

26 September 2017 - Seul le prononcé fait foi

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# Speech on new initiative for Europe

Ministers,  
Members of Parliament,  
Prefect,  
Dean,  
University Presidents,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have come to talk to you about Europe. “Again”, some might exclaim. People will just have to get used to it, because I will not stop talking about it. Because this is where our battle lies, our history, our identity, our horizon, what protects us and gives us a future.

“Already? Is it really necessary? ”, others might say. Because for them it is never the right moment to talk about Europe. It is always too early or too late. They have got used to such tactics. It is so much easier to never explain where we want to go, where we want to lead our people, and to remain with hidden arguments, because we have simply lost sight of the objective. It is so much more comfortable to hold long discussions about instruments, without knowing exactly where we are going.

We have all therefore got used to not saying what we think, what we want, passing it off as tactics. Experience shows that this gets us nowhere.

Broaching this subject at the Sorbonne University makes a lot of sense, as I am sure you will agree, Dean. We are all aware of the prestige of this lecture theater. But the Sorbonne did not start out as a prestigious building. It was first and foremost an idea. An idea supported by a few scholars and their disciples who built their future sitting on straw.

This lecture theater does not make the Sorbonne, however. The Sorbonne lives today because of the idea that its professors and students have of knowledge: an idea whose vitality has already lived on through eight centuries. Europe, too, is an idea. An idea supported for many centuries by pioneers, optimists and visionaries, and it is always up to us to claim it for our own. Because the best ideas, those which drive us forward, which improve people’s lives, are always fragile. And Europe will only live through the idea that we have of it. It is our responsibility to bring it to life, make it ever better and stronger, to not stop at the form that historic circumstances have shaped it into. Because this form may change, but the idea remains, and its ambition must be ours.

Living collectively was the ideal of Robert de Sorbon. And the intellectuals and scholars came from across Europe to forge European thought. Through wars and crises, through all the vagaries of history that have impacted Europe, this thought has not stopped growing and spreading. And where chaos could have triumphed, civilization has always won out.

We have inherited all of this history. We have inherited the two shock waves which could have brought our Europe to an end, the shock waves of the last century, the two world wars which decimated Europe and could have overwhelmed us. But together, we overcame the challenge without ever forgetting the lessons. The idea rose from the ruins. The desire for fraternity was stronger than retribution and hate.

It was the lucidity of the founding fathers to transform this age-old fight for European hegemony into fraternal cooperation or peaceful rivalries. Behind the Coal and Steel Community, or the Common Market, the project forged a promise of peace, prosperity and freedom.

When Greece, Spain and Portugal entered the Common Market a generation later, these words were not technical. They were the symbol of freedom for those leaving dictatorship behind. When what was then known as Eastern Europe, from Poland to Bulgaria, joined this project a generation later, it was this same hope that drove us. We could finally repair the story which started in 1947. For many countries who had lived through the worst oppression, joining the European Union was an unprecedented promise of emancipation.

Doubtless, we were not sufficiently aware that this much-desired Europe grew up sheltered. Sheltered firstly from the rest of the world. Security was not its business: this was performed by America. Its economy already knew the path to follow: catch up with America. Sheltered from the people, too. In its early stages the European project was a mission carried by a few individuals, sewing a torn continent back together by overcoming populist passions.

This remains the crucial issue. But the barriers behind which Europe could blossom have disappeared. So, today, it finds itself weaker, exposed to the squalls of today's globalization and, surely even worse, the ideas which offer themselves up as preferable solutions.

These ideas have a name: nationalism, identitarianism, protectionism, isolationist sovereignism. Many times have these ideas lit the fires where Europe could have perished, and they are back again today in a new guise. They claim legitimacy because they cynically exploit the people's fear. We have ignored their power for too long. For too long we were sure in our belief that the past would not come back, we thought that the lessons had been learned, we thought that we could settle into inertia, habit, putting our ambition somewhat to one side, this hope that Europe had to carry because we took it for granted and risked losing it from sight.

Because the sad passions of Europe have reared their heads once more and are drawing people in. They know how to make us forget the concert of misfortunes which it has survived down the centuries. They reassure us and, I dare say, they could tomorrow clinch victory, not because the peoples are gullible! Not because the European idea is dead! But because our weakness, blindness or lack of awareness have created the conditions for their victory. Because we have forgotten that we must stay behind this ambition! Because we have forgotten to defend Europe! Because we have forgotten to stand up for Europe! Because we have let doubt take hold.

What do they say to our people? That they have the solution. That they will protect. But what are the challenges we face? There are many challenges: from climate change to digital transition, migration and terrorism, global issues to which an inward-facing country can only hope to offer limited responses.

They are lying to the people, but we have let them do it, because we wanted to establish the idea that Europe had become a powerless bureaucracy. Throughout Europe, we explained that when there was a constraint, it was Europe's fault! When powerlessness was at the door, it was not us but Brussels! And in doing so, forgetting that Brussels is us, always, at every moment! We stopped proposing, we stopped wanting. I will not cede anything, anything to those who promote hate, division and national isolationism. I will not allow them to make any proposals. It is up to Europe to make them, up to us to support them, here and now.

Because yes, we cannot allow ourselves to keep the same habits, the same policies, the same vocabulary, the same budgets. We can no longer choose to turn inwards within national borders; this would be a collective disaster. We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated by the illusion of retreat. Only by refusing this lie will we be able to meet the demands of our time, its urgency, its seriousness.

It is up to us, to you, to map out the route which ensures our future, the one I wish to talk to you about today. The route of rebuilding a sovereign, united and democratic Europe. Let us together have the audacity to create this route. As I have done at every point in front of the French people, I would today like to say with resolute conviction: the Europe of today is too weak, too slow, too inefficient, but Europe alone can enable us to take action in the world, in the face of the big contemporary challenges.

Only Europe can, in a word, guarantee genuine sovereignty or our ability to exist in today's world to defend our values and interests. European sovereignty requires constructing, and we must do it. Why? Because what constructs and forges our profound identity, this balance of values, this relation with freedom, human rights and justice cannot be found anywhere on the planet. This attachment to a market economy, but also social justice. We cannot blindly entrust what Europe represents, on the other side of the Atlantic or on the edges of Asia. It is our responsibility to defend it and build it within the context of globalization.

So instead of concentrating all of our energy on our internal divisions, as we have been doing now for far too long, instead of losing our debates in a European civil war – because from budgetary debates to financial debates and political debates we are indeed witnessing a European civil war – we must instead consider how to make a strong Europe, in the world as it is today. And therefore how to build the six keys to sovereignty that are essential for success.

