviet Union and the United States, collapsed. The United States is the only superpower in the world today. There are a number of players with global ambitions appearing. But Europe is not only divided in this, but has also lost its way. The West has to be rediscovered again. What is the West today?

Today's challenge is also terrorism, and pandemics, including AIDS. The collapse of state structures in vast areas of the world, mainly in Africa, is also a problem. It is also our affair. Europe must have its stance on this. Europe must put in order its economy and its place in international politics, and answer the question: What is its international responsibility?

Tadeusz Mazowiecki

Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

To be itself, Europe must be stronger in terms of values, and not become a continent whose qualities are a matter of tradition. Europe must analyze its values anew, from the point of view of modern times.

Europe must also become more self-confident, and be inspired by the fresh optimism coming from its enlargement, from new opportunities, from the need of European solidarity for the sake of further development, and from the need to strengthen these values. Europe cannot regard itself as a fin-de-siècle continent, surpassed by others. Europe must – in my opinion – believe in its strength, be based more on values, and also be guided by pragmatism in economic development. In the sphere of values, it is worth recalling what was said by John Paul II, that: "Europe must breathe with two lungs."

The West was not prepared for the events of 1989. It was also not prepared for enlargement. People in the West must change their mentality. We, too, need to change. In joining the European Union, we should feel responsible for the whole of Europe, and not only wait for the things that the European Union can give us. Not only do we need to recognize that the European Union is not running out, and probably will not run out, of the whole wealth of Europe, but also we must open ourselves to the creation of structural, economic and cultural links with these European countries that are not yet members of the EU and have a long way to go to become such. Sometimes we forget, for example, about Ukraine and the Balkan countries, and, after all, peace in them is a very important issue and signifies development for the whole of Europe.

I am not concerned only about the violation of human and national rights in Belarus, but also certain – especially recent – moves in Russian policy. The Economic Forum in Krynica is the best proof that Poland, in wishing to have an influence on the policy of the European Union, by no means wants to separate Russia from Europe, but is trying instead to bring it nearer in terms of the economy and culture, in a human way.

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