

**Your Magnificence, Prof. Eitel,
Mr. Prime Minister Kretschmann,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear students**

Thank you very much for the invitation to Heidelberg. It is my great honor to speak here at one of the continent's oldest universities. It is a place which has educated dozens of generations of outstanding Europeans. Many great Germans, of course, but also many Poles. One, was even its rector.

Heidelberg is a beautiful city built and nurtured for generations. And yet this wonderful city, which is in many ways a microcosm of Europe, has witnessed much evil, violence, war and atrocity. Today, they sadly return to our continent.

Europe finds itself at a historic turning point. Even more serious than during the fall of communism. For the most part those changes were peaceful. Today, when the whole world is threatened by a war of Russian aggression, the times of 70 and 80 years ago come to mind.

Today I want to talk to you about **four major matters** that are key to the future of Europe. So, I will divide my address into four sections.

In each of these sections I will refer to what I consider a fundamental issue - the role of nation states.

I will begin with first broad topic:

1. What the history of Europe teaches us today

Then, I will move to:

2. The importance of Ukraine's fight against Russia and what conclusions we can draw for Europe from the war in Ukraine.

Further on I will undertake a third issue:

3. What European values are and what threatens them at present

and 4. Finally, I will discuss

HOW Europe can adopt the role of a global leader.

So:

1. WHAT THE HISTORY OF EUROPE TEACHES US

If we ask what the history of Europe can teach us, I would like to start with our relations... Polish and German.

We have been neighbors for over eleven centuries. We have lived, worked, worried about and solved our problems not only side by side but often together. We founded our first universities at the same time - in Krakow in 1364, in Heidelberg in 1386. There have been many Poles of German descent or Germans of Polish and Slavic descent over the centuries.

Today, Poles and Germans work closely together economically, which creates interdependence.

We are Germany's fifth largest trading partner, after China, the US, the Netherlands and France. Soon we will move to fourth place, overtaking France. And then even to third.

Many do not realize it, but Russia ranks at 16th place.

And Poland, together with other countries of the Visegrad Group, is today a far more important partner than China or the US. It is worth noting how important Germany and Poland are to each other. And although we have different perspectives on some issues, we also share many common problems that must be overcome together.

Poland still struggles with the cruel legacy of World War II to this day.

Then we lost our independence, freedom and over 5 million citizens.

Polish cities lay in ruins and over a thousand villages were brutally pacified.

While western Germany was allowed to develop freely, Poland lost 50 years of its future as a result of World War II.

I do not want to dwell on this issue in my speech, but I cannot overlook it... Poland never received reparation from Germany for the crimes of World War II, for the destruction, stolen property and treasures of national culture.

After all, full reconciliation between a perpetrator and his victim is only possible when there is a recompense. At this crucial moment in Europe's history, we need such reconciliation more than ever, because the challenges that face us are grave.

The history of Europe - with its greatest wound - World War II - threw my country, along with many others, behind the "Iron Curtain" for almost half a century.

Together with my peers, we grew up, went to school, undertook work or studies in the shadow of communist crimes.

Millions of young Europeans living behind the Iron Curtain knew that there was freedom on one side and Russian colonialism on the other.

Sovereignty for some, imperial domination for others.

On one side, a much-desired free Europe. On the other, a barbaric totalitarianism. Life under the heel of Soviet Russia.

If someone had told us that we would live to see the end of communism, we would not have believed them. Like most experts on Soviet Russia from the West.

And yet, it happened! Polish Solidarity-“SOLIDARNOSĆ”, the war in Afghanistan, Pope John Paul II and the tough stance of the US during the Reagan era led to the fall of criminal communism.

The time of democracy had come.

Today, I would like to emphasize the role of sovereignty of the nation state in maintaining the freedom of nations.

The struggle of the enslaved nations of Central Europe was -- at its heart -- a struggle for national sovereignty.

This matter united all patriots... across the political spectrum ... because we believed that our rights and liberties could only be safeguarded within the context of regained sovereign states.

And we were right. This was particularly evident during periods of social and economic crisis. Even during the recent COVID-19 crisis, we saw that efficient nation

states are fundamental to protecting the health of citizens.

