



Dublino, 30 maggio 2023. Al Dublin Castle è stata svelata la scultura “Leonessa” dello scultore Davide Rivalta, alla presenza del Sottosegretario di Stato alla Cultura, Professore Vittorio Sgarbi, dell'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias, dell'artista, del direttore e dello staff dell'OPW-Office of Public Works che hanno voluto ospitare l'opera.

Dopo la posa della scultura, il Sottosegretario Sgarbi ha effettuato una visita agli appartamenti del Castello, al Casino Marino, al sito archeologico di Newgrange e alla baia di Howth per fare ritorno a Lucan House per l'inaugurazione del parco delle sculpture del maestro Rivalta in occasione della Festa della Repubblica italiana.

Veduta del Castello di Dublino in una immagine dell'800.







Lucan House. La Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia a Dublino.

LUCAN HOUSE



LA RESIDENZA DELL'AMBASCIATORE D'ITALIA IN IRLANDA
NELL'85° ANNIVERSARIO DELLE RELAZIONI DIPLOMATICHE
TRA L'ITALIA E L'IRLANDA E NEL 75° ANNIVERSARIO
DELLA COSTITUZIONE ITALIANA

L'Ambasciatore d'Italia Gaetano Cortese ringrazia per il generoso sostegno alla pubblicazione "La Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia in Irlanda" la Ferrero.

FERRERO®





Cork, 25 luglio 2022. L'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias in visita alla Ferrero con il Plant Manager Luca Brero.



Visita dell'Ambasciatore Lucio Alberto Savoia con la consorte Maria Anita Stefanelli alla Ferrero di Cork.





Thomas Roberts (1748-1777), *Lucan House and Demesne with Figures Quarrying Stone, County Dublin, c.1773-1775*. National Gallery of Ireland Collection. Image, National Gallery of Ireland.

TABULA GRATULATORIA

Esprimiamo il nostro riconoscimento alle seguenti Autorità per avere messo a disposizione i rispettivi archivi al fine del reperimento di alcune significative fonti documentarie e della loro pubblicazione:

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AMBASCIATORE ALBERTO SCHEPISI

AMBASCIATORE LUCIO ALBERTO SAVOIA

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La sala della Biblioteca con il camino e l'Arazzo proveniente dalla collezione di Palazzo Chigi, Roma. Bottega di Alessandro Rosi, *La Legge*.

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GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE ANTICA A PALAZZO BARBERINI – ROMA

GALLERIA SABAUDA – TORINO

MUSEI REALI – TORINO

MUSEO DEL CASTELLO DI RACCONIGI – TORINO

MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL RISORGIMENTO ITALIANO – TORINO

MUSEO CIVICO AMEDEO LIA – LA SPEZIA

MUSEO PALAZZO BRASCHI – ROMA

MUSEO DI ROMA – ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO

PINACOTECA CAPITOLINA – ROMA

PALAZZO PITTI – FIRENZE

AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA – DUBLINO

AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA – BRUXELLES

AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA – LONDRA

ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA – DUBLINO

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La sala della Biblioteca con l'Arazzo proveniente dalla collezione di Palazzo Chigi, Roma. Alessandro Rosi, *La Fede*.



L'Ambasciatore Gaetano Cortese

INTRODUZIONE

Ambasciatore Gaetano Cortese

Rivolgiamo un ringraziamento del tutto particolare all'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias per avere sostenuto l'iniziativa di una nuova pubblicazione sulla nostra splendida Rappresentanza diplomatica a Dublino, affidandone la realizzazione all'Editore Carlo Colombo di Roma nell'ambito della prestigiosa Collana dedicata alla valorizzazione del patrimonio architettonico ed artistico delle sedi diplomatiche italiane all'estero, fondata e curata dall'Ambasciatore Gaetano Cortese.

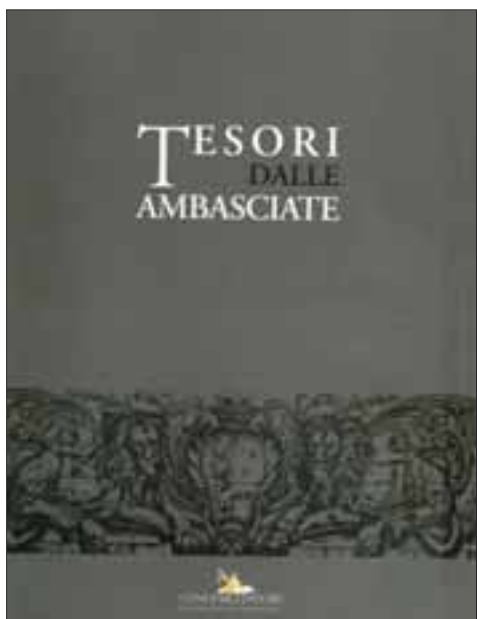
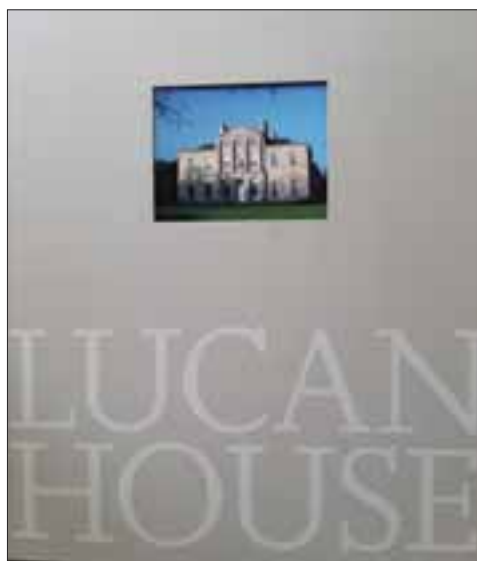
Il nostro ringraziamento va anche all'Ambasciatore d'Irlanda a Roma, Patricia O'Brien per il suo indirizzo di saluto e per la concessione di alcune immagini relative alla rappresentanza diplomatica irlandese in Italia.

Siamo particolarmente grati all'Ambasciatore Paolo Serpi per il suo scritto su "Lucan House: tra memoria e ricordi", all'Ambasciatore Alberto Schepisi per il suo scritto su "L'Irlanda e la globalizzazione", all'Ambasciatore Lucio Alberto Savoia per la sua intervista alla Presidente d'Irlanda Mary McAleese e alla Professoressa Maria Anita Stefanelli Savoia per la sua approfondita ed esauriente ricerca sulla "Lucan House e l'Italia".

Il nostro apprezzamento va all'Ambasciatore Rocco Cangelosi per avere ben voluto condividere questa nuova iniziativa editoriale con lo scritto: "Il ruolo dell'Irlanda nella UE a cinquanta anni dalla adesione".

Esprimiamo la nostra profonda gratitudine al Professore Francesco Perfetti per la preziosa collaborazione ed assistenza e per essere stato parte essenziale nella redazione "Joyce e Svevo, la strada verso la modernità".

L'Ambasciatore Alberto Schepisi, durante la sua missione diplomatica in Irlanda, nell'aprile del 2005, promosse una pubblicazione dedicata alla Residenza di Lucan House, affidandone la supervisione all'Hon. Desmond Guinness, fondatore della Irish Georgian





Perugino, *Adorazione dei Magi*. Oratorio della Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Bianchi. Città della Pieve, Perugia.



Perugino, *La Pietà*. National Gallery of Ireland. Dublino.



Raffaello o Lorenzo di Credi, *Ritratto del Perugino*, Galleria degli Uffizi. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.



Perugino, *Adorazione dei Magi*. Città della Pieve. Particolare.



Perugino, *Adorazione dei Magi*. Città della Pieve. Particolare.

Society e il servizio fotografico a Charles Campbell. Il libro su “Lucan House” (design: Jason Ellams, printing: Die Keure, Belgium, digital editing: Ryan Campbell), venne pubblicato nel giugno del 2005 per essere omaggiato alle rispettive personalità irlandesi ed italiane⁽¹⁾. A distanza di quasi venti anni abbiamo ritenuto opportuno realizzare una nuova iniziativa editoriale coinvolgendo numerose istituzioni italo-irlandesi.

La pubblicazione intende valorizzare una Sede, la cui storia è diventata parte integrante delle relazioni italo-irlandesi, illustrandone il patrimonio architettonico ed artistico che fa parte, altresì, della storia della città di Dublino.

Il Palazzo è, infatti, classificato tra i beni immobili architettonici di prestigio della città e come tale soggetto a particolari vincoli di restauro e di tutela da parte delle competenti Autorità.

Nei suoi settanta anni di attività, la Residenza dell’Ambasciatore d’Italia, con i suoi saloni e con i suoi arredi, è stata sempre proiettata ad illustrare l’immagine del nostro Paese, promuovendone le potenzialità e accrescendone il prestigio, sempre in sintonia con la tradizione di ospitalità della diplomazia italiana.

Siamo stati sollecitati in questa iniziativa anche dal desiderio di potere tributare un doveroso omaggio a tutti i Capi Missione e loro collaboratori che, con grande impegno e spirito di servizio, hanno avuto un ruolo di grande importanza nel mantenere una rappresentanza diplomatica all’altezza del patrimonio architettonico ed artistico del nostro Paese lungo tutto il corso della lunghissima storia diplomatica tra l’Italia ed l’Irlanda.

Saremo soprattutto lieti se il racconto e le immagini del volume riusciranno ad esprimere il sentimento di ammirazione per le energie spese, senza risparmio, da

(1) Per i lettori interessati alle opere d’arte custodite nella Residenza di Lucan House suggeriamo la consultazione della pubblicazione “I Tesori dalle Ambasciate d’Italia in Europa”, curata dalla dott.ssa Paola Mangia, nella quale vengono censiti tutti gli arredi e dipinti collocati nelle Residenze degli Ambasciatori d’Italia nelle rappresentanze diplomatiche di Berlino, Dublino, Lisbona, Londra, Parigi, Praga, Stoccolma e Vienna. Il progetto è frutto di una lungimirante collaborazione tra il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale e del Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, oggi Ministero della Cultura, volto alla valorizzazione del patrimonio d’arte italiano all’estero, sostenuto dall’Amministratore Unico della Società per lo Sviluppo dell’Arte, della Cultura e dello Spettacolo, Arcus, Ambasciatore Ludovico Ortona.

Il libro è stato pubblicato dalla Gangemi Editore spa, Piazza San Pantaleo, 4, Roma, nel 2015.



Perugino, *San Sebastiano e frammenti delle figure di San Rocco e San Pietro*. Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta, Cerqueto di Marsciano, Perugia.



Perugino, *Ritratto di Francesco delle Opere*. Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.



Perugino, *Natività di Cristo*, affresco, Chiesa di San Francesco, Montefalco.



Perugino, *Orazione nell'orto*. Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.

quanti (committente, architetti, artisti, Ambasciatori italiani, Autorità irlandesi), succedutisi nella Residenza, hanno contribuito ad evitare al Palazzo – malgrado il trascorrere del tempo e le mutazioni dei costumi – una parabola discendente.

Il Palazzo di Lucan House, Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia a Dublino, è una Villa palladiana situata nei pressi del villaggio di Lucan, a breve distanza dalla capitale Dublino. La costruzione ebbe inizio nel 1772, in epoca georgiana; un decennio più tardi, si ergeva nel verde con la sua facciata palladiana. L'interesse storico si intensifica con il passaggio della proprietà al discendente del Re d'Irlanda, Charles O' Conor Don ed il successivo acquisto da parte di Sir William Bourke Teeling.

Nel 1947 l'inviato straordinario e ministro plenipotenziario Francesco Babuscio Rizzo, per conto del Governo italiano su istruzioni del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Carlo Sforza, stipulò un accordo con il rappresentante del Governo d'Irlanda Éamon De Valera per il leasing della proprietà di Lucan House quale Residenza del rappresentante diplomatico italiano a Dublino.

