Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured today by being received in your ancient university and by the address which had been given to me on your behalf and which I greatly value.

I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics. It is the origin of most of the culture, the arts, philosophy and science, both of ancient and modern time. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and the glory which its three or four million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that have sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations in their rise to power, which we have seen in this twentieth century and even in our own lifetime, wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.

And what is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Some of the smaller states have indeed made a good recovery but, over wide areas, a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and their homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient states and nations, that is all that the Germanic races have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide. Indeed, but for the fact that the great Republic across the Atlantic Ocean has at length realized that the ruin or enslavement of Europe would involve their own fate as well, and has stretched out hands of succour and of guidance, but for that, the Dark Ages would have
returned in all their cruelty and squalor. Gentle-
men, they may still return.

Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were
generally and spontaneously adopted by the
great majority of people in many lands, would as if
by a miracle transform the whole scene, and
would in a few years make all Europe, or the great-
er part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is
today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to recre-
er part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is
would in a few years make all Europe, or the great-
er part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is
today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to recre-
e the European Family, or as much of it as we
can, and to provide it with a structure under which
it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom.
We must build a kind of United States of Europe.
In this way only will hundreds of millions of toilers
be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which
make life worth living. The process is simple.
All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of mil-
ions of men and women to do right instead of
wrong and to gain as their reward blessing instead of
cursing.

“We must build a
kind of United States of Europe.”

Much work, Ladies and Gentlemen, has been
done upon this task by the exertions of the
Pan-European Union which owes so much to
Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and which com-
manded the services of the famous French patriot
and statesman Aristide Briand. There is also that
immense body of doctrine and procedure which
was brought into being amid high hopes after the
First World War. I mean the League of Nations.
The League of Nations did not fail because of its
principles or conceptions. It failed because these
principles were deserted by those States who
had brought it into being. It failed because the
governments of those days feared to face the
facts, and act while time remained. This disaster
must not be repeated. There is therefore much
knowledge and material with which to build,
and also bitter dear bought experience to
stir the builders.

I was very glad to read in the newspapers
two days ago that my friend President Truman
had expressed his interest and sympathy with this
great design. There is no reason why a regional
organization of Europe should in any way conflict
with the world organization of the United
Nations. On the contrary, I believe that the larger
synthesis will only survive if it is founded upon
coherent natural groupings. There is already a
natural grouping in the western hemisphere.
We, British, have our own Commonwealth of
Nations. These do not weaken, on the contrary
they strengthen, the world organization. They are
in fact its main support. And why should there
not be a European group which could give a
sense of enlarged patriotism and common
citizenship to the distracted peoples of this
turbulent and mighty continent? And why should
it not take its rightful place with other great
groupings and help to shape the onward
destiny of men? In order that this should be
accomplished there must be an act of faith
in which millions of families speaking many
languages must consciously take part.

We all know that the two world wars through
which we have passed arose out of the vain
passion of a newly-united Germany to play the
dominating part in the world. In this last struggle,
crimes and massacres have been committed for
which there is no parallel since the invasion of
the Mongols in the fourteenth century and no equal
at any time in human history. The guilty must be punished. Germany must
deprived of the power to rearm and make
another aggressive war. But when all this has
been done, as it will be done, as it is being done,
then there must be an end to retribution. There
must be what Mr. Gladstone many years ago
called “a blessed act of oblivion.” We must all
turn our backs upon the horrors of the past. We must
look to the future. We cannot afford to drag
forward across the years that are to come the
hatreds and revenges which have sprung from
the injuries of the past. If Europe is to be saved
from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom,
there must be this act of
faith in the European Fam-
ily and this act of oblivion
against all the crimes and
folies of the past.

Can the free peoples of Europe rise to the height
of these resolves of the soul and of the instincts
of the spirit of man? If they can, the wrongs and
injuries which have been inflicted will have been
washed away on all sides by the miseries which
have been endured. Is there any need for further
floods of agony? Is the only lesson of history to be
that mankind is unteachable? Let there be justice,
mercy and freedom. The peoples have only to will
it, and all will achieve their hearts’ desire.

I am now going to say something that will aston-
ish you. The first step in the recreation of the
European Family must be a partnership between
France and Germany. In this way only can France
recover the moral and cultural leadership of
Europe. There can be no revival of Europe with-
out a spiritually great France and a spiritually
great Germany. The structure of the United States
of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to
make the material strength of a single state less
important. Small nations will count as much as
large ones and gain their honour by their contri-
bution to the common cause. The ancient states
and principalities of Germany, freely joined
together for mutual convenience in a federal
system, might take their individual places among
the United States of Europe.

I shall not try to make a detailed programme for
hundreds of millions of people who want to be
happy and free, prosperous and safe, who wish
to enjoy the four freedoms of which the great
President Roosevelt spoke, and live in accordance
with the principles embodied in the Atlantic
Charter. If this is their wish, if this is the wish of
the Europeans in so many lands, they have only
to say so, and means can certainly be found, and
machinery erected, to carry that wish to full
fruitation.

But I must give you a warning. Time may be short.
At present there is a breathing space. The can-
nons have ceased firing. The fighting has stopped;
but the dangers have not stopped. If we are to
form the United States of Europe, or whatever
name it may take, we must begin now.