Earlier, during the debt crisis, we saw a clear conflict between the countries of southern Europe... Greece, Italy and Spain... and supranational institutions that made economic decisions on their behalf without a democratic mandate.

In both cases, we came up to the limits of supranational governance in Europe.

In Europe nothing will safeguard the freedom of nations, their culture, their social, economic, political and military security better than nation states. Other systems are illusory or utopian.

They can be strengthened by inter-governmental and even partly supranational organizations, such as the European Union, but nation-states in Europe cannot be replaced.

Europe was born much earlier than the American Republic, whose unity was also forged through civil war. That is why it is so misleading to refer to this historical analogy.

Any political system that fails to respect the sovereignty of others, democracy, or the elementary will of the nation– will sooner or later lead to utopia or tyranny.

It was Christian Europe that gave birth to a civilization which respected human dignity more than any other. That civilization is worth protecting. Especially when faced with hard-hearted and increasingly strong

civilizations, for which democratic and liberal values do not matter.

We want to build a strong Europe to meet the global challenges of the 21st century.

It is the scale of the European Union that makes it a significant force in the world, not its increasingly incomprehensible decision-making system.

We need a Europe which is strong **because of** its nation states, not one built on their ruins. Such a Europe will never have any force, because the political, economic and cultural power of Europe derives from the vital energy provided by nation states.

The alternatives are either a technocratic utopia, which some in Brussels seem to envision, or a neo-imperialism, which has already been discredited by modern history.

The struggle of European nations for freedom did not end in 1989. This is best seen on our eastern border.

2. So, I WOULD LIKE TO MOVE now TO AN ISSUE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR EUROPE. To Ukraine.

I will discuss the importance of Ukraine's struggle from the point of view of our common European values. Moreover, I will set out what conclusions we should draw from it.

What are Ukrainians really fighting for today?

For what are they willing to risk their lives?

Why did they not immediately surrender to the world's second strongest army?

The struggle of Ukrainians for the right to national self-determination is yet another heroic manifestation of the defense of the nation-state and freedom.

But in order to have the will to fight, one must really believe in what one is fighting for.

Today, Ukrainians are fighting **not only for their own freedom**. Since February 24, 2022, they have also been fighting daily for the freedom of all Europe. And it is also our future that depends on how this war unfolds. The defeat of Ukraine would be the defeat of the West. Indeed, of the entire free world. A defeat greater than Vietnam. After such a defeat, Russia would strike again with impunity and the world as we know it, would dramatically change. A long series of dangerous unknowns would follow. The defeat of the free world would likely embolden Putin, just as the **appeasement** of the 1930s emboldened Hitler.

Putin, like Hitler at the time, also enjoys huge public support. It is not an exaggeration to say we are facing the threat of World War III. The way to avoid this outcome is to stop feeding the beast.

History is unfolding before our eyes.

When our children read their textbooks, they will ask did we do enough to ensure a peaceful future for them. Did we think about them and the long-term good of our countries or only about short-term comfort and the postponing of difficult decisions for later?

Have we learnt from the mistakes of the past or will we keep repeating them?

Now – a couple of remarks on -----

---- 2.1 WHY THIS IS A TURNING POINT IN EUROPEAN HISTORY?

Until just before February 24, I had heard that Putin would not attack Ukraine.

Many politicians in Europe preferred to believe this, hoping it would be possible to continue the "Wandel durch Handel" with Russia at the expense of Central Europe.

In this context, let us return to the question: what are Ukrainians fighting for?

Were they focused solely on material goods and not united by their sense of community, they would have given up long ago.

This is what Putin was counting on. He believed that **Ukrainians would choose peace over freedom**. But he was wrong.

Why? What was the Kremlin's mistake? Putin is not a madman, as many of those who have been doing business with him for 20 years would have us believe. Putin was blinded by his own vision of the world. He was unable to see that Ukrainians **are** a nation.

And now they finally have their own nation state - though it may be far from perfect- they are willing to sacrifice their lives for it.

Russian propaganda claims that there is no such thing as a separate Ukrainian nation. We all know the saying: 'if the facts don't fit the theory, change the facts.' That is why Russia is trying to explain to Ukrainians, by force, that they have no right to a national identity.