Confronted with each of these challenges, we now need to take tangible action. The first key, the foundation of any political community, is security. In Europe, we are seeing a two-fold movement: gradual and inevitable disengagement by the United States, and a long-term terrorist threat with the stated goal of splitting our free societies. In these areas, Europe is at last aware of its fragilities and the need to act in concert. We need to step up the work under way to combat the financing of terrorism and terrorist propaganda online. We have started doing so, a few of us. We need to enhance our cyber security and create a common area of security and justice.

In the area of defense, our aim needs to be ensuring Europe's autonomous operating capabilities, in complement to NATO. The basis for this autonomy has been laid, with historic progress in recent months. In June, we laid the foundations of Defence Europe: Permanent Structured Cooperation, enabling us to make enhanced commitments, to progress together and to better coordinate ourselves; and also a European Defence Fund to fund our capacities and research. We are in the process of giving this essential framework content, through discussions between the various member states who wish to move forward in this area.

But we need to go further. What Europe, Defence Europe, lacks most today is a common strategic culture. Our inability to work together convincingly undermines our credibility as Europeans. We do not have the same cultures, be they parliamentary, historical or political, or the same sensitivities. And that cannot be changed in one day. But I propose trying, straight away, to build that common culture, by proposing a European intervention initiative aimed at developing a shared strategic culture.

To create this convergence, we need deep-rooted change. I thus propose to our partners that we host in our national armed forces – and I am opening this initiative in the French forces – service members from all European countries desiring to participate, as far upstream as possible, in our operational anticipation, intelligence, planning and support. At the beginning of the next decade, Europe needs to establish a common intervention force, a common defense budget and a common doctrine for action.

I want this common culture to be expanded, in the fight against terrorism, to our intelligence services. I thus want a European Intelligence Academy to be created, to strengthen the ties between our countries through training and exchanges.

In the face of global terrorism, security Europe needs to be our shield. Terrorists are infiltrating all Europe, and their networks are there. So we must act together, from prevention through to suppression. That is why we need to create a European Public Prosecutor's Office for organized crime and terrorism, above and beyond the current competences that have just been established.

As we have seen tragically in recent days, security is not just a matter of bombs and assault rifles. Climate change too is threatening our security like never before, and is taking lives every week in Europe. That is why I want us to create a European civil protection force, pooling our resources for rescue and intervention, thus enabling us to respond to disasters that are less and less natural: from fires to hurricanes, from floods to earthquakes.

A Europe that unites to protect, intervene and save lives is a Europe that has rediscovered the meaning of this fraternity that we placed at its heart. It is a Europe that moves beyond words to act tangibly and show the strength of collective action.

The second key is ensuring our sovereignty, at European level, controlling our borders and preserving our values. The migration crisis is not really a crisis but a long-lasting challenge. It has emerged from the profound inequalities of globalization. And Europe is not an island. We are here, and our destiny is bound to that of the Middle East and of Africa. Faced with this challenge, it is once again at European level that we need to act. Only with Europe can we effectively protect our borders, take in those eligible for asylum decently, truly integrate them, and at the same time quickly return those not eligible for such protection.

So long as we leave some of our partners submerged under massive arrivals, without helping them manage their borders; so long as our asylum procedures remain slow and disparate; so long as we are incapable of collectively organizing the return of migrants not eligible for asylum, we will lack both effectiveness and humanity.

In the coming years, Europe will have to accept that its major challenge lies there. And we have only one choice, one alternative: closing in behind our borders, which would be both illusory and ineffective, or the construction of a common area for borders, asylum and migration.

That is why, in the coming year, I would like to see the adoption of the various texts that are being discussed for the reform of our migration policy. I would like a genuine European asylum office to be created that will speed up and harmonize our procedures. I would like us to at last have interconnected databases and secure biometric identification documents, for in France we currently process tens of thousands of asylum applications that our European partners have already refused. I would like a European border police force to gradually be put in place, to ensure rigorous management of borders across Europe and the return of those who cannot stay. And I would like us to finance – in solidarity – a large-scale program to train and integrate refugees, for it is our common duty as Europeans to find a place for refugees who have risked their lives, at home and on their way, and we must not forget that.

But we need to do that without leaving the burden to the few, be they countries of first entry or final host countries, by building the terms for genuine, chosen, organized and concerted solidarity. And it is through this foundation and common area that I propose to achieve that.

This solidarity and care for effectiveness begins with the work of each of us. That is why, in France, I have launched a vast reform to better handle refugees; increase resettlements within our country; speed up asylum procedures, drawing on the German model; and be more efficient in necessary returns. France is already beginning to do itself what I want to see for Europe.

We also need to look further, and I want to say clearly that even the most robust borders and most ambitious security policy will not suffice to curb long-term migration flows. Only stabilization and development in countries of origin will dry them up. Today's great migrations are fuelled by the inequalities that have taken root and the resulting crises. While Europe needs a border, which we must protect and enforce, Europe must above all have a horizon. That horizon is its foreign policy, which needs clear priorities: the Mediterranean, the heart of our civilization, first and foremost. We have turned our backs on it, so as not to see its crises. But they are now scattered across the region.

Our common policy in the Mediterranean and in Africa now needs consolidating. In recent weeks, a few of us have sought to do so, constantly involving the European Union in the initiatives taken for Libya and for the Sahel. More generally, however, our European policy can no longer view Africa as a threatening neighbor, but as the strategic partner with which we need to confront tomorrow's challenges: youth employment, mobility, combating climate change, and technological revolutions.

I would like our partnership with Africa to be an aspect of the overhaul of the European project. Development aid needs to be increased. I have committed to that, for France, and we will increase it each time, year after year. We will also do it better, because sums alone do not a policy make, and on this subject we are often obsessed with symbols. And we tend to think that a development policy boils down to figures. We will work better with civil society.

But this official development aid also needs to be European, with renewed ambition, and as such I am prepared, I wish, to relaunch on new foundations the project for a European financial transaction tax, in order to finance this policy.

We know the debate off by heart. Why do these initiatives always end in failure? Because the technical arrangements we eventually choose penalize one country rather than another. So I have a simple proposal. There are two countries in Europe which have a tax on financial transactions. There is France, and I say that with all the more humility because it is one of my predecessors who established it. So let's take this tax, and generalize it across Europe, and I am prepared, even willing to give all its receipts to European official development aid.

