

His Eminence Cardinal Agostino CASAROLI (Secretary of State of the Holy See) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, I gladly associate myself with the preceding speakers in expressing the gratitude of the delegation of the Holy See to the French authorities for the extremely cordial welcome extended to us in the capital of a country whose long history has often placed it at the crossroads of solidarity and co-operation between peoples.

Our appreciation is also due to Ambassador Pierre Dessaux and the Executive Secretariat who have organized everything so that our Meeting will make Paris, for a few days, the capital of the new Europe.

There are times in the history of mankind when it finds itself at the crossroads. It may seem banal to note that we are now living through one of those times, historic indeed for the whole of humanity and not only for Europe, meeting here in the persons of the highest representatives of its constituent States, together with the representatives of the United States and Canada which have shared intimately the history of this "old continent" during recent decades and which continue to form with it a singular community of political interests and ideals, responsibility and destiny.

The division of Europe until very recently meant the division of the world into two opposing blocs. The disappearance of this fault line through the old continent, of which the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was the symbol, opens the heart to the hope that the ideological wounds of the world which still persist may also yet be healed.

This world dimension of the fate of Europe and of its transatlantic partners in the historic moment through which we are now passing makes even more understandable the participation in the CSCE process of the Holy See, which I have the honour to represent once again as I did back in 1975 at the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. In fact, the Holy See is a power (if I may be allowed to use this convenient, though possibly incorrect term to

designate the Apostolic See) which is not only European - and despite its limited size it is the territory of the Vatican City State in Europe which enables it to carry out freely its universal mission - but is also a "power" actively engaged in all parts of the world at both the spiritual and moral levels and, consequently, in questions regarding peace, the development of peoples and human rights. As a result, the Holy See considers that there was a double reason for accepting the invitation extended to it.

On behalf of the Holy See I am happy to be able to say here how very glad we are about the developments that are taking place in the heart of Europe. Peoples too long humiliated have risen up in hope, in the hope of a worthier, happier and more humane existence. The events of 1989 in Europe can certainly be attributed in no small measure to the Helsinki process, just as it too can be attributed to developments which were initiated well before that by the objective force of things and by the inevitably underground action of men and women, of young people and the less young, whose names largely remain unknown. Nevertheless, they acted effectively and, by fomenting freedom and affirming the rights of conscience, prepared the way for the conclusions which were then approved by the consensus of States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Particular tribute is due to the perseverance and wisdom of all those who worked for many years in the difficult multilateral negotiations which led to the drafting of the Helsinki Final Act. Their patience managed to bring together positions which were initially so far apart, particularly on account of the opposing political and social philosophies underlying them. Mention should also be made of the constant efforts which led to advances along a sometimes tortuous path and allowed a more effective application of the principles agreed, up until the Vienna Meeting in January 1989, at the beginning of the upheavals which have made that year part of history.

The signatories of the Helsinki Final Act committed themselves to abide by the principles adopted independently of their political, economic or social system. Those principles thus constituted a meeting ground between systems which remained profoundly different. The then Soviet Minister for Foreign

Affairs recalled this when he spoke of a Europe crossed from North to South by the very visible lines separating two social worlds. The United States Secretary of State seemed to echo this when he referred to the barriers which still divide Europe. But, he went on, "We have committed ourselves to bringing them down". That wish has become reality. How many barriers have come down!

While we greatly rejoice at these developments, we must be aware of the new challenges created by the new situation for Europe and its transatlantic partners. It is a historic responsibility that now confronts our continent and the whole world if the fruit of such efforts and so many sacrifices are not to be lost and if Europe and all humanity are to derive all the positive consequences in terms of peace and progress for all.

We are aware, first of all, that new security conditions need to be brought into being. It is an aspiration shared by all Europeans; we all await peace in this "old continent" which has been the source of the most terrible and bloodiest wars to afflict mankind.

The major concern at the time of the Helsinki Conference was to go beyond the feeling of insecurity and mistrust that derived from the period of the cold war and to forestall the danger of new conflicts between worlds in confrontation even in a climate of peaceful co-existence that was proclaimed or desired. The causes of tension largely remained: the specific problems relating to the frontiers established after the great conflict (of which German-Polish frontier on the Oder-Neisse was the symbol); suspicion of attempts at destabilization; protests at interference in the internal affairs of States and, finally, the most important cause - the fear of each of the two worlds that the other wished to destroy it. The little security that could be hoped for was basically found in armed deterrence which was politically and economically stifling and which, in the final analysis, was itself not very secure. The Helsinki Final Act could not remove the deep-seated causes of this situation and sought, therefore, to eliminate, at least in part, its effects. Today the situation has changed.

Cardinal Casaroli

The unification of Germany, and now the treaty between Germany and Poland concerning their frontiers, the strengthening of confidence- and security-building measures and, finally, the new Treaty that 22 of us signed this morning at the Elysée Palace on the reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe undoubtedly constitute milestones on the new road of European security.

