

SPEECH TO THE AWARD CEREMONY

**European Prize Coudenhove-Kalergi 2018 to the Ukrainian
“Heavenly Hundreds”**

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Thank you all for attending this prize-giving ceremony of the European Society Coudenhove-Kalergi in posthumous honour of the Heavenly Hundreds. A special word of thanks goes to the Paneuropean Movement, our mother-institution, for hosting this event in the framework of its Congress, and to Paneuropa Ukraine for the invitation.

It is a joy for me to be back in Kiev, back in the Ukraine, this beautiful European country with its glorious history, that however sometimes has known painful periods, not least in the recent past. Your Nation has a great importance for Europe: you embody the two main cultural traditions of our Continent with its Roman and Byzantine roots. You are breathing with these two lungs - to use an expression of Saint John Paul II - and are a bridge between the West and the East. This needs a lot of internal cohesion without falling into a nationalistic trap, and quite some sensitivity for all the developments around you. This prize Coudenhove-Kalergi should also be understood as an encouragement on this path that you have so courageously undertaken: to be a sign of the success of European values, for democratically living together and for a society free of illegitimate coercion. But before further explaining the reasoning for this prize-giving, please, allow me to say a few words on the European Society Coudenhove-Kalergi and the prize we award normally every two years.

Our Society has the task to keep and develop the political and cultural heritage of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the founder of the Paneuropean Movement. He was the first in the modern era of our Continent to develop the concept of a peaceful political European unity and received from European leaders significant support for his project in between the two World Wars. After the 2nd World War his initiative bore fruit firstly with the foundation of the Council of Europe, and then, later, with the foundation of the present European Union. Without Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi we certainly would not have seen this move to European unity with its permanent institutions starting shortly after 1945.

His successors in the Movement continue to work for a European unity englobing all European nations under the motto its founder enshrined: "In Need Unity, in Doubt Liberty, in all Charity". Our Society, based in Vienna, is an offspring of the movement, having the task to take care of its founder's heritage. We do this by supporting scientific studies on Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's life and work and by making them known. We are also a dialogue forum for today's concepts of European integration. We publish a circular letter on topical themes in this respect and, last, but not least, we award the European Prize.

This prize in memory of our founder who died in 1972, has already a history of more than 30 years. Not only political leaders like Helmut Kohl, Sandro Pertini and Ronald Reagan were among the prize-winners, but also personalities from the cultural and spiritual life - like the musician Yehudi Menuhin and the bishop of Banja Luka, Franjo Komarica for their contribution to peaceful dialogue. The last prizes went to Chancellor Angela Merkel, to the first President ad personam of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, to the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, and to the British Minister Kenneth Clarke.

Today it will go to the Heavenly Hundred, who have died here for a noble cause in 2014. And the prize insignia will be placed in the Maidan Museum. It is the first time that the prize is dedicated posthumously not only to one person, but to a multitude of persons, most of them with a biography probably little known to a wider public. Let me try to give you some of the reasons that guided our society members in this decision to make this exception to our normal procedure.

The respective proposal of Karl von Habsburg got wide support by our members against many other valuable candidates.

Your people that died on Maidan under brutal circumstances were fighting for a just cause and for a European Ukraine. They wanted a more democratic governance, free of corruption and socially more just. They mainly undertook a non-violent action to attain a better future for their families and their country. The values they died for are profoundly European values, central for a peaceful living together. Freedom, democracy and solidarity need to be protected day by day against egoistic power plays and sometimes these values must even be reconquered. This is true for all European nations. For this combat, a strong example has been set on Maidan place, four years ago. It was the catalyst for toppling an unjust regime that killed innocent people.

By awarding this prize to the Heavenly Hundred, we cannot bring back their lives. But we can tell today's and tomorrow's youth that their sacrifice is not forgotten and that change for the better is possible. Their honouring may also contribute a little to the consolation of the families of the dead. I keep in prayerful memory all of them, including those who died for an unjust cause. We cannot be the final judges of their motivations, and, hopefully, forgiveness may be widely achieved. But the prize stands clearly for those who went to the streets fighting for a just cause.

So, let me conclude by wishing that the gold medal and the accompanying prize certificate, which we now place in the hands of the Director of the Maidan Museum, will help keep the memory of the fight for a just cause alive, and that it will be a sign of the strong bonds between the other European countries and this proud Nation.