But there is another country that also has a financial transaction tax: the United Kingdom, which long before us had what is known as stamp duty. Some fear unfair competition because, indeed, if we put in place a financial transaction tax that is excessive – something that was envisaged by certain predecessors for others – and damages our very ability to create economic activity, that is unsustainable. But if we decide, collectively, to adopt the British tax, nobody will be able to say that it creates disturbance or distortion of the European Union's competitiveness. No! So we should choose one or the other of these simple systems, with a wide base, but at last, do it! In any case, I will be doing my utmost.

You have understood that the third key to our sovereignty is this foreign policy, this partnership with Africa, this development policy that must guide us in founding a far-reaching project based on mutual investment, education, health and energy. If Europe fails to seize this opportunity, others will and if nothing is done, Europe alone will face all of the consequences.

The fourth key to our sovereignty is being able to address the first of the major global transformations, the ecological transition. This total transformation is revolutionizing the way we produce, redistribute and behave. Today Europe is in a period in between, but our choice is simple: do we want to continue producing as we have in the past, and defend a competitiveness against powers that are making this choice or have already done so, or do we wish to push forward and become leaders of a new production model that will not only be a model for the economy, but also a model for society and civilization, enabling a fresh perspective on inequalities and externalities of a society whose main victims of imbalances are the weakest and most vulnerable?

I have made my choice: I deeply believe that Europe must be a pioneer of an effective and equitable ecological transition. For this to happen, we need to transform our transport, our housing, our industries. For this to happen, we need to invest and provide powerful incentives for this transformation. It is first necessary to establish a fair carbon price, one that is high enough to ensure this transition. Here too, there will be a fight. Here too, there will be lobbies, resistance saying that it is a good idea but only a few euros. In the coming years, if we do not have a significant carbon price per tonne so as to develop very different directions for our economies, then it will be pointless.

Studies have shown that anything below €25 to €30 per tonne is not effective. It is towards this goal that we should work, and starting today, we must get organized to do so – this is crucial. A significant floor price, a genuine single price, a genuine transition to trigger this transformation of our economies, supporting sectors in need, supporting regions that will be victims of these changes with contracts designed to best address the needs on the ground that will help to promote regions where outdated production models are the most prevalent so that they can benefit from the creation of new jobs.

This transition also means having a European energy market that really works, therefore finally wanting and fostering interconnections. For a long time, we slowed their progress, here too, because it was not necessarily one of our core corporate interests. We need, with Spain, with Portugal, with all of our neighbors, to develop these interconnections. Why? Because in certain seasons, when renewable energy is produced in large quantities, we must ensure that all of Europe benefits. At other times, when nuclear energy is indispensable, low-carbon – no-carbon – and low-cost, we must also pool the benefits. We will have a European energy market that functions more efficiently if at last we swiftly develop these interconnections.

If this strategy is to be successful, we must also ensure that our manufacturers that are most exposed to globalization are on an equal footing with competing companies and industries from other regions in the world that do not have the same environmental requirements. That is why we should have a European border carbon tax; it is crucial.

The floor price, interconnections, the regional transition contract and border carbon tax are the four pillars of this ambition for energy in Europe. All of this cannot be done in a day, I am aware of the resistance of some, but if we refuse to talk about it or move in this direction, I know one thing: it will never be done. Yet we can give ourselves a firm goal: in five years, in 10 years, we can build transitions to accomplish this, but starting today, let's move forward. Europe must spearhead this energy transition and it needs this ambition, this unified market to build this model.

This European ambition must of course not be solely defensive. That is the reason I am also proposing that a European industrial support program be established for clean vehicles and that common infrastructure be deployed to make it possible to cross Europe without damaging it. We need new large-scale projects and this is one that will reconcile our core industrial ambitions in the area.

A Europe that ensures our demanding vision of sustainable development is also a Europe of food safety and sovereignty, and I have deliberately placed this ambition here. We must ask ourselves the right questions, without taboos: is our Common Agricultural Policy protecting our farmers and our consumers? I look back at recent years, I do not completely have the feeling that it is, and we have come to this paradoxical situation in which the CAP has become a French taboo while our farmers continue to criticize the way it works.

Agricultural policy should not be a policy which over-administers all of the European Union regions, all of the sectors and quite often, an income policy roughly accompanying the transition and producing at times complex plans that we have trouble explaining to our peoples.

European agricultural policy must make it possible for farmers to make a decent living and protect them from market vagaries and major crises; it must help them evolve over time and build responsible agriculture. There will always be several agricultural models in Europe and I would like to see every country be able to support this transformation on the basis of their ambitions and preferences. And this new Common Agricultural Policy, so as not to be bureaucratic and unfair, must be the instrument of agricultural transition, of our sovereignty in the face of the major challenges of globalization. It must restore vitality and ambition to our rural regions.

In other words, I would like us to engage with assurance and originality in a Common Agricultural Policy with two important objectives: protecting us from these considerable risks and volatile global markets that could threaten Europe's food sovereignty; and promoting the major European agricultural transition and giving countries more flexibility in organizing their regions and sectors, reducing bureaucracy, and, at regional level, allow for more flexible support for industries, wherever choices – which remain collective choices on the ground – are necessary.

What Europeans are demanding is to be able to have confidence in the foods and products they use on a daily basis, and that is part of the food safety I was talking about. And here too we see that acting at European level is vital. This summer we experienced this with what has been called the egg crisis. We saw that when something goes wrong somewhere in Europe, because of our integrated market, it has consequences everywhere in Europe that can cast doubt on our food safety, with a perfectly legitimate demand on the part of our citizens to be truthfully informed about these topics in real time.

We therefore should establish a European investigation and inspection force to tackle fraud, ensure food safety, and ensure compliance with quality standards throughout Europe. This transformation, we must also carry it out. And in this respect, I support the choice of President Juncker to end double food standards throughout Europe and ensure that this investigation and inspection force is the driver of this legitimate convergence.

What Europeans are demanding is to be able to have confidence in the experts that are providing us information. Our recent debates on glyphosate and endocrine disruptors have proven the need for European scientific assessment that is more transparent and more independent, with better-funded research so that risks can be identified and alternatives proposed. This is crucial. Today we have political debates that, at times, seek to take the place of scientific debate. Science must provide information on the dangers but also independently and transparently indicate scientifically proven alternatives. In no case must science be eclipsed to the benefit of political commitments which then become remarks by "experts" or words of authority; nor must it give way to public discourse which coincides with that of lobbies or industrial interests and makes the collective decisions our citizens expect of us less transparent.