But all these stages are, in reality, the sign and the result of a fundamental event consisting in the disappearance of the previous ideological fault line. Today, the common basis of organization and of life in the European States is democracy. Democracy founded on recognition of and commitment to respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens. It is in this new situation that the Holy See sees the most solid basis upon which we can hope for a future of peace and security in Europe.

A Europe of human rights and of peoples, that is what must be more and more realized. Henceforth, there is one conviction which all the continent shares: respect for human dignity is the greatest good to be pursued in the moral order, but also in terms of legal obligations. The CSCE has gradually sought to provide the participating States with means and mechanisms for verifying the implementation of the commitments undertaken with regard to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Holy See cannot but welcome the development of mechanisms already available to all with a view to creating conditions for genuine mutual confidence in this regard.

We also welcome the fact that this conviction has given rise to a more effective respect for the freedom of religion, which the Helsinki process has already allowed to progress substantially. I am thinking particularly of what took place in the course of the two years of negotiations in Vienna. The exercise of the freedom of religion is indicative of the qualitative level of a society. As recent history has shown, where freedom of religion does not exist, freedom does not exist either.

Speaking of the rights of human beings and of peoples, it is no longer possible to refrain from speaking of the right to life, a life not only in freedom but also in dignity. Economic development, no less than political and social freedom and cultural development, is essential for the peace and internal security of States and therefore for the peace and collective security of Europe.

One thing has to be faced today: Europe cannot just be prosperous for some while the fate of many in the continent remains more than precarious and the future of more than one European country seems sombre indeed. Such a situation, if it were to continue, could drag whole peoples down into despair, pushing them towards chaos or to totalitarian choices.

We are aware of the complex causes of such a state of affairs. That is why it is essential that there should be a radical change of attitude with the adoption of an economy that recognizes and respects free and responsible initiative, initiative protected and regulated by just laws so as to remedy the disasters of a system no less contrary to the exigencies of reality than to the freedom of individuals and social groups. But I should like to stress here clearly that freedom of economic initiative, the springboard of progress and the protection of human dignity, the subject and not merely the object of decision-making, cannot be separated from full respect for the requirements of social justice, particularly as it concerns the weakest and neediest classes.

Such requirements are equally applicable to relations between nations. They apply, so far as more directly concerns us here, to the relations between the European peoples.

If we want real unity in our continent and if we wish to see prevail here not only peaceful relations, but also collaboration beneficial to all, it is necessary to take account of it, not only in words but also in the reality of deeds. It is in no one's interest, and it is certainly not in the interests of peace, that part of Europe should feel itself abandoned by the other part.

A Europe which is prosperous can even better discharge its duty of solidarity to other parts of the world which also have urgent need of it.

The security and peace of the European peoples, their prosperity, their unity with their transatlantic partners in a greater community, not withdrawn into itself but open to fruitful and peaceful collaboration with the rest of the world, all this presupposes the attainment of numerous other conditions which are reflected in the Charter, which we are going to sign.

Cardinal Casaroli

I will confine myself to referring to just some of these conditions which the Holy See regards as being particularly important.

First, freedom of culture and of the promotion of free and intensive cultural exchanges with respect for diversity and in recognition of the common values that make Europe a geographical and spiritual whole..

Secondly, respect for the right of peoples to self-determination in conformity with the rules of law and of peaceful international coexistence, particularly where historic considerations of justice justify their aspirations to recover their national and State individuality.

Thirdly, respect for the rights of minorities. As Pope John Paul II said in his message for World Peace Day, 1989 (no. 12), this respect must be regarded to some extent "as the touchstone of harmonious co-existence and as the yardstick of the civil maturity achieved by a country and its institutions".

Fourthly, the CSCE must now meet these new challenges by creating new structures for itself. The Holy See, for its part, has always sought to promote the establishment of relations between States which would involve the rule of law through respect for the commitments undertaken and through institutional forms which go beyond national self-interests. In order to achieve that, small, stream-lined institutions should enable the new Europe to organize itself more effectively so as not to repeat past mistakes. That is why the Holy See welcomes and looks forward to future developments in the CSCE and it will not fail to choose the form and the means the most appropriate to its particular nature for participating in what will be born of our meeting for the Europe of tomorrow.

Finally, the Holy See looks forward to progress towards the reduction of all armaments and towards the elimination of the deadliest weapons, particularly chemical weapons, as well as to control of the arms trade. We also look forward with interest to all attempts within the CSCE which might give rise to mechanisms for conciliation and for the peaceful settlement of disputes, without prejudice to existing international authorities, of which greater use needs to be made.

If I may say so, Mr. Chairman, the Holy See is all the more happy to indicate its support for the principles and the commitments of the Helsinki Final Act and of the Charter that we shall be signing, because it sees in them and recognizes in them an echo of the gospel message with its moral values and high spirituality, which have shaped the soul of Europe and of the regions to which it has spread its ancient culture. And these are values which have so much to say also to other cultures.

Yesterday, the Helsinki Final Act. Today, the Charter of Paris.

I cannot refrain from expressing a wish, and that is that there may be accomplished what a distinguished poet of the nation which has given us such warm hospitality here stated over a century ago when he said, "What Paris counsels, Europe ponders. What Paris begins, Europe continues".