And yet it is the grandchildren of the soldiers who today risk their lives for a free Ukraine that will one day proudly say in school: my grandfather fought near Kherson! And mine repulsed the assault on Kyiv! My grandfather died in Mariupol.

And today's soldiers, these future grandparents, know that they are also fighting so that their grandchildren can live in a free country.

Let us remember: **A nation is a community of the living, the dead and those yet to be born.**

Today, Europe is witnessing crimes committed in the name of an anti-national ideology. This is what motivates Putin: the desire to eliminate all difference, destroy all national identities and melt them into the great Russian empire. Into RUSSKIJ MIR.

Russian propaganda, has repeatedly made the false accusation of Ukrainian fascism.

This is exactly what Stalin said: „Call your opponents fascists or anti-Semites. You just have to repeat these epithets often enough”.

It must be said clearly: a fascist is someone who wants to destroy other nations. It is someone who violates human rights and **tramples on human dignity**. The fascist today is Vladimir Putin and all accomplices of Russian aggression. As Europeans, we have a duty to oppose Russian fascism. This is what European identity is all about.

Now,.....

2.2 WHAT LESSONS SHOULD WE LEARN FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE?

Ukrainians today remind us of what Europe should be. Every European has the right to personal freedom and security. Every nation has the right to make key decisions about the future of its territory.

Democracy can be implemented at a municipal, regional or national level, wherever there are ties based on a common identity. Therefore, a vote in which 140 million Russians would vote "**for**" the incorporation of Ukraine into Russia and 40 million Ukrainians would vote "**against**" would not be democratic, would it?

What other lessons can be learned from more than a year of war in Ukraine? One thing is clear to me: **The policy of 'making deals' with Russia is bankrupt.**

Those who for decades wanted a strategic alliance with Russia and made European countries dependent on it for their energy, made a terrible mistake. Those who warned against Russian imperialism and repeatedly said not to trust Russia were right.

Those who, for many years, financed Russian war preparations, disarmed Europe and imposed a partnership with Russia on those weaker than themselves, **bear political co-responsibility for the war in Ukraine.** And for the current economic and energy problems facing hundreds of millions of Europeans.

Putin behaved like a drug-dealer who gives the first dose for free, knowing the addict will come back later and agree to any price. Putin is cunning, but he isn't brilliant. Europe succumbed to him so easily mainly because of its own weakness.

This weakness was the pursuit of particular interests at the expense of other countries.

If the individual nations of the European Union seek to dominate others, Europe may fall prey to the same mistakes of the past. And all decisions to stop the Russian aggressor can be reversed again. This will happen if a few of the largest countries decide that it is **more profitable for their elites** to do business with the Kremlin, even at the cost of blood. Today it is Ukrainian blood. Tomorrow it may be Lithuanian, Finnish, Czech, Polish, but also German or French... We have to prevent this from happening.

Now-----

3. THOSE LESSONS SHOULD MAKE US ASK THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION - WHAT ARE EUROPEAN VALUES TODAY AND WHAT THREATENS THEM? --- and I will concentrate now on that third 'major matter'.

In terms of material prosperity, we are living in the best of times.

But has this prosperity killed our spirit?

Do we still care what we live for?

Would we be ready to defend our homes, our loved ones, our nation, if attacked?

This tension between the realm of spirit and matter is not new. We are, after all, at the university where Hegel was a professor.

In literature, few have concerned themselves with this problem as well as the great Thomas Mann, 'the

conscience of Germany' in the era of German Nazi crimes. It is Mann's heroes who desire a higher, more elevated meaning of life - not just the accumulation of goods and their consumption.

Over the past decades, many Europeans have come to believe that consumption sprinkled with perfunctory claims of "European values" is the final stage of history. We are against this approach. Smacking others with the whip of "European values" without agreeing on their definition or understanding what changes must be made by particular countries, is precisely - in Thomas Mann's sense - self-destructive for the European Union.

Once the symbol of Europe was the ancient agora. A place where every citizen could speak on equal terms. Today, all too often the European agora is replaced by the offices of Brussels institutions, where decisions are made behind closed doors.