The fifth key to our sovereignty concerns digital technology. This challenge is also one of an extensive transformation of our economies, our societies and our very imaginations. The digital transformation is not a sector of activity, it is not a contemporary anecdote, and Europe has a great deal to both lose and gain from it. Europe has this singular attachment to a continuous balance between freedom, solidarity and security, and this is precisely what is at stake in the digital revolution. Europe, which established a catch-up economic model after the war, must take the lead in this revolution through radical innovation. So yes, throughout Europe, we must do everything in our power to have these digital champions, to attract talented scientists and entrepreneurs.

I know that some people do not agree with this. It is the economic policy that I wish to conduct in France. We are no longer living in times in which our economies can develop as if they were closed, as if talented people no longer moved around and as if entrepreneurs were tied to a post. We can regret this, but this is how it is. This digital revolution is being led by talented people and it is by attracting them that we will attract others. This is the direction the government is taking and what the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Economy and Finance, and the Minister of Innovation, Higher Education and Research, among others, are advocating within the government.

We will press on with these reforms, but Europe also needs to have ambition in this area. I want Europe to take a leading role in this revolution through radical innovation. I propose that, over the next two years, we create a European agency for disruptive innovation in the same vein as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the United States during the conquest of space. This must be our ambition. Today, we have a unique window to do it. We must drive this ambition, finance research in new areas such as artificial intelligence, and accept risks. Such an agency would make Europe an innovator and not a follower.

And rather than bemoaning the fact that the current leaders in the digital technology are American, to be followed by the Chinese, we must create European champions, we must invent in this global upheaval fair securities and efficient regulations. I want a Europe which succeeds in this digital transition, but it is disrupting our points of reference and our economic and social organization. And today, this digital continent has no standards, or more precisely, it has a law: the survival of the fittest. It is Europe's responsibility to define its regulatory framework so as not to effectively be subject to the survival of the fittest here.

To this end, the digital single market project is a unique opportunity which we must take to create the methods which will allow us to defend the rules protecting our individual freedoms and confidentiality to which everyone is entitled, which will allow us to protect our companies' economic data and create European regulations which will at the same time provide legitimate protection to persons and companies, which will allow European actors to emerge in a fair market and which will help compensate for the deep upheaval in the traditional economy sometimes created by this change. Major digital platforms and data protection are at the core of our sovereignty in that regard.

Can the same be said of taxation? This is a debate we must have, because I fully believe in this innovation economy, I fully believe in an open world, but an open world is only worth having if there is fair competition! And we cannot accept having European actors who must pay tax, while their international counterparts do not, and digital actors who pay no tax competing with traditional economy actors who do pay tax!

To that end, France, with its partners, has begun supporting an initiative at the level of economy and finance ministers which I would like to see extended to heads of state and government level, namely the taxation of value created, where it is produced, which will allow us to overhaul our tax systems and to stringently tax companies which relocate outside of Europe for the specific purpose of avoiding tax. This is a fair tax because it taxes across countries the amount of value which is created in each, and simply recalls a fundamental element of our common and democratic philosophies: that there are common goods to be financed and that all economic actors must play their part. In the new economy, there can be no actors who are stowaways from the contemporary world because, as we know, this new economy also creates upheaval and inequality, disrupts territories and therefore creates situations which require compensation and support which the public authorities must be able to resolve. It is therefore fair and legitimate that when they make profits elsewhere, they contribute to this solidarity where they create value.

As you can see, I do not want Europe to simply succeed at this digital transition, but to build a fair framework for it, a framework which will allow us to uphold our values, the fundamentals of our civilizations and the essential economic balances. That is why in this digital Europe we must also defend our copyright, and wherever it exists, we must defend the value created by those who truly create it. And copyright is not a debate from another era, it is not an outdated debate. People stigmatize France by saying "we already know what you're going to say, you're going to talk to us about copyright." As talented directors from around Europe know, without our European imagination – and I will return to that in a moment – Europe is no longer itself; but this is also a question of justice.

Would the digital continent therefore be the only one where the value created does not lie with whoever truly creates it, but rather with whoever transports it, whoever brings it to its final consumer? So if we are here today, if we have addressed all the challenges I have just mentioned, if we are still standing, it is because we have had emotions, a common culture, because the authors are the people who etymologically hold what is most important to us and who hold true authority in Europe. Copyright must therefore be defended in this contemporary digital space. And it is the dignity of Europe, its very ability to exist and not to break up into a continent of similar states that means that, to succeed in this transition, we must defend fair remuneration for all authors and for all forms of digital creation.

The final key to our sovereignty is industrial and monetary economic power. Making the heart of Europe an economic and industrial power naturally requires the energy and digital technology policies I have just mentioned. It also means having an ambitious space policy and consolidating a competitive European industry on a global scale. But long-term economic power can only be built around a single currency, which is why I am so firmly attached to the ambitions of the eurozone. I am not ashamed of belonging to the eurozone, I'm sorry if some people are, and I think that it neither relieves nor pleases any non-eurozone EU member state that those who share the euro are afraid to say that they do so in order to do something with it.

Because it is through this Economic and Monetary Union, at its heart, that we can create the heart of an integrated Europe. I know there are questions and concerns about this issue, and I want to be clear: the fundamental goal is not to find a mechanism which will magically solve all our problems, if there were one, we would have already created it. It is not to pool our past debts, nor to solve public financing problems in one state or another, it is to reduce unemployment, which still affects one young person in five in the eurozone. So what we need is a long-term economic and political strategy, and our challenge within the eurozone is to work out how to make it an economic power which can compete with China and the United States, and how to achieve what for the past 10 years we have failed to do: to create jobs and ensure that today's generation of young people are not destined for unemployment because of our failures and instability!

To achieve this, we must all assume our responsibilities, which is why in France we have begun unprecedented reforms – I had announced them, and the government is now implementing them. Reforms in the labor market, vocational training and financing the economy will allow us to create growth and employment and to do what we need to do in France. Because no one would listen to us for a second if our European ambitions were merely a means of fixing our domestic problems. That is not their purpose, and in light of what we are doing in France, I will not allow anyone in Europe say that France now has no legitimacy to propose measures. We are making reforms, we are changing the face of our country, but we are doing so with a European ambition. I have no red lines – I only have horizons.