Dopo sette anni di leasing nel 1954 l'inviato straordinario e ministro plenipotenziario Francesco Silj di S.Andrea d'Ussita, per conto del Governo italiano, acquistò l'immobile con il suo parco per farne definitivamente la Residenza del rappresentante diplomatico italiano in Irlanda.

Attualmente Lucan House è tra le residenze diplomatiche più prestigiose d'Europa.

In occasione dei festeggiamenti tenutisi nel 2023 in Italia e all'estero per il 500° anniversario della morte di Pietro Vannucci, detto il Perugino, abbiamo inserito in questa pubblicazione dedicata alla Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia in Irlanda alcuni dipinti del Perugino a ricordo di uno dei più grandi Maestri della pittura mondiale.

L'omaggio al Pittore è tanto più opportuno in quanto gli Irlandesi amano in modo particolare l'Umbria e diversi artisti, letterati, intellettuali e accademici hanno acquistato una proprietà nella Regione.

Rivolgiamo i nostri più vivi ringraziamenti ai Direttori della Galleria degli Uffizi di Firenze, della Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria di Perugia, dell'Oratorio di Santa Maria dei Bianchi a Città della Pieve, per avere concesso l'utilizzo delle immagini dei dipinti di Pietro di



Perugino, *Adorazione dei Magi*, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria. Perugia. Su concessione del Ministero della Cultura.



Perugino, *Fortezza e Temperanza sopra sei eroi antichi*. Sala delle Udienze del Collegio del Cambio, Perugia.



Cristoforo Vannucci, detto il Perugino, o il Divin pittore, considerato uno dei massimi esponenti dell'umanesimo ed il più grande rappresentante della pittura umbra del XV secolo, definito da Agostino Chigi "il meglio maestro d'Italia". Il Perugino collaborò nelle decorazioni della Cappella Sistina al Vaticano con altri artisti tra cui Sandro Botticelli, il Ghirlandaio ed il Pinturicchio, dove dipinse una delle sue opere più famose, la *Consegna delle chiavi*.

Siamo particolarmente grati al Chiarissimo Professore Giovanni Puglisi, Presidente della Associazione UNESCO-ITALIA onlus, per il contributo alla realizzazione della presente iniziativa editoriale dedicata alla Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Italia a Dublino "Lucan House".

500 ANNI PERUGINO

A CITTÀ DELLA PIEVE 30 OPERE MAI RIUNITE

DA LUGLIO LA MOSTRA “...AL BATTESIMO FU CHIAMATO PIETRO”



Perugia, 14 gennaio 2023. Sono iniziate le celebrazioni per i 500 anni dalla morte di Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci, detto Il Perugino, avvenuta nel 1523, quando aveva all'incirca 73 anni.

Città della Pieve, città natia del Divin pittore, ha organizzato uno degli eventi di punta a livello nazionale: la mostra “...al battesimo fu chiamato Pietro”, curata dal comitato scientifico composto da Vittoria Garibaldi, storica dell'arte, già soprintendente ai beni culturali dell'Umbria e direttrice della Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Francesco Federico Mancini, professore di storia dell'arte moderna all'Università di Perugia, Antonio Natali, già direttore della Galleria degli Uffizi e Nicoletta Baldini, storica dell'arte.

La mostra, che avrà due sedi espositive, palazzo Della Corgna e il museo civico diocesano di Santa Maria dei Servi, verrà inaugurata sabato 1 luglio e durerà sino al 30 settembre 2023 e si svilupperà intorno ai focus iconografici dei principali temi delle opere del Perugino a Città della Pieve: la Natività, il Battesimo, la Deposizione dalla Croce e il Compianto su Cristo morto, che rappresentano alcuni dei momenti più significativi del suo innovativo e rivoluzionario percorso artistico. “Dopo anni di incessante lavoro e intensa progettazione – commenta l'amministrazione comunale – si è chiusa la fase di conferma dei prestiti che porteranno a Città della Pieve circa 30 opere, oltre a quelle già possedute dalla città, del Perugino e di pittori contemporanei al Divin pittore umbri e toscani, mai riunite tutte insieme prima d'ora, provenienti da musei ed enti culturali nazionali ed internazionali, da Vienna, dalla Galleria degli Uffizi e dai Musei Vaticani. La vita, l'arte e alcune delle opere più importanti di Pietro Vannucci saranno al centro del calendario pievese di quest'anno, con numerose iniziative che accompagneranno il pubblico a ripercorrere le sue orme, nei luoghi dove nacque, visse e fu ispirato per realizzare i suoi magnifici capolavori, ma anche partecipando a eventi, laboratori e intrattenimenti a tema”. (ANSA).

INAUGURAZIONE MOSTRA PANNELLI SU PIETRO VANNUCCI DETTO IL “PERUGINO” ALL’UNIVERSITÀ DI GALWAY



Lunedì 27 febbraio 2023, alla presenza dell’Ambasciatore d’Italia, Ruggero Corrias, è stata inaugurata la mostra di 15 pannelli didattici in lingua inglese sulla figura di Pietro Vannucci, pittore conosciuto come “Il Perugino” a 500 anni dalla sua scomparsa.

La mostra – esposta nell’Hardiman Research Building, Università di Galway in collaborazione con la sezione di Italiano dell’Ateneo – comprende la riproduzione di una serie di dipinti e didascalie che raccontano la storia del pittore, attivo nella Firenze medicea tra la fine del ‘400 e l’inizio del ‘500 laddove operarono anche il Verrocchio, il Ghirlandaio, Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo, Raffaello e Michelangelo.

I materiali sono ideati e realizzati da Stefano Baldi ed esposti per l’occasione in varie sedi degli Istituti Italiani di Cultura nel mondo.



Veduta dell’Università di Galway.



Veduta della National Gallery of Ireland. Dublino.



Galway, 27 febbraio 2023. L'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias all'inaugurazione della mostra dei Pannelli del Perugino con il Professore Paolo Bartoloni, Dott., PhD, MRIA Head of Italian Studies, Millennium Building, University of Galway.

IL PERUGINO

*"Il meglio maestro
d'Italia"*

*"The best master
of Italy"*



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY



Ambasciata d'Italia
Dublino



Embassy of Italy
Dublin



IL PERUGINO

*"Il meglio maestro
d'Italia"*

*"The best master
of Italy"*



**MOSTRA IN OCCASIONE DEL 500°
ANNIVERSARIO DELLA MORTE DI
PIETRO VANNUCCI DETTO IL PERUGINO
(1445/52 - 1523)**

**EXHIBITION ON THE OCCASION OF THE
500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF
PIETRO VANNUCCI, KNOWN AS
IL PERUGINO (1445/52 - 1523)**



Mostra ideata e realizzata da:
Exhibition designed and produced by:
Stefano Baldi

* L'immagine utilizzata da Agostino Chigi in una lettera del 7 novembre 1502, invio di padre Marone.

** L'immagine utilizzata da Agostino Chigi in una lettera del 7 novembre 1502, invio di padre Marone.



Da sinistra: Dottor Fabio Bartolozzi (Console onorario d'Italia a Galway), Professore Paolo Bartoloni (Capo Dipartimento Italianistica), Professoressa Becky Whay (Vice-Presidente dell'Università Internazionale di Galway), Ruggero Corrias (Ambasciatore d'Italia in Irlanda) e Professore Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh (Presidente dell'Università di Galway).



Da sinistra: Professoressa Anne O'Connor (Italiano), Signora Jacqueline Teegarden (Manager, Galway Music Residency), Dottor Fabio Bartolozzi (Console Onorario d'Italia a Galway), Professore Paolo Bartoloni (Capo Dipartimento Italianistica), Professoressa Becky Whay (Vice-Presidente Università Internazionale di Galway), Dottor Tina-Karen Pusse (Capo della Scuola di lingue, letterature e culture), Professore Enrico Dal Lago (Capo della Scuola di Storia e Filosofia), Robbie Blake (Direttore esecutivo Galway Music Residency). Seduti: Professore Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh (Presidente dell'Università di Galway) e l'Ambasciatore d'Italia in Irlanda Ruggero Corrias.





Dublino, 30 maggio 2023. Il Sottosegretario di Stato alla Cultura Professore Vittorio Sgarbi, assieme all'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias e al Direttore dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Marco Gioacchini, ha visitato la National Gallery of Ireland e la mostra temporanea su Lavinia Fontana. Il Sottosegretario Sgarbi ha poi incontrato Kim Smit, Head of Collections NGI e Simone Mancini, restauratore della Galleria, che ha guidato la delegazione in una visita dello studio del restauro.



Palazzo del Quirinale, 1° giugno 2023. Il Presidente Sergio Mattarella rivolge il suo indirizzo di saluto in occasione del concerto eseguito dall'Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della Rai, diretta da Speranza Scappucci, in onore del Corpo Diplomatico accreditato presso lo Stato Italiano.







Roma, 2 giugno 2023. Il Presidente Sergio Mattarella alla Parata Militare ai Fori Imperiali, in occasione della Festa Nazionale della Repubblica.





Roma, 2 giugno 2023. Il Presidente Sergio Mattarella alla Parata Militare ai Fori Imperiali, in occasione della Festa Nazionale della Repubblica. © ANSA



SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, SERGIO MATTARELLA, AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS' HOLIDAY WISHES



Quirinale Palace, 16th December 2022

Most Excellent Dean, Mister Minister, Your Excellencies the Ambassadors,

Before all else, allow me to apologize for the unusual nature of this meeting but it was the only way to celebrate it and I did not want to forgo this traditional yearly appointment to which I have always attributed utmost importance.

I thank the Most Excellent Dean for the holiday wishes that he addressed to Italy and to me personally on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps. In turn, I would like to reciprocate with my sincerest greetings for the upcoming festivities to all of you, your families, and the citizens of the Countries that you represent here in Rome.

A year ago, on this very same occasion, we exchanged wishes for a better future after the suffering caused by the pandemic across all the Continents.

Never would we have imagined that, only a few months later, we would witness the dreadful disaster caused by the war of aggression that Russia waged against Ukraine. An aggression that has plunged Europe back in a nightmare that we were sure would remain in the darkest pages of our history. Never would we have imagined that the nightmare would come back to haunt us again.

And never would we have imagined that a country like Russia, so close to us culturally and historically, could actually attack Ukraine's civil infrastructure with the cruel aim of depriving the population of light, water, and heating throughout their long and harsh winter.

A year ago, with the pandemic, we told each other that nobody could feel safe until everybody, everywhere in the world, was protected against the disease. Today, we must unfortunately acknowledge that the same axiom also applies to what is happening in Ukraine. In an evermore interconnected world, the hardships inflicted by war are not only impacting Ukraine. In every corner of the world, the citizens of countries very diverse and far apart, suffer the repercussions of Russia's brutal attack. Food

insecurity, the difficulties in assuring energy supplies, and the exponential hike in prices indiscriminately affect all continents and every place where the weakest population segments are the first to pay the price for that evil act.

Thus, along with the rights of the Ukrainian people, also the fundamental rights of millions of people around the world are being violated: the founding rights on which our democracies are grounded.

Shirin Ebadi, the first Muslim woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, said: “to take care of a beautiful plant we must water it every day, be careful of how much light it receives. We cannot limit ourselves to pouring a large amount of water on it and then ignore it for a year. In these conditions, the plant dies. And the same happens with democracy: if it is not watched over by the people, it dies.” These are words to be shared.

Today the international community, we all, must look after our democracy, and vigorously defend its values and ideals that represent the indispensable condition for everyone to be able to enjoy fundamental human rights.

How can we look after our democracies? How can we work for an equitable peace?

The international community has the tools to carry out this task, and it is necessary that Governments place their trust in those organizations, starting with the United Nations, which were established precisely to meet the need to protect peace and democracy.

We need a global system of governance and to urgently relaunch effective multilateralism, capable of contributing to develop a world order centered on the United Nations, bearing peace and justice, and based on representative, democratic, transparent, accountable, and efficient institutions.