In these present days we dwell strangely and
precariously under the shield, and I will even say
protection, of the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb
is still only in the hands of a state and nation
which we know will never use it except in the
cause of right and freedom. But it may well be
that in a few years this awful agency of destruc-
tion will be widespread and the catastrophe
following from its use by several warring nations
will not only bring to an end all that we call
civilization, but may possibly disintegrate the
globe itself.

I must now sum up the propositions which are
before you. Our constant aim must be to build
and fortify the strength of the United Nations
Organization. Under and within that world
concept we must recreate the European Family in
a regional structure called, it may be, the United
States of Europe. And the first practical step would be
to form a Council of Europe. If at first all the
States of Europe are not willing or able to join the
Union, we must never-
thelless proceed to
assemble and combine those who will and those
who can. The salvation of the common people of
every race and of every land from war and servitude
must be established on solid foundations and
must be guarded by the readiness of all men
and women to die rather than submit to tyranny. In all
this urgent work, France and Germany must take
the lead together. Great Britain, the British
Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America and I
trust Soviet Russia – for then indeed all would be
well – must be the friends and sponsors of
the new Europe and must champion its right
to live and shine. Therefore, I say to you:
Let Europe arise!
Previous speeches

2019
Process of Discovery: What Brexit has taught us (so far) about Parliament, Politics and the UK Constitution
RT Hon John Bercow MP
Speaker of the British House of Commons

A strong Europe in a changing world
Mark Rutte
Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Europe – challenges and perspectives
in an ever more complex world
Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović
President of Croatia

2018
The Future of Europe –
Foundations of Unity of the States of Europe
Andrzej Duda
President of the Republic of Poland
Roberto Balzaretti
Swiss State Secretary of Foreign Affairs

2016
Europa – la dernière chance de l’Europe
Valéry Giscard d’Estaing
Former President of the French Republic
Pascal Couchepin
Former Swiss Federal Councillor for Home Affairs

70th Anniversary of Churchill’s speech at UZH
Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission
Johann N. Schneider-Ammann
President of the Swiss Federal Council

2015
The Future of Europe’s Security Architecture
Toomas Hendrik Ilves
President of the Republic of Estonia
Felix Gutzwiller
Chairman of the Swiss Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council of States
Seung Chong
International Lawyer and Author

Ukraine in Europe
Petro Poroshenko
President of Ukraine
Didier Burkhalter
Swiss Federal Councillor for Foreign Affairs

2015
Der Staat im dritten Jahrtausend
Fürst Hans-Adam II. von und zu Liechtenstein
Governing Prince and Head of State of Liechtenstein

Democracy and the National Interest –
The Challenge for Europe

Lord Christopher Patten of Barnes
Former European Commissioner for External Relations and former member of the UK Parliament
Moritz Leuenberger
Former Member of the Swiss Federal Council

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

2012
Quo Vadis Europe
Romano Prodi
Former President of the European Commission and former Prime Minister of Italy
Switzerland and NATO: Partners in Security
Anders Fogh Rasmussen
Secretary General of NATO

2011
Europe at the Crossroads
Tony Blair
Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Doris Leuthard
Swiss Federal Councillor for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications
Adam Roberts
Former Professor for International Relations at Oxford University

Europe’s political and economic challenges in a changing world
Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Council
Michelle Calmy-Rey
Swiss Federal Councillor of Foreign Affairs

2009/2010
The Future of Europe
Jean-Claude Trichet
President of the European Central Bank
Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf
Swiss Federal Councillor of Finance

Kroatien an der Schwelle zur Europäischen Union
Stjepan Mesić
President of Croatia

2008
A Learning Organisation Tackles the Future
Ursula Plassnik
Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs
Michelle Calmy-Rey
Swiss Federal Councillor for Foreign Affairs

What will happen in Europe?
Prof. Dr. Romano Prodi
Former President of the European Commission and former Prime Minister of Italy

Kroatien auf dem Weg in die EU
Dr. Ivo Sanader
Prime Minister of Croatia

2007
The Future of Europe: A British Perspective
Margaret Beckett
Former British Foreign Secretary

Die Bedeutung von Schwellenländern in der globalen Strategie der Deutschen Bank
Dr. Josef Ackermann
Vorsitzender des Vorstands und des Group Executive Committee, Deutsche Bank

2006
60 years after Churchill’s call for unity: where does the United States of Europe stand
Richard Freiherr von Weizsäcker
Former President of the Federal Republic of Germany

Europa in einer neuen Weltordnung
Dr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher
Former German Federal Minister

2005
Europe from an American Perspective
Henry Kissinger
Former US Secretary of State
Denis MacShane
Former Minister of State for Europe
Annemarie Huber-Hotz
President of the Swiss Federal Council

Österreich 10 Jahre in der EU – eine Zwischenbilanz
Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel
Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria

Sir Winston Churchill
30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
10 May 1940 – 26 July 1945
26 October 1951 – 6 April 1955

Member of the Parliament
From 1900 till the start of his term as Prime Minister in 1940.

Nobel Laureate in Literature
Nobel Prize in Literature for his mastery of historical and biographical descriptions as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values, 1953.