And I am shouldering and will continue to shoulder France's responsibility, because it is in the interests of France and Europe, but we also need common rules and instruments. We need convergence and stability through national reforms, but also by coordinating our economic policies and a common budget. If we want to reduce our differences and develop our common goods – everything I have just mentioned, security, protection in the context of migration, digital transition, ecological transition, a genuine development and partnership policy – these common goods, foremost among which is our currency, must be financed. And we therefore need more investment, we need the means to provide stability in the face of economic shocks, as no state can tackle an economic crisis alone when it no longer controls its monetary policy. So for all these reasons, yes we need a stronger budget within Europe, at the heart of the eurozone.

This budget's resources must reflect its ambition. European taxes in the digital or environmental fields could thus form a genuine European resource to fund common expenditure. And beyond that, we must discuss partly allocating at least one tax to this budget, such as corporation tax once it has been harmonized.

The solidarity required for a budget must be combined with increased responsibility, which starts by observing the rules we have set ourselves and implementing essential reforms.

A budget must be placed under the strong political guidance of a common minister and be subject to strict parliamentary control at European level. Only the eurozone with a strong and international currency can provide Europe with the framework of a major economic power.

So let's look at the issue the right way round: if the euro is to become the currency of all EU member states once they meet the criteria, we must quickly create a strong, efficient, inclusive eurozone, and this strength will benefit all who join it in the future.

The real issue here is unity. European unity – forged through Franco-German reconciliation and the reunification of Eastern and Western Europe – is our greatest success and most precious asset. In addition to these six battles for sovereignty, it is the battle for unity I want to lead. We will never have a strong, sovereign Europe if it is not united and coherent in itself. If we lose this unity, we risk falling back into our deadly divisions and destructive hegemony. Our challenge is to remain united without chasing uniformity.

Europe's 28 member states cannot operate like the original six-member bloc. Our project, the future of our peoples cannot be based on the lowest common denominator. If we are to cultivate the desire to push ahead and ensure Europe's progress benefits everyone, we need to constantly accommodate the driving ambition of some while allowing others to move ahead at their own speed. Solidarity and culture are the cement that will bind us together and keep us from fearing the progress of the precursors. I would like to stress the idea of solidarity, because while we have talked at length over the past ten years about responsibility in Europe, we have neglected the solidarity between us.

Europe and its single market – its foundations – are not a race to the bottom, as we thought in the early 1990s, distorting the ambition of the common market, giving the idea that it was an environment for the lowest bidder: it was the diktat of a market that had lost its sense of direction! This is not what the common market, Europe's essence, is about. As Jacques Delors said, it is meant to "create competition that stimulates, cooperation that strengthens and solidarity that unites" – all at once. We must strike that balance again, without which unbridled competition will become unsalvageable discord.

This is the aim of my current combat to revise the Posting of Workers Directive, which is no minor issue at a time when France is also striving to reform its labor market. We must revitalize labor relations, but I will never do that if I cannot defend those who work in the face of social dumping. Europe does not currently protect against social dumping and we have allowed a European market to develop that runs contrary to our labor market's very philosophy of unity. No matter where I go in Europe, no one is pleased with this situation.

Reforming this directive is a fight for justice and social convergence in Europe. In this respect, I applaud Jean-Claude Juncker's proposal to create a European Labor Authority to ensure that rules are enforced. Such an authority is necessary, but we must go further and establish genuine tax and social convergence.

To do this, I have two concrete proposals. The first is corporate taxation. Efforts are already under way, but we must work faster to harmonize the tax base. And France and Germany should be able to finalize plans within the next four years. We have the opportunity of a clear mandate – let's move forward with this. However, it goes deeper than this: we cannot have such disparate corporation tax rates in the European Union. This tax divergence fuels discord, destroys our own models and weakens all of Europe.



This is why I would like to see a binding rate range that member states must commit to ahead of the next European budget in 2020. Compliance with this corridor would determine access to the European Cohesion Fund, because members cannot enjoy European solidarity and play against the others at the same time. I commend the European Commission's recent initiatives in this regard and, through the efforts of Margrethe Vestager and Pierre Moscovici, its push for certain players and countries to make changes. We must go further: we cannot have lower corporation taxes financed by our structural funds. Doing so is to take Europe backwards, to encourage division.

My second proposal is to develop true social convergence and gradually bring our social models closer together. Doing so is entirely compatible with our global competitiveness. I don't see any contradiction between these ambitions. Because we must see the world as it is. A few years ago, some people would say "you know, a pan-European ambition is a bad idea; competitiveness is our priority." Those who tried lost their people's trust. What did the British people say ahead of the Brexit vote? The British middle class said "your competitiveness is all good and well, but it is not for me. The attractiveness of London's financial center is not for me." When you listen closely, what were the American people really saying? "This open America, this competitiveness that you have sold us, isn't made for us, the middle classes." Isolationism is gaining ground, wherever democracies have taken this no-holds-barred approach to competition as far as it can go.

So in Europe, we need a revamped social model: not one stuck in the twentieth century, and not that of a catch-up economy. We need to set out the terms at European level, as this is the right scale for this battle. I would like to begin talks as early as November to define the common minimum European social standards, and to build that floor I would also like to build rules for convergence. We should establish a minimum wage that takes into account the economic realities of each country, while gradually moving towards convergence.

Our social contributions are too disparate today, and when workers are posted to other countries, the main source of inequality among inequality today is these contributions. This is why, above and beyond the reforms on posted workers I would like to see by the end of the year, I propose that the higher rate of social contributions should be paid, but to the home country. This money would go into a solidarity fund for the less wealthy countries to support their convergence.

In the coming months, we need to define simple and relevant social convergence criteria to guide the 2020 budget debate and enhance consistency in the structural funds. We also need to create access conditions to the market and this budget at the heart of Europe, because it is through this convergence that we must integrate the solidarity I spoke about earlier.

This is what solidarity that unites is: a fair, protective and ambitious Europe. Monnet wanted to unite people. Sorbon called on people to live together in harmony. The goal remains the same. That is to what we must always return.

The strongest cement that binds the European Union together will always be culture and knowledge. This Europe, where every European recognizes their destiny in the figures adorning a Greek temple or in Mona Lisa's smile, where they can feel European emotions in the writings of Musil or Proust, this Europe of cafés that Steiner described, this Europe that Soares called "a law, a spirit, a custom", this Europe of landscapes and folklores, this Europe of Erasmus, the continent's preceptor, who said every young person should "travel the continent to learn other languages" and "unlearn their natural boorish ways", this Europe, which has lived through so many wars and conflicts: what holds it together is its culture.