In a phase that strongly curtails human rights and democratic values, strengthening them must form an integral part of the renewed effort to relaunch them. We must not allow that worries over contingent crises distract us from reforming the multilateral system and its institutions; we must not forgo our effort to strengthen an international order capable of standing up to scrutiny in assuring legal certainty, respect for human rights, and a peaceful settlement of conflicts.

We must have the foresight and determination to design instruments in which all States can identify and confide.

Through these instruments we must act to create the conditions for our youths to regain confidence in looking at the future in which they will be key players.

Unfortunately however, we are recently witnessing repeated, brutal attempts to stifle the voice of youths who peacefully demonstrate to ask for greater freedom and spaces for participation. This behaviour is to be firmly condemned. A State that rejects and murders its own children stands self-condemned.

At the same time, we must act to immediately mitigate the consequences produced by the war.

I am thinking of the sudden suspension in food exports and of the consequent rise in prices that have exacerbated an unprecedented food crisis. Italy is dedicating efforts and resources to mitigate this supply crisis by developing innovative and sustainable solutions capable of producing wealth for local populations. We work with our partners and with the FAO, IFAD, and the WFP, which jointly comprise the UN food and agriculture Agencies that we are proud to host in Italy.

Equally catastrophic is the energy crisis with its immediate and long-term consequences.

As we rethink our supply options, we must not forget the commitments made towards a clean transition, also on behalf of future generations: an enduring and sustainable solution and an indispensable means of combating global warming.

Renewable energies mean security and autonomy as well as economic convenience, value creation and employment.

Equally worrying is the risk of our economies becoming self-enclosed as a possible reaction to the moment of crisis. In Europe, as everywhere else, we must not give in to the lure of protectionism, and to the presumption of self-sufficiency. Interdependence – history teaches us – is a precious factor of peace and stability, as well as of well-being.

Lastly, I am thinking of the migration flows, which are strongly intensifying as a direct consequence of food insecurity and of the instability produced by the war.

It is a phenomenon with complex characteristics, which however must not make us forget that the international community's first indispensable objective must be that of protecting the rights of migrants.

If we only remembered that underlying the numbers that are coldly listed in the statistics on migrants there are children, women, and families, it would be easier to let ourselves to be guided primarily by a principle of reality and solidarity in identifying solutions capable of collectively regulating this phenomenon.

For Italy, all these challenges are to be tackled firstly with our transatlantic partners and within the European Union, which was established as a union of democracies that, after reconquering their freedom, committed to mutually protect their independence and to join forces in promoting a speedy reconstruction for the common good.

A month ago, I was in Maastricht to celebrate the 30th anniversary of one of the most crucial phases in the construction of Europe: the signing of the namesake Treaty that established the European citizenship.

It offered the opportunity to meet with young students from all over Europe. In their questions, I perceived their evident concern for the future but also their confidence in a Union that must now find the strength to renew itself, without forgoing its founding principles.

The European Union must remain in step with the times. The great changes and challenges of these last few years oblige us all to shoulder our responsibilities.

This is the message that emerged last May from the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The proposals of the Conference – which was the fruit of the interaction between European institutions and the representatives of citizens – indicate a clear roadmap of reforms.

However, in reforming itself, the Union must not run the risk of looking only within its borders, but must also continue to keep alive its vocation for dialogue and solidarity, and for cooperating with other Countries: the European Union can and must stand as a reliable partner and as a responsible global security provider.

Prosperity, stability, and security are not only values to enforce but strategic interests to defend.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has further highlighted the geopolitical continuity and the strategic relevance of Italy's relations with Europe, with the Enlarged Mediterranean and with the whole African Continent, which is being particularly impacted by the serious effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

The 8th edition of the Rome Med Dialogues international conference that closed only a few days ago confirmed Italy's tangible attention for a region – that of the Enlarged Mediterranean – to which we are bound by a common history, geographical location, challenges, and opportunities.

The factors of interdependence that run along this geopolitical axis to the point of including the entire African Continent, unite us in a common destiny and call us to build a common future together.

A future that now requires us to resourcefully work together for peace and stability and to promote sustainable and resilient growth.

We have seen that when the international community is driven by a community of intents, the results become feasible; we have seen an example of this with the positive launch of the pacification process in the Horn of Africa thanks to the mediation of the African Union.

We must continue to seek constructive solutions also to mitigate the violence suffered by the civilian population in the African Great Lakes region.

The same consideration should be made about the Balkans, a region strongly hit by the consequences of the war in Ukraine. With this region, we share the same challenges, spanning from the energy to the migration crisis. Italy has always supported the European enlargement process within the EU.

Today it is all the more essential to offer tangible answers to these Countries which have long considered the European option as the best possible solution for their future.

The recent EU-Balkans Summit has represented an important step in the right direction. Now we need to further accelerate the process.

In the same spirit and with the same intent, Italy continues to encourage the European Union to establish evermore structured and fruitful ties with the regional organizations of all continents. Accordingly, we should celebrate the recent summit between the EU and ASEAN, a key organization for the stability of Asia, as well as the dialogue opened for a similar summit with Latin America and the ongoing negotiations for an agreement to strengthen ties between the European Union and numerous Countries in both continents.

Most Excellent Dean, Authorities, and Your Excellencies the Ambassadors, the latest challenges cannot and must not allow us to forget the numerous dramatic situations of crisis across the world.

According to the latest data made available by UNICEF, today more children are in need of humanitarian assistance than at any other time in recent history.

We are witnessing an unprecedented overlapping of risk factors that represents a further hazard for children: conflicts, food insecurity which increases malnutrition rates, famines caused by climate change, new outbreaks of epidemics, including cholera and the measles.

More than 400 million children live in areas of crisis, of which 36 million are displaced, and half of the world's children live in conditions of vulnerability.

Italy, through its development cooperation service, does not forget these dramatic emergencies. The attention focused on new crisis scenarios is not to the detriment of our actions in other contexts, where we continue to act to provide emergency relief to the most vulnerable people and to facilitate enduring common development dynamics. If it is true that with war there can be no development, it is equally true that without development there can be no peace and stability.

Most Excellent Dean, Authorities, and Your Excellencies the Ambassadors,

My wish for the future is to re-establish an equitable peace because it is only through peace that humanity will be able to look to its progress. This is the goal that we should all unite to achieve, and the diplomacies of all Countries are called upon to join in this common commitment.

Italy is grateful for your friendship, on which it is sure it will be able to continue counting in the future.

I thus renew to you, your families, and your people, my very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS AT THE STATE DINNER IN HONOUR OF PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY SERGIO MATTARELLA



Áras an Uachtaráin, 14 February 2018

Your Excellency President Mattarella,
Ms. Laura Mattarella,
Foreign Minister Alfano,
Distinguished Guests,
A Chairde

È un gran piacere per me e mia moglie Sabina riceverla qui, insieme a sua figlia Laura. Siete i benvenuti nella nostra casa.

Is mór an chúis áthais dom féin agus do mo bhean chéile Saidhbhín fáilte a fhearadh romhat féin, a Uachtaráin Mattarella, agus roimh do iníon agus an toscaireacht atá leat ar do Chuairt Stáit chuig na hÉireann.

Sabina and I have the distinct honour and pleasure to welcome you President Mattarella, your daughter, and your esteemed delegation to Ireland.

You are most welcome.

Tá fáilte romhaibh.

Benvenuti!

Is ócáid í ár ndinnéar anocht chun ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar an bhfíor-chairdeas agus an mórmheas atá ann le fada an lá idir ár dhá dtír agus idir muintir na hIodáile agus muintir na hÉireann. Tá sé tráthúil, b'fhéidir, gur ar lá fhéile Naomh Vailintín a bhfuilimid ag bualadh le chéile. Iodálach mór le rá ón 3ú Aois a bhí ann agus a bhfuil ina laoch den ghrá rómánsach ó shin i leith. Tá Naomh Vailintín ag feidhmiú fós mar inspioráid, agus chatalaíoch b'fhéidir, do fhir agus do mhná óga, agus iad siúd atá níos sinne chomh maith! Cé gur maraíodh Vailintín sa Róimh i bhfad ó shin, tá a chnámha anseo linn i mBaile Átha Cliath le beagnach dhá chéad bliain anuas.

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the many close bonds that Ireland and Italy share, both in our bilateral relations and as members of our common home, the European Union. I recall with great warmth our meeting in Rome in 2015. More recently Sabina and I had the pleasure of visiting Venice in 2017 for the Biennale.

Your Excellency, our two countries are old friends with historic and cultural links stretching back many centuries, and indeed long predating our emergence as nation-states. Among our most important early contacts was the founding of a monastery in Bobbio by the Irish monk Saint Columbanus in the seventh century, when Irish monks brought Christianity and learning to much of Europe.

The church of San Pietro in Montorio on the Janiculum Hill in Rome houses the remains of the Irish Earls Hugh O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell who fled Ireland in 1607 following their defeat at the Battle of Kinsale. Their departure with their families marked what we call the end of the Gaelic order in Ireland and the friendship and generosity shown by Italy to Ireland is well-remembered and appreciated to this day.

In more recent times, the Irish writer James Joyce, lived in Trieste between the years 1904-1920 and this beautiful environment provided the inspiration for the major part of his most famous work *Ulysses* as well as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. What could be more European than an Irish writer, inspired by Greek mythology, based in an Italian seaport, and heavily influenced by Latin, Slavic and Germanic cultures?

These personal connections between Italian and Irish men and women continue today in all sorts of ways. Thousands of Irish tourists travel every year to enjoy the many joys Italy offers including art and architecture; history; opera; food and drink; landscapes as well as the wonderful hospitality of its people. Italians come to Ireland too, and increasing numbers are finding employment and making their home here. We also welcome Italian language students who come here to improve their English. Last year, 32,000 Italian students added life and colour to our towns and cities. This was from a total of 340,000 Italian visitors to our shores. In the same year over 400,000 Irish people travelled to Italy.

On the wider international stage, Ireland and Italy have a long tradition of working well together and have broadly similar approaches to many of the main challenges confronting us. We cooperate successfully in many fora including the United Nations. We warmly congratulate you on the constructive role you played on the Security Council last year and we look forward to emulating this success if elected for the period 2021-2022.

Excellency, you are visiting us at a crucial time in the political life of your country as you prepare for elections early next month and we will follow proceedings with great interest. This is also a crucial time for the European Union. Italy is of course central to the history of the European Union

and played a visionary part in forging a better future for all Europeans following the Second World War.

One of the most morally compelling visions of European internationalism emerged from the Italian resistance movement, in that remarkable manifesto composed in 1941 on the island of Ventotene by Altiero Spinelli, a member of the Italian Communist Party, and Ernesto Rossi, one of the founders of the anti-fascist *Giustizia e Libertà*.

The manifesto of Ventotene, with its emphasis on the peopled economy, the shared prospect of humanity, offered a remarkable vision of a federation of European states dedicated to disarming the worst passions of European nationalisms.

It asserted that such a federation could only be achieved, and would only be preserved, if it was capable of continuing 'the historical process of the struggle against social inequalities and privileges', and of recognising that 'economic forces must not dominate man, but rather – as for the forces of Nature – they must be subject to man, guided and controlled by him in the most rational way, so that the broadest strata of the population will not become their victims'.

These demands were ambitious and required a fundamental shift in thinking to deliver the attainment of those social goals necessary for the cohesion of any society: the provision of 'food, lodging, clothing and that minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity'.

The world order that had so dramatically failed Europe and Europeans needed to change. Today we must ask ourselves whether the world order we have created has succeeded in securing the social cohesion necessary for our citizens to live in dignity and to flourish, or whether we too need a shift in thinking to realise the vision of Spinelli and Rossi.

Today, Europe is experiencing instability on many fronts. The UK's decision to leave the EU and the lack of clarity about its relationship with the Union after March 2019 has potentially grave consequences for this island. We greatly appreciate the solidarity Italy has shown for our concerns, including our determination that there can be no return to a hard border in Ireland. We also appreciate your seminal work last year in crafting the Rome Declaration, an important moment in European history when EU leaders rededicated themselves to the founding principles of the Treaty of Rome of 1957.

