



# THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL

President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

## Introduction

I can say in this case that it is cosy. In some senses, it is a very pleasant place to be. Now, I know that most of you are tired, because it was a long day. Many of you are coming from overseas. I am therefore happy to say that you will now have two speeches. The first one is mine. Fortunately for you, it is almost at an end. The second one will be from Mr Stepic. I would say that there are three reasons why Mr Stepic is our speaker tonight.

I am not going to give the reasons in a rational order. The first one is because he is the sponsor of the conference dinner. However, that would certainly not be a sufficient reason for having invited him as a speaker. There is a second reason which is that he is the CEO of Raiffeisen Bank International, which as I am sure many of you are aware is a very important bank in Austria. It is particularly involved in what used to be called Eastern Europe. That is the second reason we are here at the heart of Europe; we are at the heart of history and the heart of Europe. That is the second reason.

However, even that would not be enough. There is a third reason. The third reason is one that I am sure you will see in a second. You may believe me or not, but you will believe me in a second, he is a good speaker. According to my spies, nobody has ever seen anyone sleep while Mr Stepic was talking. Mr Stepic, I am very happy to give you the floor.