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It is my particular privilege and pleasure to take part in the First Conference on Global Policy-Making at the invitation of the French Institute for Foreign Relations. This Conference is being organized at the appropriate time - a time of turbulence affecting global finances and the global economy, and, in the long run, overall stability. All this is very relevant for global policy-making, called upon to take steps focused on dealing with the crisis.

It would be difficult, even impossible, to answer at once all the questions facing us. However, what is important is the fact that there is an ongoing discussion involving the participation of statesmen, politicians and scientists from the whole world, a discussion bringing together experience, will and vision. Today the world is so integrated and interdependent that any major event in one of its parts triggers a chain reaction in all the other parts. Therefore, we all share a common destiny.

The topic of my address is Frontiers: Frontiers of States, Frontiers of Peoples. I have not chosen it at random. That is to say, I come from an area which has been the object of wars for territories for centuries, and over time it even acquired the very picturesque nickname of tinderbox.

Unfortunately, the name has cropped up again some fifteen years ago when another war flared up in the former Yugoslavia, caused by Milošević's aggression. The aggression left a profound mark and a severe aftermath. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives, thousands of homes were destroyed, many people became refugees and displaced persons...

The war changed the demographic picture in the area under consideration, and in addition to the human tragedy and the immense loss of property it also left behind a number of other consequences. Among them due attention ought to be given to the loss of mutual confidence. The war was motivated by the change of frontiers determined already during the common fight for liberation from fascism, and confirmed by the 1874 Constitution. Ultimately the frontiers were also recognized internationally. And, at the end of the whole tragic story, the frontiers did not budge an inch.

Almost every war in Europe was waged for frontiers as its first and foremost objective.

After a war everybody is a loser! That is why I have continuously been making the same point: it is better to negotiate for ten years than to wage war for ten days. The aftermath of war exhausts everyone.

Of course, frontiers set the limits of each country's territorial integrity. But they do not set the limits of peoples. Peoples live on both sides of the frontier. They must have the feeling that they belong to the same cultural and ethnic entity.

Frontiers will exist as long as there are states. The question is: what purpose should frontiers serve? First of all, they must connect and not separate states and peoples. Open frontiers are windows to our neighbours and, ultimately, to the whole world. That is the model applied on the European continent.

The Schengen space and its frontiers include the entire territory of the European Union, but also some countries which are not its members. This is a unique space facilitating the free flow of people - and that, along with the free movement of goods, services and capital, is a new quality for European communion.

Although a regional project, the European Union is in many respects a globally worthwhile development. It is also globally important because it has abolished war as a political instrument. Similarly, the Union has given a new meaning to frontiers. Symbolically they like to call it "Europe with no frontiers!" That, too, is one of the historic achievements showing that the Union has created new values not only for itself.



The aspirations focused on European unity have progressed very much indeed from the initial idea from which the European politicians Schuman, de Gasperi and Monet set off. Over time, the European Union assumed the features of a political, economic, monetary, and even partly a military project.

A space has been created in which frontiers are relativized. Because of this, the process of European unification has developed in parallel with the process of new confirmation and protection of national identities - of specific cultural, linguistic, historical and partly economic identities.

If the two processes are to continue developing successfully and in parallel as they have done so far, unity should not affect identity. Similarly, ethnic identity cannot be preserved and defended at the expense of or against the interests of European unification. Within such a pattern, identity does not contradict unity or vice versa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We know that today there are about 200 states in the world; 192 of them are members of the United Nations. However, we should additionally bear in mind the fact that there are also about 500 dominant cultures worldwide. Similarly, the existence of more than 600,000 transnational companies also deserves due mention. This means that the present-day world, as I already said, is interdependent, but also economically, sociologically and biologically indivisible.

To conclude, frontiers exist, and will continue to demand recognition, but they must be turned into ties binding our common, global destiny.

Thank you!