EU leaders pledged to listen and respond to the concerns expressed by citizens. Ireland firmly believes that the needs of citizens have to take centre-stage in any debate on the future of Europe. Achieving social cohesion must be a priority in our efforts to reconnect Governments, Parliaments and the institutions of the European Union with European Citizens. We must all be concerned that large swathes of Europeans, most notably young Europeans, will have little hope of employment or of meaningful education or training. A despondent underclass, disconnected from national or European government, provides a dangerous resource for those willing to exploit the disillusioned, promising salvation through simplistic, populist and xenophobic nationalisms.

Excellency,

In recent years, Italy has been coping with a significant influx of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and further afield. I want to commend the Italian people for their generosity and humanitarianism in the face of this challenge. We in Ireland are geographically distant from the main migration routes but we work closely with Italy in the Mediterranean, and together we have helped to save the lives and dignity of thousands of vulnerable migrants who risk their lives at sea at the hands of ruthless people traffickers. We do this because of our common humanity; to

show solidarity with member states experiencing hardships; and in recognition of the importance of EU solidarity and burden sharing.

Your Excellency,

May I now invite you all, distinguished guests, to stand and join me in a toast:

To the good health of the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella;

To the happiness and prosperity of the people of Italy;

To the continuing friendship and affection between our two peoples!

Sláinte mhaith, Salute!



TOAST BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC SERGIO MATTARELLA, AT THE STATE DINNER OFFERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND MICHAEL D. HIGGINS



Dublin, 14 February 2018

President
Dear Mrs. Higgins,
Ministers,
Authorities,
Dear Guests,

Thank you, President, for your expressions of esteem and friendship for Italy and for the warm welcome which you have extended to me and my daughter, and to the delegation which has accompanied me since our arrival in this marvellous city.

I am so happy to be carrying out my first State visit of 2018 in Ireland and to meet you again, President, a little more than two years since Your visit to the *Quirinale*.

The bonds between Ireland and Italy are indeed very strong and deep-seated in every respect and in particular with regard to culture.

I am particularly pleased to remember the latter here today in front of you, a valued writer and poet and knowledgeable scholar of the works of Dante.

The friendship between Ireland and Italy – and between the Irish people and the Italian people – has long standing roots. Since the High Middle Ages, Irish monks undertook a fundamental role in the preservation of Latin literary heritage, establishing monasteries in our Country which were meeting points in a climate of tradition, spirituality and culture.

Over the centuries these links have intensified, so much so that in modern times it was precisely the prestigious Trinity College to establish the first Chair of Italian in the English speaking world and it was the Irishman, Henry Boyd, to publish the first full translation of the *Divine Comedy* in English.

The immortal work of many, great Irish writers and poets, eminent experts on Italy and its culture, has enriched our attentiveness to each other and our attraction: from William Butler Yeats to Seamus Heaney, from Samuel Beckett to James Joyce. And it is the very strong attachment of the author of *Ulysses* to Italy – his adopted homeland for seven years – and his intellectual understanding with Italo Svevo, that constitute perhaps the most emblematic expression of the literary bonds between our Countries and a fluid representation of our contribution to a multi-faceted European identity.

This friendship enabled both authors, and with them our Countries, to achieve great results and to gift humanity with universal masterpieces.

Renowned Italian authors – amongst whom Eugenio Montale – have contributed to “tell” the story of Irish culture to the Italian public. And it is also thanks to these contacts and efforts, on both sides, that our cultures have been enriched and have developed further, always influencing each other. On this positive path, albeit naturally in different forms and ways from the past, nowadays the tradition continues: several great Irish artists, in particular in the world of music – such as U2 – have had and have a strong and impassioned following amongst generations of Italians.

Recently, on the occasion of the 1916 *Easter Rising*, an exhibition was held in Rome at the “Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale” entitled “Irish in Italy – Irish Literature and Politics in Italy in the first half of the Twentieth Century”. This event provided a significant view of the important political and cultural rebirth of Ireland, which culminated in the process of independence and in the subsequent membership of the European Union.

President

Dear Mrs. Higgins,

still preserving our national characteristics and respective identities, of which Ireland and Italy are rightly proud, a cultural heritage has thus been moulded, which is an indissoluble part of European civilization and the fruit of a shared yearning for knowledge, beauty and the transfer of knowledge.

The relationship between Ireland and Italy has always been, and is still today, deeply productive: the many Italians who have moved to Ireland – one of the oldest foreign communities on the island – benefited from the welcome which this extraordinary Country extended to them and they integrated very well. This experience was lived by those Italians who migrated to Ireland before the Second World War and is lived today, under very different conditions, by our many young people who have the opportunity to come to Your Country to study, to work and as tourists.

Ireland and Italy, in large measure, have taken a similar path: our people have felt the pain which comes from being separated from their homeland, to face poverty and deprivation.



Emigration has marked both our histories and our identities, just as we have both shared an aspiration to achieve independence and unity.

Furthermore we also share a strong commitment and ambition to achieve a society in which solidarity, respect, tolerance and integration are real and deep rooted conditions.

We have found a place in our European home to pursue these objectives, often finding ourselves aligned on crucial *dossier* such as the question of migration. In this field we have been able

to count on Dublin's generous cooperation, both in terms of troupes and means deployed in the Mediterranean and of economic resources.

We are grateful to Ireland for its tangible demonstration of this sensitivity. We are aware that this synergy does not depend exclusively on an equal assessment of the current situation but rather on our common adherence to a scale of values which places humanity at its peak.

Firm in this conviction, we must give impetus to our commitment in favour of a more prosperous and more fair Europe, raising the bar and further deepening integration, giving back to Europe the ability to operate and consolidating its democratic legitimacy, which constitutes the basis of our common project.

The same energy must guide us to face global challenges. Our Countries are strong supporters of multilateral solutions; we are certain that dialogue constitutes the only foundation for a world order which will ensure a peaceful coexistence and enable us to achieve a more solid and inclusive development.

With these sentiments, President, I raise my glass to Your health and the health of Your wife and to the deep and strong friendship between the people of Ireland and Italy.

Sláinte!

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, SERGIO MATTARELLA, ON OPENING THE CONFERENCE “THE STATE OF THE UNION 2018, SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE”



Badia Fiesolana, 10th May 2018

(European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, 10 May 2018)

Mister President of Ireland,
Mister President of the European University Institute,
Distinguished Dignitaries,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, to speak of the union of Europe is a challenge in and of itself.

In this troubled world, regardless of how essential the balancing role of a union of 27 States would appear to be, we nonetheless see a yawning gap between what is and what should be an extended community that already finds its dimension in a common space. Therefore, never has “united” appeared to be as urgent as it does now.

Yet, a large part of the continent’s public opinion appears to be swept by a feeling of disillusionment, oblivious of the meaning and the result of a prized and positive process towards a goal that inspired the spirit of youths formed in the 1900s. This lack of awareness lays outside the vision of history.

I am grateful to President Dehousse for the invitation extended to me to take part in the Eighth Conference on the State of the Union.



It is an event that has become important thanks to the commitment of the European University Institute, its researchers and its management, enabling us to hold, every year, a serious and in-depth public debate with guests of exceptional standing.

Italy is proud that Florence is the one to host the European University Institute which, for more than four decades, has contributed to exploring the academic and cultural dimension of the European integration process, with a focus that is not

only concentrated on the past, because it houses the first European School of Transnational Governance, which is called on to provide training in thematic areas that can only be addressed through coordinated multilateral efforts.

Today's Conference falls within the framework of the meetings that mark "Europe's birthdate": the commemoration of the Schuman Declaration, which engendered that fruitful continental integration process that we are contributing to celebrate here today.

Those roots are still strong and thriving today and the modernity of the words uttered by the great French statesman on that 9th of May 1950 was evident from the outset: "World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it."

A courageous warning from someone who had understood the entity of the trials facing Europe and, at the same time, had pondered over the keys to overcome them: solidarity and historic vision.

"Europe will not be made all at once" he wrote "or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity."

The force of these words has spanned across the history of the last seventy years before reaching us, to tell us how this message was already central to the birth of the Union.

Not solidarity in abstract terms, enshrined in the lifeless words of a Treaty, but living substance within the process that was being courageously undertaken.

If it was solidarity that generated the beginning of our Union, it is not senseless to go back to those almost primordial ties in order to tackle today's problems.

All the more so in a context witnessing internal and international crises, widespread instability and the winds of war rocking the building of Europe, making any further step towards greater integration hesitant.

Indeed, the assertive solidarity of the beginning seems to have converted into stagnating indifference, a seeping mistrust pervading all levels and turning all public opinions, Governments, and common Institutions to be increasingly and mutually distrusting.

We cannot ignore this state of affairs nor can we hush the fact that, among European citizens, there is a spreading conviction that our common project has lost its capacity to effectively meet

the growing expectations of large segments of the population; and that it can no longer assure adequate protection, security, work, and growth to single individuals and to communities at large.

With a peculiar contradiction that sees the simultaneous inflating of citizens' expectations and their scepticism on Europe's capacity to meet them.

Numerous European fellow-citizens have stopped thinking that Europe can - now or at a later point in time - solve their problems. They decreasingly see Brussels as an advantageous interlocutor, withdrawing within a purely domestic horizon, feeding upon an illusion: the thought that the most impacting global phenomena can be tackled at national level.

It is a paradoxical situation if we think that, thanks to integration, more than three generations in a row have not known the tragedy of war that has and continues to encroach around the borders of the Union. Suffice it to think of the Balkans of a few years ago, of the Ukrainian crisis, of the conflicts in North Africa and in the Middle East.

Everyone knows that none of the big challenges facing our continent today can be tackled by any single member State of the Union, no matter how large it may be.

Not the challenges represented by the tension at our northern and southern borders, nor the instability produced by sudden and unexpected measures that risk triggering trade wars to the detriment of all. Nor those connected to energy supplies, climate change, the digital revolution, economic inequalities, the fight against terrorism and the increasingly subtle and insidious phenomenon of organised crime and epochal migration flows.

The security and progress of any society are grounded on the principle of mutuality among its members. This is the sense of solidarity: knowing you can count on the help of your neighbour when your strength falls short.

Well now, millions of people are escaping their place of origin; we are faced with an organised crime so extended that its income exceeds the GDP of many States and a terrorist threat that spreads like a lightning bolt through the Web, irrespective of any border.

In the face of all this, to think that it is possible to make it on one's own is a pure illusion or, worse, the conscious deceit of public opinions.

Out of the continent's frame of reference, the irrelevance of the policies of single European Countries would immediately become apparent.

In terms of affirming their effective sovereignty over the rights and liberties of their citizens and over the context of security within which to organise their own lives.

In terms of adequately governing "European borders", effectively and with humanity.

In terms of asserting our sovereignty over food and digital networks and in the management of "big data".

The answer to all these difficult tests is one and one only: the European Union.

Mister President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our founding fathers - De Gasperi, Schuman, Adenauer, Monnet, Spaak, and others - were united by the solidarity that arose from a common task: re-founding their communities, destroyed by the horror of the Nazi-Fascist war.

Their task was self-explanatory. Europe had to get back on track after the season of darkness under the dictatorships.

Two devastating wars and millions of victims had made it very clear to every single citizen that it was necessary to surrender the defence of peace and even of individual and collective freedoms to the decision of giving Europeans a common future, that would afford a higher level of protection than could be offered by single States.

A double protection built on facts in these past decades, bringing us to a European citizenship and to the Treaty of Lisbon.

In 1948 there was no possibility of misunderstandings in a world torn by war and in which the logic of blocs was already starting to prevail.

Defending the achievements that represented and continue to represent the greatest legacy of our history - liberty, the Rule of Law, respect for individual and collective rights, the "European" economic model based on free enterprise and a wide range of protections for workers - strongly urged the progressive integration of the States that make up our Continent.