Our fragmentation is only superficial. In fact, it is our greatest opportunity. Instead of deploring our many languages, we should make them an asset. Europe must be a place where all students can speak at least two European languages by 2024. Instead of lamenting the divisions between our countries, let's step up exchanges. In 2024, half of students in a given age group should have spent at least six months in another European country by the time they are 25, whether they are university students or learning a trade. In this place where pioneers, like those in Bologna, Montpellier, Oxford or Salamanca, believed in the power of learning, critical thinking and culture, I want us to be worthy of this grand design.

I believe we should create European Universities – a network of universities across Europe with programs that have all their students study abroad and take classes in at least two languages. These European Universities will also be drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence. We should set for ourselves the goal of creating at least 20 of them by 2024. However, we must begin setting up the first of these universities as early as the next academic year, with real European semesters and real European diplomas.

We should begin creating these ties from high school. I want us to begin harmonizing and mutually recognizing secondary diplomas. As we have already done for university students through the Bologna Process, let's launch a Sorbonne Process to create a programme accommodating exchanges, changes and transitions throughout the European secondary-school system.

Because as Mounier said, "that which is universal speaks to people in several languages, each of which reveals its own singularity." These initiatives are not acts of resistance. They are acts of conquest for future generations. Because what remains at the end is that which unites people! It is this collegiate life together that you will experience in Paris, Milan, Berlin or Gdansk. This is what matters, what makes up this European cement, this unbreakable tie that holds Europe together, so that when governments lock horns, when policies change, there are women and men who can carry these shared histories on.

But most of all, I want you to understand that it is up to your generations to build this Europe in several languages. A multilingual Europe is a unique opportunity. Europe is not a homogeneous area into which we must all dissolve. European sophistication is an ability to see all the many parts without which Europe would not be Europe. But it is also what makes Europeans, when they travel, more than just French, just Greek, just German or just Dutch. They are European, because they have inside of them this universalism of Europe and its multilingualism.

Europe must be shaped by these languages and it will always be made of the untranslatable. We must work hard to keep this. Political and journalistic debate is fueled by untranslatable notions. Let me share with you something I've learned: tomorrow, some people will be seeking out the small divergences and the debates around this speech, and those without any ideas of their own will be focusing on the sticking points, saying "look, there. . .". But I've noticed that, while there are indeed sticking points at times, they are often not about fundamental issues. They are about something untranslatable, something that stems from a difference in language, in culture. The word "debt" is a perfect example: it does not have the same meaning or implications in France as it does in Germany. We need to consider this when we speak to each other.

Our political debates are always more complicated in Europe than in the rest of the world. Because, in some ways, the European Sisyphus always has his untranslatable burden to roll up the hill. But this untranslatable burden is in fact an opportunity. It is the mysterious part inside each of us, and it is the part of us that trusts in the European project. It is the fact that at a given moment, despite not speaking the same language and having these unfamiliar and complex differences, we decide to move forward together instead of letting those things drive us apart. I champion this untranslatable quality, our complex differences, because I want to imagine Sisyphus happy.

In the end, it is the young people of Europe who must ensure the movement of ideas and people, who must want Europe. This is what has always united us, more than rigid rules or borders. This is why we must trust in Europe, in what all of us have learned over the centuries, to find the path of this unity.

Finally, the essence of the European project is democracy. I would even say that it is its greatest strength, what really fuels it. As in the 1930s, democracy is being accused of weakness. In Europe today there is a fascination with "illiberal" democracies. There is a fascination with brutal unilateralism, because Europe has supposedly become ineffective, and with it democracy. I will tirelessly argue the opposite.

For Europe, sovereignty, unity and democracy are inextricably linked. And those who think we could choose sovereignty without democracy are mistaken! Those who think we could simply, casually, create democratic "gimmicks" without wanting a project of sovereignty and unity are equally mistaken! We must promote this indivisible triangle.

But I am telling you very emphatically this afternoon that we have drawn a line under one form of European integration. The founding fathers built Europe in isolation from the people, because they were an enlightened vanguard and perhaps because they could do that, and they made progress by proving subsequently that it worked. Perhaps they enjoyed a trust that is no longer exclusive to leaders; that is how things are. They lived in another time, when means of communication were not the same.

European democratic doubt – the doubt which the "no" votes in the French and Dutch referendums made us experience – put an abrupt end to that chapter. And I think we were wrong to move Europe forward in spite of the people. There was a time when we thought we had to, in a way, shake up our democracies by pushing Europe forward despite everything. That was a mistake, and that mistake was compounded by a lack of proposals: we twisted people's arms and said, "careful, we'll no longer be making proposals and we'll no longer be coming to ask your opinion." And we entered that "glacial period" when France, like many others, was afraid to make proposals because it was afraid of something taboo, something dreadful: a treaty change.

The German taboo is financial transfers; the French taboo is treaty change. Ultimately, if we want Europe, both will happen, I want to reassure everyone of that, but we must stop being afraid of the people. In terms of our approach, we must simply stop building our Europe in isolation from them. But we mustn't fall into the trap of the populists or extremes, which consists in saying: "let's ask the question in a simplistic way: yes or no?". We know the answer: it is always "no", whatever the question. We need to overhaul the European project, through and with the people, with much greater democratic stringency than a mere binary question.

That is why, if we want to move forward again, I'd like us to hold democratic conventions that will be an integral part of Europe's radical reform. Once we've defined the simple terms of a roadmap shared by the main governments ready to move in that direction. I'd like us to be able – for six months next year, in all the countries that so wish – to organize a huge debate on the same issues and identify the priorities, concerns and ideas that will fuel our roadmap for tomorrow's Europe. Restore proper order to things instead of asking at the last minute – gripped by fantasies and incomprehension – whether “yes” or “no” to an opaque text written in secret; we should organize an open, free, transparent European debate in order to build this project that will finally give content and purpose to our European elections in 2019.

And let me be clear: anyone who is afraid of this has grown too used to the idea that intelligent plans are drawn up in a complex, opaque way; that's not true. Anyone who has fallen into the trap of the Europe-haters should go and ask some of the farmers who are suffering today. They may tell you: “I don't want anything more to do with Europe.” That's the bread-and-butter of the Front National in France! But when you start getting into a discussion: “OK, so what do you want? What will best protect you?”. they sometimes want another Europe! But they themselves will come round to the idea that Europe would protect them better than an absurd national policy.

