



Split, 27 October 2024

Opening Speech at the Presidency Council

Dear friends,

Almost twenty years ago, Otto de Habsburg asked me to succeed him as President of the International Pan-European Union.

In presenting my candidacy to the General Assembly, the second international President was following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, who himself had wanted Otto de Habsburg to take up the Pan-European torch.

During these twenty years, with the means at the IPU's disposal, I have endeavoured to preserve and maintain the links between the member organisations of the International Pan-European Union.

Following the enlargement of the European Union to ten countries in 2004, the accession process, i.e. the implementation of Paneuropa, took too long. Only Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and Croatia in 2013 have been successful. For all the other candidate countries of South-East Europe, to which Ukraine, Moldova and, I hope soon, Georgia have been added, the accession process has only moved forward at a slow pace.

During this period, which followed the end of the war in the former Yugoslavia, Europeans had to endure the return of war to their continent and the consequences this had on their economic and social lives. These consequences were added to those they had experienced with the Covid epidemic.

With the multiplication of crises, more or less distant conflicts and the return of power struggles, the illusion of a happy globalisation has come to an end for Europeans. They need to be convinced that their future depends solely on themselves.

That is why I have set the Pan-European Union the goal of a powerful, independent and sovereign Europe of solidarity.

To face up to this new period in Pan-European history, the time has come for me, in my turn, to hand over the Presidency of the International Pan-European Union.

This time, once again, it is within our movement that I must pass on the torch. I know the organisations and I know from experience who their most active leaders are.

The three successive presidents of the International Pan-European Union have all come from one of its founding countries.

It now seems to me that the renewal of this Presidency should be open to other countries, and in particular to South-East Europe, which is in its entirety impatient to become a full member of the European Union.

After careful consideration, I have decided to propose Pavo Barišić's candidacy to the General Assembly, which will meet next February in Strasbourg.

As International Secretary General of our movement, he knows it better than I do. As President of the Pan-European Union of Croatia, he also knows its history perfectly and shares its political, social, humanist and spiritual vision. Emeritus university professor, Pavo Barišić has held important ministerial posts and has maintained a relationship of trust and friendship with the head of the Croatian government.

I fervently wish that Pavo Barišić's candidacy is acceptable to the members of the International Pan-European Union, so that, in accordance with our tradition, it can achieve consensus.

Alain Terrenoire,

President of the International Pan-European Union