Over borders and national traditions prevailed the unifying values that had brought the peoples, in solidarity, to fight united to affirm their refusal of the idea of being mere subjects or the blind mechanisms of a war machine, and to instead confirm that they were alert, with their human dignity unscathed, which no State would ever be able to abuse unabashedly. This is the authentic solidarity built among the people.

A solidarity that wanted to definitively leave behind the arithmetic of the rights and wrongs of two devastating world wars.

This vision, actively shared and participated by the citizens, has taken us a long way.

We have now come to a crucial point in our integration process, one in which the citizenship rights expressed up to now under the sovereignty of individual States are increasingly transposed into the collective sovereignty of the Union, merging into an irreversible unicum.

We have a currency capable of constituting a tangible international point of reference, a role that no national currency could ever have.

We have finally gone back to working concretely on common defence and foreign policies consistent with the needs of our Countries, in a phase recording a patently weaker commitment of our major transatlantic ally and the unchained offensive of terrorism. We are pursuing a policy of independence and quality in our energy supplies that will make Europe less dependent on single suppliers.

We want to affirm environmental rules that meet the highest possible international standards, in order to protect the health of our citizens and the future of the planet.

All this around an integrated market of goods, services and capital that has made our peoples more prosperous.

Safer now than after the war, freer than after the war, better off than after the war, we now risk appearing to lack all determination in facing up to the challenges. And, along a road that has become arduous and demanding, some surrender to the temptation of seeking 19th century formulas to solve the problems of the 21st century.

It would be sufficient to cover a little more ground in order to harbour the whole European construction against these threats but – let us be honest – it would take even less to undermine its foundations.

What have we overlooked? Why does the drive seem to be exhausted? Why is the concept of solidarity so easily disavowed in the facts, often by those who are, or were, the very first beneficiaries of other people’s solidarity?

Perhaps we are not sufficiently aware of how the “others”, the “extra-Europeans”, unlike some among us, increasingly see and perceive us as Europe and no longer as single and distinct realities. Perhaps we forget that Europe and its civilization, in its wealth of diversity, cannot be reduced to the dimension of a single State or a group of States. We could describe the Union with the words of French historian Ernest Renan who questioned himself on the definition of a Nation. He answered: “a Nation is a soul, a spiritual principle...a great solidarity...a legacy...it is a daily plebiscite”.

And we have no intention of losing this European plebiscite!

So, what has failed us, despite the valuable work done, is our self-consciousness.

Perhaps, with the passing of years, we have - with blameworthy superficiality - taken for granted that new generations, the new ruling classes, would go on perceiving with equal strength the quality of the “European” model and the key role that solidarity plays in it, as the remembrance of the terrible losses of the past fade from our collective memory.

Perhaps it is not sufficiently clear to us that everything that we have built, the progress arduously and patiently made during these years, can be logically and coherently contextualised only if it is part of our common model of society.



A society based on awarding mutual protection to an area governed by the Rule of Law and in which all the citizens are equal before the law. A peaceful, free, open and respectful society wanting to interact in a system of international relations grounded on dialogue with all major international players.

This - without leaving out any of its components - is the model of liberal democracy in which we have invited to participate the Countries that, for many years, the division in blocs had excluded from the discourse of integration. This is the model of society that we propose when we speak of enlargement and neighbourhood policies and that we hope will also increasingly take root outside our Continent.

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is evident that Europe needs to know how to tend to today's problems with the strength of its roots and the ideals of its history.

This is a key responsibility of the political leaders of all European States. Too often - and for too many years - Europe, in a superficial narrative generally shared by all the member States, was represented as a bureaucratic, complex and scarcely intelligible entity to be held accountable for unpopular measures and for depriving local communities of their traditions and customs in the name of integration.

In actual fact the decisions - including questionable ones - have always been the fruit of democratic debate among governments within the European Council, in concert with the European Parliament.

No doubt, the introduction of certain measures and the passing of certain policies could and should have been more mindful of specific national problems and sensitivities and focus on social cohesion objectives along with the ones related to fiscal consolidation.

However, it is precisely the primary responsibility of national ruling classes to be able to illustrate how the integration of a single sector specifically meets the principle of solidarity, a forward-looking logic, a "strong design" in which peace, wellbeing and prosperity arise from abandoning single sectoral advantages in order to share more important ones and to undertake a common virtuous path in which everyone can be a player.

It is an action to be taken without delay: European Institutions and member States should well devote more of their efforts to the capillary and lasting dissemination of the "deep-rooted reasons" of Europe.

An effort to be made by schools, starting in primary classes, and continued through the school curriculum into University, where the Erasmus - and other youth mobility programmes - already perform a very important role.

The possibility of boosting this potential, supported by the development of full-fledged European Universities, should be promptly explored.

This is the point from which we should start in order to rediscover Europe as a "big design", avoiding the dominance of futureless particularisms and a sovereigntist narrative with ready-made solutions that are as appealing as they are impracticable, however certain of being able to blame their impracticability on the Union.

However, the rediscovery of a "big design" cannot only be a short-term "response" to the short-sightedness of these views.

It must firstly enable us to rekindle the vital lymph of the European construction, the deep consensus, the solidarity among peoples, States and Institutions, allowing us to give new impetus to the integration process in order to produce new and long-lasting collective advantages in line with the contents of the Declaration of Rome ratified a little more than a year ago.

It is from this text, which all Union members signed, that we must start anew. Without more integration there will be no national benefits but only the greater irrelevance of single States in the face of the rest of the world, which is growing at a frantic speed and in which actors, once marginal, gain positions of great relevance.

Mister President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think it opportune to mention another circumstance that has contributed to tarnishing the image of Europe in the eyes of public opinion.

The emphasis recently (ever since Maastricht) and unconditionally placed on the exclusively economic aspects of integration – albeit consistently with the development process and the heralding of fruitful results – has probably contributed to enhancing a negative “narrative”.

The narrative of a distant Europe, described in almost caricatural terms as the Europe of banks and bankers, engrossed in a construction detached from the sensitivities and the needs of the European people, in which, among other things, the elements of an albeit correct and necessary rigour were not counter-balanced with elements capable of shedding light on the effectiveness of its actions in many other areas.

The Ventotene Manifesto - a cultural point of reference not to be forgotten - continues to remind us that the economy must be part of a political vision of the integration process. Indeed, market regulations, currency legislation and competition rules cannot but be conceived as being functional and instrumental to liberty and growth and to the pursuit of a general policy objective, namely that of improving the general wellbeing of society, and not as an end in its own right.

The great progress made in the economy, currency and finance, which is prized and important, must be consistently accompanied by the parallel development of a social pillar, so as to make it evident to the European public opinion that they are instrumental to achieving the “big design”.

We need to take note of the contribution made by relevant EU institutions, such as the European Central Bank, with its wise policy to ease economic recovery.

Even if its mandate, unlike that of national central banks, only entails the task of carefully managing monetary stability, it would be arbitrary not to recognise its important role.

And what does managing our common currency mean if not the expression of a strong solidarity between the States of the Eurozone, setting a tangible example for all the other States?

It is the concentric circle type of solidarity that leaves no one behind and, on the contrary, leaves its doors open while jointly respecting the ambitions of those who want to progress, and the pace of those who think that they are not yet ready to make stringent decisions.

It is the mutualization of the principles of the free movement of people, goods and services, that was later extended to the currency and now involves the principles of the Rule of Law and the administration of justice as well as defence and foreign policy and must increasingly stretch to include culture and education. It is the solidarity that, through the experience of the European development and cohesion Funds, has made us jointly shoulder the problem of inequalities and disadvantaged territorial areas, in order to offset their effects.

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Europe's sophisticated architecture needs continuous and careful maintenance in order to keep the Institutions sound and pervaded with the spirit of solidarity that inspired the founding fathers and made them aware of the trials lying ahead.

The quick-paced unfolding of events, both within single States and in international relations, is in fact fraught with challenges: our capacity to meet them will decide our future.

We are witnessing crises that are relentlessly encroaching around our borders: how can we avoid that our societies, our liberty and our wellbeing be put under siege without endowing the Union with instruments to express unitary positions in order to stand up for the principles that inspired its existence and for the political weight of its economy?

We must extend the area of stability and shared principles while, instead, we are making hesitant progress towards the integration of the Western Balkans, where the European perspective appears to be the only option to ward off dangerous returns to the past and the creation of external spheres of influence, a source of instability for the whole Union because based on value systems radically different from ours.

Solidarity in the area of security and military integration cannot be disjoined from civil and political solidarity objectives.

I hope that courageous and forward-looking decisions will also be taken on this issue, both in Brussels and in the Countries of the area.

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the Union, key dossiers have long been waiting to be resolutely addressed, the first of which are the reform of the Dublin system and the banking union.

These issues are key for our future and, in addition, will not be satisfactorily solved - in fact they will continue to be shelved - unless they are addressed in a framework of renewed solidarity, in which re-establishing sovereignty at European level is perceived as an obvious necessity, part of a comprehensive design which will ultimately increasingly benefit all those involved.

It is a "win-win" logic that must prevail over the logic of winners and losers on the single dossiers before the Union: this logic cannot be part of the Union's heritage of ideas.

Lastly, we will have to face managing a common budget: it is an issue that will be the tangible yardstick of the level of the Union's ambition over the next seven years.

We strongly hope that, despite Brexit, the common budget may expand, also thanks to our own additional resources.

We must single out and focus our policies on the "European public goods", which we need to protect and develop: for example, internal and external security, defence, the environment, economic convergence among member States to boost employment by developing, in actual practice, the solid "social pillar" indicated in the Gothenburg Summit.

Solidarity is built through interconnections and interdependence: infrastructure and transport networks; energy and TLC networks; education, university and research networks; technological innovation programmes and networks (e.g. Galileo).

Italy has made an effort to take a balanced stand on these issues, within a greater effort to strengthen the ties of solidarity among member States and to consolidate the roles of the European Commission and Parliament, an effort we have no intention of abandoning.

Mister President,

Allow me to conclude my speech by quoting Stefan Zweig, a sophisticated Austrian writer who, as World War I was raging, wrote: "The great monument to the spiritual unity of Europe is in ruins, the builders have dispersed. Still standing are its battlements, still erect above the bewildered world and its invisible codes, that however, without a persisting common maintenance effort, will fall into oblivion."

Still now, these words sound as a warning. And it is up to us, us alone, to follow up on it.



**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND
MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, ON OPENING THE CONFERENCE
“THE STATE OF THE UNION 2018, SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE”**



European University Institute, Florence, Italy, 10 May 2018

I believe that what is required is for us to rediscover the enabling and inspiring principle of solidarity, solidarity within the Union and solidarity with the wider world.

I am delighted to be here today. It is always enriching for the human spirit to visit Italy, this most beautiful country, the origin of so much of the world's culture and creativity; all the more so to be in Florence, a city forever associated with names like Dante, Michelangelo and Galileo.

It is always a particular pleasure to speak at a university, especially when the invitation comes from such a distinguished one and one which has the capacity for an interface with policy. The attraction of speaking here today at the European University Institute is not just the opportunity it offers for engagement with bright and enquiring minds but also because of the essential role, I would even say urgent role, which universities can and must play in understanding the complexity of our world and in addressing its challenges, empowered with adequate scholarly reflection and commitment to humanity in the fulness of its possibility and capacity.

I'm pleased, of course, to have been given the opportunity to participate in this timely, and indeed urgent, conference on "The State of the Union"; and because the theme of the conference is perhaps the most important one facing our continent, namely "Solidarity in Europe".

Allow me, if I may, to say a word about the two venues in Florence for this conference. Today we meet in Fiesole where much of *The Decameron* is set. Boccaccio might almost have been thinking of the role of universities and of the importance of fresh and creative thinking in Europe when he wrote:

"You must read, you must persevere, you must sit up nights, and exert the utmost power of your mind. If one way does not lead to the desired meaning, take another; if obstacles arise, then still another; until, if your strength holds out, you will find that clear which once looked dark."