As a European politician once said bluntly about the mechanism of EU institutions: "We decree something... If there is no outcry because most people don't understand what was implemented, we continue step by step -- to the point of no return." ---***end of quote***.

This is a short path for the EU to become a bureaucratic autocracy.

Alongside the new geopolitical circumstances, the fate of the European Union is also now being determined. Will it be a democratic community or a bureaucratic machine and centralist structure?

Politics is always about choice. But this choice must be made at the ballot box, not in the privacy of bureaucrats' offices. Do we really want a pan-European cosmopolitan

elite with immense power but without an electoral mandate?

I warn all those who want to create a superstate governed by a narrow elite. If we ignore cultural differences the outcome will be the weakening of Europe and a series of revolts, perhaps even a new Springtime of Nations like the one in 1848.

At the time, Germans made a huge effort to build a united and modern state. They had to wait twenty years for its political results, but they were victorious. Today we face a similar dilemma. If the rulers of Europe, like the Metternich-type aristocrats of the time, prefer the power of elites and the top-down imposition of *their* values, they will ultimately meet resistance. It may come sooner or later, but it is inevitable.

IT'S WORTH RETURNING TO THE BASIC QUESTION: What are European values?

And more importantly: what is Europe? Its history did not begin a few decades ago. Europe is more than two millennia old. Europe grows out of the heritage of the ancient Greeks, Romans and Christianity. These are our roots, we grow from them, we cannot cut ourselves off from them.

There is no Europe without soaring Gothic cathedrals nor the edifices of universities. Europe has always soared on the wings of faith and reason. And the university model of education that was created in Europe has spread all over the world.

This happened because the European university was a space for discussion and clash of opposing ideas - the most conducive environment for discovering the truth.

There **SHOULD BE NO PLACE** in Europe for censorship or ideological indoctrination. We have already gone through this in the past, when the communist authorities told us what to think. This was also experienced by Germans in the times of Hitler, when the books of free-thinking authors were burned.

EUROPE SHOULD BE A CATHEDRAL OF GOOD AND A UNIVERSITY OF TRUTH!

Here, too, it is worth highlighting that various bans, arbitrary decisions on what can and cannot be presented within the walls of universities as well as political correctness **undermine** the eternal mission of the academy - the search for truth.

And just as we protect our material heritage, we should also protect our spiritual heritage, which consists of dozens of different cultural and linguistic traditions. Europe's strength over the centuries has been its diversity. We share common values, but each nation has its own identity. Gleichschalten, uravnilovka, is a road to nowhere.

Germany and France are two central players in Europe.

In the 75 years between 1870 and 1945 they fought three wars - only after the last one was reconciliation achieved.

This reconciliation bears fruit today in the special political relations between Berlin and Paris. This special

mutual sensitivity to the rationales and sensitivities of the two capitals grew out of a tragic past.

For the sake of European balance, but also because of a much more tragic past, the same model of mutual sensitivity to the rationale and interests of Warsaw is needed. Today - we do not have a sense of this sensitivity in Warsaw.

The foundation for that reconciliation was laid by two great Europeans - Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer.

Both wanted to build a lasting peace in Europe.

They understood that mutual respect and awareness of each other's roots were prerequisites for cooperation. Chancellor Adenauer said: "If we now turn away from the sources of our European civilization, born of Christianity, it is impossible for us not to fail in trying to rebuild the unity of European life. This is the only effective means of maintaining peace."—***end of quote.***

General de Gaulle was also deeply aware both of Europe's great cultural heritage and ***the horrors of "internal war"***. De Gaulle said: "Dante, Goethe, Chateaubriand all belong to Europe to the extent that they were respectively and eminently Italian, German, and French. They would not have been much use to Europe if they had been stateless and if they thought, written in some kind of Esperanto or Volapük."

Our basic identity is national identity. I am a European because I am a Pole, a Frenchman, a German, not because I deny my Polishness or Germanness.

The attempt in Europe today to eliminate this diversity, to create a new man, **uprooted** from his national

identity, means undercutting the roots and sawing off the branch on which we sit.