It's this robust debate that will also enable us to rediscover the thread and the stringency of many of our common policies! Let's not be afraid of that debate. But above all, let's not be afraid of having a European debate for the 2019 elections! And I can already hear all those faint-hearted people who have got used to the idea that European elections are merely an aggregate of national debates, little routines where we place our pawns, where we never talk about Europe but instead about all our attitudes. Let's give the European elections a project to feed on and see who is for and who is against! And let's have a democratic debate about it.

Also in order to finish building this democratic area, I'm arguing for transnational lists for 2019 that will enable Europeans to vote for a coherent, common project. How? And here I acknowledge that this idea originated with a few of the people in this hall... The British have decided to leave us, freeing up 73 seats in the European Parliament. We have a simple choice. Sharing out the spoils, in a delicate and dignified manner and deciding that Europe – for lack of a common spirit – is a syndicate of co-owners: using a carefully-considered distribution key, we'd share out the vacated MEPs' seats. Or we decide that those 73 MEPs must be Europe's response to Brexit. And there will be a transnational list where people vote for the same MEPs throughout Europe. I dare you!

And to all the major European parties which explained to us that it would be tremendous to have a “Spitzenkandidat”, a lead candidate, for the European Commission, making the elections more European, I say: “Take that reasoning to its conclusion! Don't be afraid! Have genuine European elections! Don't make finely-weighted calculations for your erstwhile interests! Let's do it!” But then you will all see, at European level, what appeared clearly in France in May: namely that what sometimes keeps you in common parties no longer exists, because your relationship with Europe is no longer the same, within the same major parties, and you no longer believe in the same things.

I will not leave those major European parties a monopoly on the debate about Europe and the European elections! Because citizens must overhaul it, via the grassroots, from the bottom up, on the basis of truth. And at the following elections, I hope the real step forward will be half of the European Parliament being elected on these transnational lists.

France has often seen the European Parliament as the second division of national politics, and I say it here to several French members of parliament and MEPs. That's a serious mistake. If we want to build a sovereign Europe, pool our competencies in order to be stronger, make our trade policy more transparent and control the budget we need for the eurozone, this Parliament of Europeans must be the crucible for our shared project.

This ambition must be our political project, with a goal – 2024 –, while maintaining, together, the urgent need for action and a sense of the long term.

In 2019, Europeans will elect their MEPs. That will be the time of Brexit. If we start overhauling Europe now, it will also be a time of regained trust in our future, with a clear mandate: our MEPs must act to transform Europe. And five years later, they will leave 500 million Europeans with a new Europe.

A few weeks after the European elections, Paris will host the Olympic Games. But it's not just Paris that is hosting. It's France and, with it, Europe that will keep alive the Olympic spirit born on this continent. It will be a unique time of coming together, a magnificent opportunity to celebrate European unity. In 2024, the Ode to Joy will ring out, and the European flag can proudly be flown alongside our national emblems.

That is why this debate, this ambition must be promoted now. This is the right time. Let it be built for the European elections of 2019. This is the right time! And this term from 2019 to 2024 is that of Europe's transformation. Those who tell you we must wait have been saying we must wait for years or decades. Procrastination is the cousin of that lethargy I was talking about earlier. They want to miss another opportunity! We have been shaken up! There are threats! Boldness is our only answer. Renewed ambition is the only way of responding. Let's not be afraid, let's move forward.

What will this Europe of 2024 look like? As I have said, Europe's unity is the basis of this overhaul. The European Union in 2024 will be brought together on two pillars, in my view. The first represents the values of democracy and the rule of law. They're non-negotiable, there can be no cherry-picking. On values, there can be no two-speed Europe. They are the catalyst for our unity and freedom. And in this respect, I want to pay tribute to the ongoing work by the Commission in recent months, and in particular that of Frans Timmermans.

The second pillar is the single market, which is still the best guarantee of our power, prosperity and attractiveness. The work of simplification undertaken over the past three years by the current Commission must be continued and broadened. I'd like us to resume the European debate we initiated before the British vote.

The 28 of us need a simpler, more transparent, less bureaucratic Europe! If the vitality of the law is Europe's strength, the profusion of standards sparks its rejection. Together with business leaders, NGOs and citizens' panels, we should gradually review European rules to check they are appropriate, understood, useful.

The single market – simple, effective, protecting – must become, once again, an area of convergence rather than competition. The same goes for its external mirror image, namely trade policy. I hear the ambitions put forward by some, but I say to them: "Careful, I'm ready to follow you, but only if this trade policy is radically updated, radically changed. I don't want new trade talks with yesterday's rules, which have led us to the absurd situations we have today on the agreement between Europe and Canada." We need to have transparent negotiations and we need the trade agreements to be implemented. We need environmental stringency in our trade debates. And we need reciprocity, by creating a European trade prosecutor tasked with verifying adherence to the rules by our competitors and immediately issuing penalties for any unfair practices.

In order to work better, this European Union cannot escape the issue of its institutions. We won't be able to continue with a Commission of nearly 30 members, as if they each had to take care of their country's interests. That's neither the meaning nor the spirit of the European project. A 15-strong Commission will have to be our goal, and in order to make progress let us be simple: the major founding countries should give up their commissioners, for a start! We will set the example. This will enable us to bring together skills rather than fragmenting them.

This EU of the market and law has a remit to open itself up more widely in a few years' time. Why? Because this European Union – based on values and this single market, simplified and overhauled in this way, closer to our citizens and more stringent on trade – is a Europe whose borders are not finalized.

When they fully respect the *acquis* and democratic requirements, this EU will have to open itself up to the Balkan countries, because our EU is still attractive and its aura is a key factor of peace and stability on our continent. They'll have to respect the conditions stipulated, but securing them to a European Union reinvented in this way is a precondition for their not turning their backs on Europe and moving towards either Russia or Turkey, or towards authoritarian powers that don't currently uphold our values.

In the same way, in a few years' time the UK will be able to find its place, if it wishes, in this EU refocused on uncompromising values and an effective market. This is why you haven't heard me talking about Brexit this afternoon. The discussions under way will not define Europe's future. But in this revamped, simplified European Union that I propose, I cannot imagine that the UK would be unable to find its place.

If we can accept this demanding enlargement, it is also because the European Union's stronger foundation will allow greater forms of differentiation. And I take full responsibility for this philosophy. Europe is already moving at several speeds, so we should not be afraid to say so and want it! It's because those who go faster no longer dare to forge ahead that the very essence of this ambition has been lost, that the others watched them move forward and ended up saying, "being in the vanguard of Europe doesn't look that good, they dare not even meet, propose or move forward anymore."