This captures well the importance, this week and always, of moving beyond received wisdom towards the honest open reflection and original thought which the European debate requires.

Above all we need, in the European Union, a pluralism of scholarship. It is something we may be losing. It was John Henry Newman who wrote, ‘in a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often’.

Tomorrow the conference meets at Palazzo Vecchio which has been the seat of civic government for much of the period since it was built more than half a millennium ago. Michelangelo’s *David*, which arguably celebrates human beauty more wonderfully than any other statue, stands outside the Palazzo quietly dominating the piazza, even if the original statue is, of course, now in safekeeping elsewhere. Michelangelo’s *David* should remind us of three things which are essential for the European Union as we consider its future.

First, that respect for culture, in its diversity, must be at the heart of our public discourse and our public space, of our common enterprise;

Second, that the impact of our policy decisions on human beings must be foremost in our thoughts and in all our endeavours;

Finally, in a contest as to future direction there is no inevitability that the Goliaths of this world will come out on top; no certainty that might will be proved right.

Despite the many historic achievements in the history of our continent, many centuries of which were tarnished by war, suffering, expropriation of resources and exploitation of colonised peoples, the European Union today faces a unique opportunity and responsibility to assert, indeed where necessary reassert, its founding values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in a world in which those values are increasingly challenged.

Solidarity in Europe, the timely theme of this conference, must be, I suggest, the foundation on which our Union’s action is built. It must be the star which guides our action at home and in the wider world.

We have entered a period when, for the first time in many years, the future shape of the European Union has become a matter of contestation and debate. In the shadow of Brexit and of social forces which have given rise to so much doubt across Europe, we Europeans are invited to define, through deliberation, the outlines of the European Union that we seek.

Political and institutional leaders across the Union are making their contributions to that debate.

The so-called Future of Europe debate has been launched because we need together to identify the significant reforms which are needed to reconnect the European Union with its citizens. If we fail in that aim, the debate would serve little purpose. In contributing to that debate, I strongly share President Macron’s view that our Union must be renewed and rebuilt from below. We may differ, however, in terms of the degree to which our assumptions about the connection between economy and society must also be changed, from the top, and down through the institutional architecture.

Business as usual cannot address the challenges we face. May I suggest that we have an obligation to Europe’s history, to our people and to the wider world to examine and address those challenges, and the conversation on these issues must involve us all.

Our first obligation to Europe is to understand and affirm the nature of the European Project, the nature, form and aspirations for the Union we seek to make and to explain not only what is



Il Presidente Sergio Mattarella durante l'intervento del Presidente della Repubblica del Portogallo Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, in occasione della conferenza "The State of the Union".

but what might be better to our citizens. While reform should be our driving aim, if we fail to understand or recognise what is failing, the fulness of what is in need of reform, we will likely set our course in the wrong direction. We must understand Europe in all its complexity if we are to preserve and strengthen it.

We must above all avoid being trapped in any single paradigm of thought. We can, for example, achieve a reworking of economic strategies by re-locating economics within culture, within a political economy. Centres of learning, such as the European University Institute, can play a necessary and valued role in developing that understanding. While many doctoral theses are written to help us to understand the European Union, I would like today to mention briefly just three points which seem to me fundamental to understanding our Union.

First, we must understand the diverse roots of the European Project. One of the most morally compelling visions of European internationalism - considered as one of founding documents of European integration - emerged from the Italian resistance movement, in the manifesto composed in 1941 on the island of Ventotene by Altiero Spinelli, a member of the Italian Communist Party, and his colleagues.

That is not, of course, to say that the European Union did not have other important roots reflecting other political persuasions, but it is to give the lie to any idea that in its conception the European Project was simply and exclusively about capital and markets.

Indeed, while the seminal Schuman Declaration, drawn up in 1950 by the visionary Christian Democrat who gave the document its name, spoke of production it also spoke of peace, and while it spoke of modernisation and markets it also spoke of equalising and improving living conditions for workers. President Mattarella has called our attention to this in his opening address this morning.

This is a breadth of vision we need today. It is a breadth of vision so many of our European citizens see us as having lost.

The objectives to which the Union commits itself, which are now contained in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, reflect *inter alia* the inheritance of some of the most egalitarian and humane traditions which, although their origin is by no means confined to Europe, saw an important flourishing in Europe. The rich scholarship, philosophy, moral instinct and generous impulse that contributed to and drew on an enriched European thought yielded an impulse towards the promotion of social justice and protection, equality between men and women, solidarity between generations, economic and social cohesion and solidarity between Member States. These principles lie at the very root of the European Project and reach their fullest European expression today in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The second point I would like to underline, with a view to our understanding of our Union, concerns our way of doing business. The European Union's culture of accommodation, respect and compromise has been with us so long that perhaps we now take it for granted.

The decision-making process of the European Union is complex, painstaking and can be frustrating. Like every human construct, it is imperfect. It makes mistakes, sometimes big mistakes. But our calm, respectful and, when we are at our best, rational way of doing business, underpinned crucially by the rule of law, should never be taken for granted on a continent which has been the scene and the source of so much suffering.

It should never be taken for granted by countries which, even recently, have known dictatorship. It cannot be taken for granted by small countries which know all too well the realities of power

when it is unconstrained by institutions in which all are represented and by the binding rule of law. And equally it should not be ignored by large countries which may be tempted by the illusion that in a modern world of globalised trade and finance they can go it alone.

We should always strive to improve the way we work in the European Union, and be vigilant when its principles are called into question, but we should also celebrate it by giving authentic credence to its values and their sources. We must not allow those values which citizens need to be drowned out by a disconnected set of discourses from different silos, as it were, giving us 'silo speak' rather than 'citizen speak'.

My third point about understanding the Union goes back to a point I made at the outset namely that people, our citizens, and the citizens of the planet, must always be foremost in our thoughts and in our endeavours. It is thus imperative that we not only find better ways of explaining to people how our Union works but also better ways of learning from people what form of European Union they want. The opportunity of the current debate about the future of Europe must not be squandered. I am pleased that public debate about the future is being encouraged across so many of the Member States of the Union and that, in that context, the Irish Government has been conducting a citizens' dialogue.

We cannot and should not wish away the complexity of the European Union, but we cannot be lazy as to how we present and respect that complexity. Spectacle constructed for the media must not be allowed to replace the necessary discourse upon which our, and our citizens, future depends. Language matters. It must not impede the new economic literacy that we need. Media management cannot substitute for in-depth discussion informed by scholarship and commitment to future generations.

I would like to touch briefly on one issue which has in a sense been delivered to us by special delivery rather than one we would have chosen to address, namely Brexit. I'm conscious that much of the work by our diplomats on the agenda of the Union necessarily concerns managing current challenges rather than looking ahead to reshaping our shared future.

Of course, like so many of you, I regret the decision of our nearest neighbour. Although I'm conscious of the ongoing debate in the UK about some of the circumstances around the conduct of the referendum, we must accept the decision of the British people, as indeed we should accept any other democratic decision they may choose to take.

I would like to pay warm tribute to the support of our European partners and of the European institutions for Ireland's concerns in the Brexit negotiations and, in particular, for the unqualified support we have received for the maintenance of the Good Friday Agreement in all its aspects.

The European Union has for several decades provided generous political and financial support for peace on our small island. It has also, over time, provided much of the wider context in which peace was possible. Few could have predicted the central and necessary role that the European Commission, with support from all our partners, would be playing today in seeking to ensure the full protection of what has been achieved in our Peace Process, in effect the maintenance of the status quo in the application of the Agreement on the island of Ireland. There could be no better example of the solidarity which is the theme of this week's conference.

Jacques Delors once said that "Europe does not just need fire-fighters, it needs architects too". It is important therefore, as Delors implied, to take opportunities such as this conference, to raise our eyes above the road immediately ahead and shift our gaze towards the horizon, to look beyond

the immediate roadblocks to consider where we are heading and whether we need to adjust our direction.

There could not be a more important guiding theme for our reflections on the future of the Union this week than the theme chosen for this conference, namely solidarity.

Solidarity was in the DNA of the Founders of the European Union, so when our solidarity is inadequate or lacking we call into question our very nature. Solidarity is not a possession to be stored away. It is a living impulse. It must be no mere aspiration but something of concrete achievement and policy decision to which we can point.

Internal and external solidarity are necessarily linked. One of the great tasks of the next decade will be to achieve cohesiveness within the communities and between the communities of our common European home. It is only by achieving that goal – by rebuilding our capacity and willingness to work together to lead fulfilling lives in all spheres of human activity – that the Union can play the full leadership role of which it is capable in confronting the global challenges which are common to all humanity: the pressing demand for just and sustainable development; the imperative of vindicating the human rights of those fleeing war, persecution and famine; and above all the urgent necessity to address the causes of climate change and to mitigate its consequences.

The most urgent task is to rebuild its internal cohesion on the principle of solidarity. I have no doubt that the European Union has within it the capacity to bring into being a new discourse that leads to a fairer, more inclusive Union. To achieve that we must, as a first step, be ready to challenge failed and failing paradigms. Let us not forget, as we meet in Florence which provides Galileo’s final resting place, that more than 400 years ago the Roman Inquisition described Galileo’s belief that the earth revolves around the sun as “foolish and absurd in philosophy and formally heretical”.

Surely all of us who seek a Union capable of accomplishing these great tasks before in this century cannot rely on any failed orthodoxies, whether in thought or action. The intersection of all of these matters – climate change, migration, the role of the state and the future of our economy – has been considered in depth by scholars such as Professor Ian Gough, a former Jean Monnet Fellow at this institution.

If we are ready to challenge old and unconvincing certainties, to have the open minds which real scholarship requires, then we can preserve and even strengthen the vision of the European Union. In doing that we can re-energise a model in which the peoples of other continents have placed, perhaps increasingly place, their hopes.

As we consider the strengthening of European solidarity, it is essential to recognise that the Founding Treaty of the European Union, while some might wish it were so, was far from being a neoliberal charter. The Union, properly interpreted, was not envisaged to consecrate private profit over public purpose. Rather the Union was to be a bedrock of profound values and overarching rules. Above all it should be seen as a process - a context for creative and open debate between our elected Governments; a structure for framing and evolving policy through democratic and open discussion in our institutions and parliaments. It is vital that that debate and discussion be enriched by contributions from wider society, including academia. The emphasis must be on a courageous questioning untrammelled by preconceptions.

In strengthening internal solidarity, it is important to recognise that the challenges we face are not just economic. They are social, political and cultural. The form of the market calls for redefinition.

The market must not be accepted as an unregulated market, as end point rather than instrument. Human beings, all of our citizens, must be at the heart of our endeavours. We are, after all, the best of our moral social scholarship tells us, social beings, not simply consumers, targets, to be treated as commodities within a totalising version of an unregulated and insatiable market.

The dignity of work, therefore, in all its facets and in its essence as a shared human activity, must be at the centre of the values by which we want to live. A first and urgent task must be to restore sustainable and fulfilling employment to the citizens of the European Union. There is nothing more corrosive to society and more crushing to the individual than endemic unemployment, or the insecurity and uncertainty of the vulnerability of a precariat.

Unemployment in the EU has come down and we should welcome that. Yet, there are still nearly 18 million men and women without work. More shockingly, nearly 18% of our young people are unemployed, with the figure being much higher in some Member States. Where short term work has been created it is too often precarious work. We must define and create work in a way that can provide the necessary self-fulfilment and protections of the worker.

We must be cautious too when we use words such as 'populism'. Populism must not be confused with popular will. However, we must at the same time be very forthright in condemning the rise of those populists who, through the fomenting of fear, relentlessly exploit the anxieties of the vulnerable and the frustration of those who are left behind. Nothing would give more succour to abuses of such populism than for us to fail to create just and equal societies with real opportunities for participation.

The European Union, given the political will, and its strong legal framework and tradition, could – if it demonstrates imagination and determination in addressing its own challenges – make a significant contribution in confronting the excessive deregulation and erosion of rights that is emerging at global level.