Be warned: We can easily fall down - strong cultures and harsh dictatorships from other corners of the world are waiting for this. They would surely be happy to see Europe fall into insignificance.

Would we want all Europeans to forget their languages and speak only in Volapük? I wouldn't.

Some people try to negate Europe's contribution to the development of the world because they only see the dark sides of history. And indeed, countries responsible for exploitation and colonialism, imperialism and terrible crimes - like German Nazism and Russian communism, like crimes in the colonies - **should make amends for their own past.**

This is part of our European DNA - the pursuit of truth and justice. But historical Europe is not only a source of shame for us. All of today's amazing scientific development and prosperity is, one might say, Europe's offspring.

The way forward for Europe is also not 'political McDonaldization'. It requires drawing on its own diversity. The attempt to artificially unify Europe in the name of abolishing national and political differences will in practice lead to chaos and conflict among Europeans.

It is Cooperation combined with competition that is the best way for Europe to succeed in the global world.

Millions of people from all over the world visit Paris, Rome, Cologne, Madrid, Cracow, London or Prague

every year. The richness of these beautiful cities and the power of their attraction stem from the fact that each of them has its own unique identity.

We don't want a Europe that gives an ultimatum: either you voluntarily cure your nationality, or we will apply all kinds of political and economic pressure on you, to do so.

Poland has taken in millions of refugees in the recent months. Ukrainians have found shelter in our homes. Our understanding of European values certainly includes support for a neighbor in need. However, we received minimal help. And in this context, we see different treatment of countries in the same situation, and this is the definition of discrimination.

Poland experiences this discrimination also due to a complete lack of understanding of the reforms that a country emerging from post-communism needed to make. Due to the involvement of European institutions in internal disputes of a member state under the slogan of "defending the rule of law".

I want to make it absolutely clear here: in Poland we have the same understanding of the term "rule of law" as in Germany. And there are very few things I am as sure of as I am about the fact that my political camp defends the real rule of law to a much greater extent than was the case in the first 25 years after 1989.

It fights against oligarchy, against the domination of closed professional corporations, against poverty and against corruption. It safeguards against these

pathologies. But since this is not the main subject of my argument, let me stop here.

In a deeper sense, the dispute today is between the sovereignty of states and the sovereignty of institutions.

Between the democratic power of the people at a grassroots level and the top-down imposition of power by a narrow elite.

In the two thousand years of Europe's existence, no one has ever succeeded in politically subordinating our entire continent. It will not work today either.

The vision of a centralized Europe will end in the exact same place as **the concept of end of history** announced 30 years ago. The sooner we move away from this vision and accept democracy as the source of **legitimate** power in Europe, the better our future will be.

**by the way --- THERE IS NO *END OF HISTORY*.
HISTORY IS ACCELERATING AND BRINGING
CHALLENGES OF UNLIMITED PROPORTIONS!**

Unfortunately, a large part of today's EU elite operates in an alternate reality. ,,,,

If EU elites stubbornly insist on the vision of a centralized superstate, they will face the resistance of more European nations. The more they persist, the fiercer this rebellion will be. AND ----- I do not want polarization, division and chaos. I want a strong and competitive Europe.

4. So – let me now focus on the last major topic: how can Europe adopt pole position in the global leadership race?

Above all, the Union's policies must change. Not towards greater centralisation and the transfer of power to a few key institutions and to the strongest countries.

But towards strengthening the balance of power between the peoples of Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. And to complete EU integration with the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova – in line with Europe's geographical borders.

The question must be asked: how seriously do we take the issue of building a strong and influential European Union?

Today, pro-Europeanism is expressed by our mindset of enlargement, not in focusing on ourselves and the centralisation of the EU.

Strangely enough, those countries that like to present themselves as pro-European and propose turbo-integration are at the same time the most sceptical about enlargement policy and play games of political poker.

We should not talk about the values that unite the EU while dividing Europe into those who deserve to be in, and those for whom access is denied.

A larger common market, diversity of its economic assets would make us a strong global player.

I often hear that the EU needs reforms if it is to enlarge. This is very often a camouflaged proposal

of federalization, de facto – a proposal of centralization.