No, let's embrace the differentiations, the vanguard, the heart of Europe I was talking about earlier. We've got to make progress on all our major challenges, quickening the pace and setting our sights higher. No State must be excluded from the process, but no country must be able to block those wanting to make faster progress or forge further ahead.

Let me say, going back to what Mario Monti and Sylvie Goulard proposed a few years ago: the idea that whoever wants the least can block the others is a heresy. We must accept these many differences and, as at every key moment in its history, Europe will move forward first of all through the determination of a few. This ambition is never a source of exclusion, it is the seed of European unity and sovereignty.

The time when France took decisions for Europe never existed, except in the fantasy world of a few misguided nationalists. The time when France “sought” to take decisions for Europe may have existed; but that is not what I want to do. But the time when France makes proposals in order to move forward with Europe and every European who so wishes – that time has returned, and I’m thinking right now of Robert Schuman who, in Paris on May 9, 1950, was bold enough to propose building Europe. I remember his powerful words: ‘A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.’”

So today, I take responsibility for making proposals, forging further ahead, being bold enough to talk about Europe and finding words of affection and ambition for it again. Not imposing, forcing or seeking to reinvent everything – many things have already been said – but taking the risk of proposing a coherent, ambitious vision, proposing a way forward, an objective, rather than discussing instruments, and taking the vital risk of proposing initiatives.

Two days after our main partner’s elections I want again to congratulate Federal Chancellor Merkel, whom I look forward to going on working with because we share the same European commitment, and I know her commitment to Europe. I also know how upset she is to see nationalist, hateful discourse winning so many votes. But I know that her response will be to adopt neither an inward-looking nor a timid approach. I know that, like each time her country has faced historic challenges, she will have the same reaction: boldness and a sense of history. And that’s what I suggest to her.

So first of all I am making the proposal to Germany for a new partnership. We will not agree on everything, or straightaway, but we will discuss everything. To those who say that is an impossible task, I reply: you may be used to giving up; I am not. To those who say it is too difficult, I say: think of Robert Schuman five years after a war, from which the blood was barely dry. On all the issues I have talked about, France and Germany can inject decisive, practical momentum. Why can we not start a “disruptive innovation agency” and launch a joint artificial intelligence program, which would make Europe a driver of global growth? Why can we not set ourselves between now and 2024 the goal of completely integrating our markets by applying the same rules to our businesses, from business law to bankruptcy law?

This pioneering, practical spirit is found in the Élysée Treaty. So let’s get to work and put these joint commitments into a new cooperation treaty which we could sign together for the 55th anniversary of that founding treaty, on January 22, 2018. Let’s produce another Élysée Treaty on January 22 next year.

We share this ambition with Italy too. Tomorrow I will be with Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, and together we will be making initial commitments aimed at this. But we also share this vision with Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and so many other partners. I have met 22 of my counterparts over the past few months; I want to work with every one of them, humbly but with determination, because this is our moment.

France’s time for making proposals has returned, so I will be making proposals to everyone who shares this desire for a sovereign Europe, based on the central objectives I have mapped out: the desire for a united, differentiated Europe, for a democratic Europe supporting the conventions initiative, for launching in the next few weeks a group for the refoundation of Europe. This group will include representatives of each participating Member State and will involve European institutions.

Let’s move forward right now. Between now and summer 2018, the group will work on detailing and proposing measures which will implement the six keys to sovereignty, drawing on discussions arising from the democratic conventions.

As you can see, I am coming to the end of my speech and you have heard me say hardly anything about tools. Because Europe has obsessively talked about treaties, budgets, capabilities and mechanisms, rather than projects. This approach no longer moves us forward. Changing a treaty is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, an ambition. And here too, let’s go about things in the right order, subject by subject.

The group for the refoundation of Europe will identify the necessary changes, with nothing ruled out. Where appropriate, enhanced cooperation, an ad hoc agreement or new legislation will be required and, if necessary for the project, there will be a treaty change. I am ready to take responsibility for this.

In the same way, we should not define a closed club for those who could be members of it, let’s define the way forward, the method, and all those who have the ambition, desire and power will be in it, without blocking or stopping the others.

There is only one ambition in these proposals for action which I've just set out, the initiatives I'm proposing to those partners who want it and the course I wanted to map out before you: to give Europe back to itself and give it back to European citizens. We must convince them that the past 70 years did not simply happen by chance but were the fruit of an unyielding determination anchored in sheer optimism.

We have to rediscover the ambition of a Europe which allowed us to turn our backs on war. Today we know almost nothing any more about the destroyed towns and cities, the barbed wire which divided, which was at the heart of Europe, the fathers, sisters, children whom people, with a lump in their throats, buried because of tragedy. We no longer come across people in our streets whom the war left grief-stricken because fanaticism and nationalism once gained the upper hand over peoples' consciences.

But we are already seeing the beginnings once again of what could destroy the peace we blissfully enjoy. So I say to you, this whole ambition we are championing is about giving people's consciences a jolt; we've got to take responsibility for this at a time when obscurantism is reawakening just about everywhere in Europe. Let us ask ourselves a serious question about the kind of future we want, and find the courage to build it all together.

And I say this to all the European leaders, to all members of parliament in Europe, to all European people: look at our times, look at them closely and you'll see that you have no choice, you don't have the luxury of the generation preceding us, which could manage what had been achieved and had scarcely been built. You don't have the luxury they had. You have only a simple choice: making a bit more room at each election for nationalists, for those who hate Europe – and, in 5, 10, 15 years they'll be there. We have already seen them win here!

Or you can choose to shoulder your responsibilities, everywhere, and want this Europe, taking every risk, each of us in our own country, because we must have this heartfelt commitment, because the scars which disfigured our Europe are our scars!

So we must champion this ambition now. Now, because the time has come, a wake-up call for our fellow citizens, but also because above all it's our responsibility to our young people throughout Europe. Those in charge are taking responsibility today for leaving our young people under the influence of every extreme, for offering them a future which won't have the luxury we have had – that of choosing one's own destiny – and for consigning our young people to a history that repeats itself.

So I say to all Europe's leaders that whatever our difficulties, whatever the upheavals, we have only one responsibility: the one our young people require of us, for the generations to come: that of earning their gratitude, otherwise we will deserve their scorn. I have made my choice.

Thank you.