However, to do that we need to revisit the relationship between economic and social policy in a fundamental way. While I therefore warmly welcome the convening of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November last year which aimed at boosting growth, creating fair jobs and fostering equal opportunities, and see it as a step towards creating a strong and tangible social dimension, obviously much further progress is needed. The Summit's recognition of the need to put people first and that employment and social progress are first and foremost created on the ground was a good starting point.

It was an attempt, I would suggest, to reconnect with the project of the European social model which is rooted in our recent history and which recognises that solidarity among citizens and social cohesion are values that must be fostered and maintained – not as mere by-products of, or compensations for, as residual of a successful economy but as foundational elements of economy in their own right. Our leadership, our authenticity in terms of concern for our citizens is tested by our willingness, or lack of it, to embrace new paradigms of practice and theory, including in the economy, to emerge; our willingness to allow what is failing to be discarded, to make way for what needs to be born.

The 20 principles set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights which was proclaimed by the Gothenburg Summit are a step forward and many of them point generally in the right direction. But the Union needs to go further and to start by delivering on the commitments which it has made.

The principles agreed in Gothenburg indicate, for example, that everyone has a right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning; that employment relationships that lead to

precarious working conditions shall be prevented; and that workers have the right to fair wages that provide for a decent standard of living.

Such good principles cannot be allowed to remain aspirational; if they do they will merely feed into the disillusion which is evident in so much of our society. The agreed principles must now, urgently, be transformed into principles of practice supported by Member States. Pending social legislation should be driven forward and the further necessary legislation should be tabled. This is essential if the social principles are to achieve authenticity where it matters most: on the European Street.

There are, of course, other priorities on the European agenda: the completion of the single market, including the digital single market, and of the Banking Union as well as the next steps towards Economic and Monetary Union. A sufficient basis for the legitimisation of such developments depends on a prior achievement of social cohesion, and such developments must be subordinated to that aim. These priorities can only deliver their intended benefit to our citizens if located within a social vision, if put forward in the right way, can bring great benefits to our citizens.

It is not for me to be prescriptive as regards the details of how to take these dossiers forward. However, it is my strong conviction that unless solidarity, within societies and between Member States is demonstrated - a very great deal more solidarity than has been demonstrated in the past - our efforts, and any short term or superficial success, will be hollow.

Solidarity should also characterise the Union's approach to the wider world. The stronger and more cohesive we can be internally the more effective a role we can play externally to that end.

In speaking of the external role of the Union, we should acknowledge that the role of this continent over the centuries, as seen by much of the world, has often not been a glorious one. There is nothing essentially moral in the varying practices of Europeans or the role our members have played in history; even if, needless to say, many Europeans have made very positive contributions to our world.

We need to transact our past if we are to remove the capacity of a past wrong to limit our present, curtail our future.

The warm East-West relations that have been created between Ireland and its neighbours required a facing of the past on both of our parts. Surely it would be positive, let us take the relationship between European nations and Africa, that a similar clearing of the past take place, with the aim of not losing the opportunity for dialogue in the present and our joint hopes for the future.

In all humility but with every confidence, our Union should take as its starting point the urgent and growing need to defend multilateralism. Multilateralism is an important form of solidarity. It provides a context in which solidarity makes sense and can have maximum effect. In a world in which insularity often seems to be taking hold, in which for some patriotism and selfishness are increasingly intertwined, in which there are those who would even beat their ploughshares back into swords, the European Union has both an opportunity and a responsibility to provide leadership on the importance of working together through agreed institutions.

Resiling to the inevitability of war, abandoning the prospect of peace, reviving the literacy of democracy, bringing a new literacy of economics into being - these are choices that will, in how they are made, define the very future of multi-lateral institutions.

Recently I spoke at the United Nations as to the importance of not allowing the strut of the most powerful, and the arms industry, to drown out the whispers from the gallery of the UN that yearn for peace, the elimination of poverty, freedom for minorities, respect for indigeneity.

The United Nations lies at the very heart of the multilateral system. Like all human organisations, it can lay no claim to perfection. To cite just one example, the UN Security Council should become more representative of the wider international community, in particular the Global South. The UN's weaknesses, however, are no reason to talk it down. Rather they constitute every reason for building it up.

The UN remains the essential framework for the assertion of global values and provides the only global context for aspiring to the solidarity of all humanity. The European Union and its Member States must continue to work strongly in support of the United Nations with which they share not only important values but also a fundamental commitment to multilateralism as a way of doing business.

The Union has an important role, through the UN and elsewhere. By working with others to defend human rights, democracy and the rule of law while avoiding hubris, and in no sense claiming perfection for ourselves, the European Union now finds itself in a context that offers leadership, a role which we should take forward, obviously with full respect for others on the one hand, but with determination on the other, offering a strong diplomacy, new mechanisms for achieving peace, avoiding the lure of the international arms industry and its advocates.

The Sustainable Development Goals can be seen as a charter for global solidarity. They challenge all of us to deal with trade, debt, the environment, intellectual and spiritual freedom, as well as cultural diversity, in a spirit of justice, partnership and mutual solidarity. I am proud of the leadership role that Ireland played in the negotiation of those goals.

The international community must now commit to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to realising their full potential. The European Union carries in a sense three separate responsibilities in taking forward those goals: the responsibility of history; the responsibility of an inclusive and sustainable prosperity; and the responsibility which flows from our values, including notably the principle of solidarity.

Africa offers the European Union both a particular challenge and an opportunity to bring new models of a connection between economy, ethics, and sustainable ecology into being. The Union itself and its Member States constitute the largest aid donors to the African continent. However, the Union should collectively do much more on a continent where so many still suffer from hunger but which at the same time has so much potential for the future.

While the Union should continue to help to build resilient and accountable states in Africa, states which will deliver for their young populations and which in future can be strong partners with us in achieving sustainability. Europe's willingness to transact the previous relationship with Africa with the new scholarship of contemporary Africa would be of immense assistance. The European Union should give a lead in removing the impediments to the transfer of the science and technology which Africa needs to achieve sustainability and respond to climate change.

Climate change is not only an environmental challenge but also a challenge of security, development and justice – it is an existential threat to our planet.

The Paris Agreement in 2015, of course, left very significant challenges ahead. However, when compared with the disappointing failures of the past, the acceptance of the scientific reality of climate change and the reflection of that reality in a universal, legally-binding agreement remains of immense significance. What is required now, first and foremost, is that all of those who made commitments must stand by them and deliver on them. The Secretary General of the United Nations,

António Guterres, has rightly insisted at last year’s Climate Conference in Bonn that our duty to future generations also requires us to raise our level of ambition.

The contribution of the European Union is central to what has been achieved on climate change and European leadership is now required more than ever in taking forward that achievement. In this area also, the Union’s approach must rediscover fully its founding value of solidarity. Climate justice demands that those countries and peoples who have least contributed to the problem of climate change should not be expected to pay the highest price to resolve it. Priority should therefore be given to accelerating support to the Least Developed Countries including the mobilisation of the necessary resources.

Perhaps the greatest current challenge which the Union faces in terms of solidarity relates to migrants. As Pope Francis has reminded us, “migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chess-board of humanity”. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants delivered a strong message of solidarity and contains detailed commitments which, if implemented, would ensure a more humane, dignified and compassionate response by the international community to the plight of refugees and migrants. I’m pleased that Ireland played an important role as co-facilitator of that Declaration. However, the consequences of the continued failure to transform into effective action the promises which have been made are often evident and sometimes tragic.

I would like, as others have done, to pay strong tribute to Italy for the leadership role it has played in recent years in saving the lives of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to escape extreme poverty, hunger, conflict, and ethnic cleansing; people seeking in Europe a better life for themselves and for their families, as Europeans have sought a better life abroad in centuries past. I’m pleased that the Irish Naval Service has been able to provide some support to Italy’s efforts.

Clearly the issue of migration in the Union is complex and sensitive, not least because of the threat of significant forces in our societies today which seek to exploit people’s fears and to use opportunities to direct those fears against those whom they portray as different from ourselves. This should not make us hesitate from providing the new institutional, including financial, arrangements appropriate for a collective response.

Let me say in conclusion that I believe we should remain committed to the European vision and to the potential for the founding principles of the European Union to provide the foundations of a renewed and strengthened Union. To make that possible, we need a creative and courageous vision at this crucial moment in the history of our continent. I believe that what is required, as the timely theme of this week’s conference so rightly implies, is for us to rediscover the enabling and inspiring principle of solidarity, solidarity within the Union and solidarity with the wider world.

If I may, I will conclude by returning to Michelangelo who once observed that:

“every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it”.

We are in a sense the sculptors of this European generation, still working on a block of valuable marble which has been passed down to us from the founding fathers of the European Union. If solidarity remains our guiding principle, I have no doubt that our European future, the outlines of which we can see but much of which remains to be discovered by our own chisels, will be a source pride for ourselves and an object of admiration for others. Go raibh maith agaibh, thank you.

**TOAST BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AT
THE LUNCHEON WITH THE EU HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT TO CELEBRATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE TREATIES OF ROME “BEYOND THE TREATY
OF LISBON. EUROPE AND THE ASSERTION OF ITS VALUES
IN THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT”**



Quirinale Palace, March 25th, 2017

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Messieurs Presidents of the European Institutions,
Kind Guests,

I am greatly honoured to welcome you here today at the Quirinale Palace at the closing of the solemn ceremony that at the Capitol - the same place that hosted the six Founding Countries sixty years ago - commemorated the anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome.

From Rome, in those early days of spring, rose a sign of confidence in the prospect of Europe. The sign of a new start - as many have recalled - following the first real moment of crisis in the Continent's integration project with the failure of the European Defence Community.

The evolution of those Treaties and the broad vision of the founding fathers, through a common commitment, made it possible to develop a community with an unequalled social model.

In these past few years our project of liberty and democracy has been under attack. Only a few days ago, one year after the Brussels attack, another act of terrorism struck London, one of the capitals of Europe.

Defeating the arrogance of terrorism, which brings its bloody endeavours on the doorstep of our Institutions, requires commitment in giving firm answers anchored in the Rule of Law.

Our unreserved solidarity goes to the people, the Parliament and the Government of Britain. What we need is widespread mobilisation, especially of people's consciences, and an incisive common action by enhancing cooperation among our security and intelligence systems.

The European Union, with its reasons of solidarity and shared commitment towards development and peace, must shoulder a fundamental role in reasserting the value of life against the peddlers of death.

The Union, over these past sixty years, has gradually become stronger, acquiring growing competences and turning into a multidimensional Union, built on sound and continuously developing Institutions.

This Europe of ours has gone through periods of impasse – as in the seventies – which alternated with periods of intense activity – as in the time that elapsed between the Single European Act and Maastricht and the Eastern enlargement of Europe – and with others of great disappointment, such as with the failed ratification of the Constitutional Treaty.

But we mainly have in mind the great moments of hope, as on the first day of circulation of the Euro, the progressive assertion of that extraordinary free space that goes by the name of “Schengen” or the continuous expansion of the Erasmus Programme: hopes confirmed through their development.

However, we are well aware of the difficulties we face today.

A short while ago, at the Capitol, you adopted a challenging Declaration that plots the road to undertake in order to give new momentum to our Union.

A Declaration that reaffirms, without any pretense, that our future identifies with our being, together, Europe and moves in the direction indicated in the most ambitious scenarios recently outlined in the Commission's White Paper, upholding the most authentic values underlying the integration process.

It is these values of openness, solidarity amongst peoples and generations, and tolerance, which assert the principles of liberty and democracy, that will enable the Union to make that “quantum leap” of which we so greatly feel the need today.

Without the prospect of taking further steps forward – which have borne the load in the construction of Europe – we risk a fatal paralysis because of the lack of uplift.

However, the guiding principles of the Declaration are self-evident: a secure Europe emanating stability to its neighbours; internally prosperous and adopting sustainable growth strategies; that develops its social model through the strenuous protection of individual rights; the authoritative promoter of peace and a leading player at international level.



If we want the Union that citizens insistently call for, in fulfilling this endeavour we must wholeheartedly conclude that the present European architecture will have to be redesigned.

The tests that the European Union is already now called on to overcome – the economic and financial crisis, the migration phenomena, and the crises at our Eastern and Mediterranean borders, along with the threat of terrorism – forcefully face us with the need to relaunch the inevitable objective of reforming the Treaties.

The next ten years – as highlighted in the Declaration – will be truly crucial for our common project.

Globalisation, by quickly multiplying the players on the international scene, players who are undoubtedly our friends but also our competitors in the normal flow of market forces, oblige us to follow an ever-faster paced agenda. The speed of change, which occurs at an unprecedented pace, must spur us to close ranks within our Union, also to make it more nimble and competitive.

Our window of opportunity will not remain open forever and we must grasp a hold of it now. We must be capable of governing change before it becomes impossible to do so.

No self-isolation will ever be able to guarantee our citizens the same level of peace, prosperity and liberty that we now have.

It has been said in this respect that European Countries are divided into two categories: the small States and those that have not yet come to realize that they are small. It is undoubtedly an unusual definition but it deserves a moment of reflection.

The essence of the Union's choice consists of promoting an integration process based on the decision to pool together talents, resources and capabilities to enhance the wellbeing of our societies and to foster the continuing development of our democratic institutions.

The discussion over getting to work on the review of the Treaties will not be simple but what emerges from the Declaration is that today marks the beginning of a "constituent phase" which I hope will be fruitful, enriched with the diversity of options and, in any case, with the unity of intents that Member States will be able to contribute to this common construction effort.

It is with this wish, along with the wish for a fruitful day of work, that I invite you all to raise your glasses and join me in a toast to Europe, our Europe, the Union of all our people.





Dublino, 7 luglio 2022. Il Presidente d'Irlanda Michael D.Higgins e l'Ambasciatore Ruggero Corrias durante la cerimonia della presentazione delle lettere credenziali al Capo dello Stato.

IL PRIVILEGIO DI VIVERE A LUCAN HOUSE

AMBASCIATORE D'ITALIA IN IRLANDA
RUGGERO CORRIAS

Il privilegio di vivere a Lucan House in qualità di rappresentanti del nostro Paese è un dono che va riconosciuto, apprezzato e conquistato ogni giorno.

Molto si è già scritto sulla storia di questa casa, una elegante dimora del diciottesimo secolo ispirata dalle ville Palladiane del Brenta.

Poco si sa di cosa significa viverci oggi, nel ventunesimo secolo.

Lucan House offre tanto: spazi, natura, suoni.

Ma pretende altrettanto, in particolare amore, rispetto, attenzione.

In una parola: Vita.

Vivere a Lucan House significa darle vita, non solo con le attività di rappresentanza che ogni Ambasciatore vi ha svolto e vi svolge, ma anche ripristinando la funzionalità di ogni suo spazio, meccanismo, segreto.

Dal montacarichi degli anni 30', destinato a fare viaggiare le pietanze dalle cucine ai saloni, al fossato che preserva la salubrità delle fondamenta.

Dal caveau dove un tempo venivano custoditi gioielli e vini pregiati, all'attico ove ora alloggiano i collaboratori domestici.

Dai sei camini che hanno ripreso a scaldare, non solo gli ospiti, ma anche le mura esposte all'umidità del fiume Liffey, alle travi dei solai, testimoni dei 250 anni di storia che ha vissuto la casa.

Dare vita a tutto ciò significa costruire sinergie, tra pubblico e privato, tra padroni di casa e manutentori, tra personale di servizio e giardinieri.

Significa avere pazienza, come con gli anziani, che la richiedono, ma che sanno ripagare con un sorriso ciò che viene loro dato.

Lucan House sorride, quando le si ridà luce, con una illuminazione moderna, fatta di luci calde, a led, che riflettono di notte anche le rovine millenarie del parco che la circonda.

Sorride quando ospita eventi di solidarietà, mettendosi a disposizione di chi ha poco o nulla o quando accoglie visitatori che, accompagnati da esperti accademici, ne rievocano storia e gesta.

Sorride, consapevole del suo ruolo, oggi di ponte tra Italia e Irlanda, domani chissà.



L'Ambasciatore d'Irlanda Patricia O'Brien.

ADDRESS BY AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND TO ITALY

PATRICIA O'BRIEN

I was delighted to learn of Ambassador Gaetano Cortese's decision to write about Lucan House, the historical residence of the Italian Ambassador to Ireland. Not only does this book showcase our wonderful residences, but it also highlights the long history of our warm and enduring bilateral relationship.

The Villa Spada, which encompasses the Embassy of Ireland to Italy and the Ambassador's Residence, is an extraordinary jewel set in the lush vegetation of the Janiculum Hill, with a breathtaking view over the Eternal City.

This Villa is a very significant part of Italian history and is a concrete symbol of our excellent diplomatic relations, which date back to 1937. Our cultural ties and our people to people link are, of course, much older than this.

Built in the 1630s as a summer retreat for the Nobili family, the Villa Spada is a historical landmark. The property became the headquarters of the Great Italian leader, Giuseppe Garibaldi, in 1849, during the war between the Italian revolutionary patriots and the French soldiers in the fight to restore the temporal power of the Pope over Rome. Indeed, this was the beginning of the *Risorgimento*, which ultimately resulted in the Unification of Italy.

The Villa suffered extensive damage in these battles, although the main structure remained intact. It was sold several times over the years and leased to the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from 1888 to 1895. The records suggest that before the Irish Government took possession of the property, the last owner of the Villa Spada was Giorgio Uzielli, who undertook major renovations and refurbishing works in the 1930s.

The Villa, which was purchased by the Irish Government in 1946, was the official Residence of the Ambassador of Ireland to the Holy See until 2012 and is now the residence of the Ambassador of Ireland to Italy.

Since its acquisition, I am proud to say that the Irish State has succeeded in preserving this magnificent treasure. I see it as my responsibility, as current Ambassador with the honour and privilege to live in this great house, to make every effort to preserve and take care of our treasure. I like to think that taking care of this building is also a way to thank Italy for our deep and lasting friendship.

To quote one of my predecessors, Ambassador Seán Ó hUiginn, who said, 'Our two peoples are united by the instinct to put the human person at the centre of the world'. This, in my opinion, is one of the reasons why our two countries have been bound together by such deep and lasting friendship and cooperation.

The visit to Ireland paid by President Mattarella in 2018 and to Italy by President Higgins in 2021 are tangible examples of this fruitful relationship, which is based on our shared values, as proud and committed members of the European Union.



Palazzo del Quirinale, Salone dei Corazzieri. Foto di Massimo Listri





Palazzo del Quirinale. Il Salone dei Corazzieri. I corazzieri in alta montura di gala prestano gli onori in occasione della cerimonia della presentazione delle lettere credenziali da parte di un Ambasciatore straniero accreditato presso il Quirinale.







La Residenza dell'Ambasciatore d'Irlanda a Roma, detta Villa Nobili Spada, situata nel rione Trastevere, sul Gianicolo, fu costruita nel 1639 dall'architetto Francesco Baratta su incarico di Vincenzo Nobili. Nel 1849, il Palazzo divenne sede del comando di Giuseppe Garibaldi durante la Repubblica Romana dopo che la precedente sede, nella Villa Savorelli, era stata distrutta dai cannoni francesi. Anche Villa Spada venne demolita dai bombardamenti dei francesi con la resa ordinata dall'Assemblea della Repubblica Romana. L'edificio venne ricostruito secondo i disegni originali intorno al 1900, a opera di Arturo Pazzi. Nel 1939 fu eseguito un nuovo restauro sotto la supervisione di Tullio Rossi e, nel 1946, Villa Spada fu acquisita dal governo della Repubblica d'Irlanda per ospitare la rappresentanza diplomatica irlandese presso la Santa Sede. Nel 2012 il governo irlandese decise di trasferire nella sede diplomatica l'ambasciatore d'Irlanda accreditato presso il Quirinale.

The Irish Embassy to Italy is located at the Villa Spada in the beautiful surroundings of Rome's Gianicolo (Janiculum) hill. The Villa Spada has both a long lay and religious historical connection. The building dates from 1639, when it was originally constructed as a summer home for the Nobili family. The Nobili family produced several noted churchmen including Roberto Nobili, who was made a Cardinal at the age of 12 by his grand-uncle Julius III in 1553. The Nobili Family owned the property for about a hundred years and then another Italian family, the Spada Family, owned it for a further 200 years of its history.

In 1849 for 10 days Giuseppe Garibaldi, Italian patriot and soldier, placed the Villa Spada at the centre of Italian history when his forces fought to defend the revolutionary Roman Republic against French forces, who were fighting to restore the Temporal power of the Pope over Rome.











Villa Spada.





Dublino, febbraio 2018. Il Presidente d'Irlanda Michael Higgins e l'Ambasciatore Paolo Serpi durante la cerimonia della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali al Capo dello Stato.

LUCAN HOUSE: TRA MEMORIA E RICORDI

AMBASCIATORE PAOLO SERPI

Ricordo in maniera molto viva quel giorno di febbraio del 2018, quando presentai le mie credenziali di Ambasciatore d'Italia in Irlanda al Presidente Higgins .

Porgendo la nota del mio Governo, pronunciai per intero e ad alta voce il nome del mio predecessore, pensando che in qualche modo proseguivo la sua azione e la sua presenza.

Allo stesso tempo speravo con quel gesto di essere anche io ricordato un giorno dal mio successore, legando così nel tempo e nelle persone la bella amicizia fra Italia e Irlanda.

Dopo quel momento d'inizio, c'è stato per me simbolicamente quello di conclusione, quando a giugno del 2022, ho preso congedo dal Presidente Higgins al termine della mia bella missione in terra d'Irlanda.

Ma tornando ai miei inizi di Ambasciatore a Dublino, non posso dimenticare la splendida esperienza di ricevere il mio Presidente della Repubblica in visita di Stato in Irlanda, proprio nel febbraio del 2018.

Averlo poi ospite a Lucan House, nella splendida Residenza degli Ambasciatori d'Italia in Irlanda, poter condividere con lui la compagnia della nostra bella comunità, offrire un pranzo ufficiale al Presidente e alla sua importante delegazione, illustrandogli la bellezza di quello storico palazzo e dei suoi meravigliosi giardini.

Negli anni che sono seguiti, fino alla mia partenza da Dublino, ho poi vissuto con la mia Ambasciatrice ed eccellente Signora, Maria Gabriela, momenti importanti, a volte solenni, a volte difficili, ma sempre qualificanti e vivi, nella coscienza positiva di lavorare per promuovere sempre l'amicizia e i comuni interessi dell'Italia, come dell'Irlanda.

Ho cercato di conoscere a fondo la storia, la realtà e la bella geografia dell'Isola di Smeraldo, come giustamente viene chiamata l'Irlanda .

Ricordo anche altri momenti molto qualificanti nel corso del mio mandato, come la creazione della Camera di Commercio Italo-Irlandese, importanti visite di ex Capi del Governo, del Vice Presidente del nostro Parlamento, di importanti esponenti politici e di eventi artistici e culturali ospitati anche dalla Residenza di Lucan House.

Visto che provengo da una famiglia di militari, non vorrei comunque dimenticare due momenti molto belli, che sono stati, nel maggio del 2018, la visita di una delegazione di alto livello delle nostre Forze Armate, ospitata dal Capo di Stato Maggiore della Difesa Irlandese, Mellett, con la tappa a Dublino dell'Amerigo Vespucci, nel luglio del 2019.

Considero indimenticabile il momento in cui mi sono rivolto all'equipaggio e ai cadetti dell'Amerigo Vespucci in quel giorno. Forse, insieme all'immagine del Presidente Mattarella, seduto di fronte a me durante il pranzo di Stato a Lucan House, quell'evento sulla tolda del "Vespucci" è stato la più bella sintesi di quattro anni da raccontare.