This is because the slogan of “federalisation” is a top-down imposed concentration of decision-making.

According to the authors of this **centralisation called “federalisation”**,-- the decision-making process must be changed by moving away from unanimity to qualified majority voting in a number of new areas. The argument for this solution is that obtaining unanimity among more than 30 countries will be difficult.

It is true that it is more difficult to obtain a unified opinion within a larger group of states. However, the question is whether this should lead us to think that decisions should be pushed by the majority, against the interests of the minority in other areas ??

I HAVE A DIFFERENT PROPOSAL:

Let us refrain from encroaching upon issues where national interest remains divided.

Let us take one step backwards to take two steps forward.

Let us focus on areas where the Treaty of Rome gave competencies to the Union and let the rest be guided by the principle of subsidiarity.

We have been observing the process of “spill over” of EU competences into new areas for several decades. It is critically evaluated in many Member States.

Nevertheless, it has recently accelerated.

The question to what extent the states remain “the masters of the Treaty”, as the Constitutional Court

in Karlsruhe once called it, is even more relevant today.

Thus, if the EU is to make changes to its decision-making process that have democratic legitimacy and allow for mutual trust, Member States must regain full authority over the Treaties.

They cannot relinquish decision-making power to "headquarters in Brussels" and "coalitions of power".

In other words, let us review the areas under the authority of Brussels and guided by the principle of subsidiarity, let us restore a better balance. More democracy, more consensus, more balance between states and EU institutions. Let us reduce the number of areas under EU competence, then the Union, even with 35 countries, will be easier to navigate and more democratic.

More centralization means more of the same mistakes. It is a failure not to listen to the voices of those countries that were right about Putin. It is giving power to people like Gerhard Schroeder, who made Europe dependent on Russia and put the whole continent at existential risk.

One example: Just a few months ago, in June 2021, there was an idea to celebrate meeting of the European Council with Vladimir Putin. As if no aggressive actions by Russia had taken place by then. Where would we be without the opposition of Poland, Finland and the Baltic States? If unanimity was rejected?

Polish foreign policy – in that context – is decided in democratic elections by Polish citizens – people for whom an aggressive neighbour is a real problem. Those are not people who live thousands of kilometres away and only see Russia through the prism of the works of Pushkin, Tolstoj or Tchaikovsky.

Today, it is not enough to talk about rebuilding Europe. We need to talk about *a new vision* for Europe. So that peace and security may become lasting foundations of development for decades to come.

If the last few months can be considered successful in any way, it is certainly due to cooperation in the field of security.

Transatlantic cooperation and NATO in particular has proved to be the most efficient defence alliance ever. Without the involvement of the US and – possibly – Poland – there would be no Ukraine today.

NATO, soon enhanced by the near accession of Finland and Sweden, is key to the security of Europe. It needs to be strengthened and developed. At the same time, we must build our own defence capabilities. Something Poland is currently doing. We are building a modern army not only to defend ourselves but also to help our allies. We are spending up to 4 per cent of GDP on defense which is only possible thanks to the repairs made in public finances after the gaping holes left in them by our predecessors. **And we propose that**

defense expenditure not be part of the Maastricht Treaty criterion of a 3 per cent limit.

Europe has disarmed itself, staring at Russian aggression like a rabbit in headlights.

Today, there is a shortage of ammunition and basic weapons to respond to the Russian invasion. Not to mention to other threats that may occur elsewhere.

My desire for the countries of Europe is to be so militarily strong that they do not need outside help in case of an attack – but that they can provide military support for others.

This is not so today. Without American involvement, Ukraine would no longer exist. And the Kremlin would have moved onto its next victim.

During the ‘detente’ of the 1970s, many mistakes were made. That era ended with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The West responded properly. This time, the Russian aggression of the last 20 years has not caused such concern. Sobriety came late - on February 24, 2022.

Now.....

4.1 WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN EUROPE'S POSITION?

We all remember Clinton’s campaign slogan: it’s the economy, stupid!

In those days almost everyone believed that money was a cure-all drug.

That even in countries like Russia and China, money would expand the middle class and democratize public life.

Things turned out differently.

Today we know that the economy must go hand in hand with social desires and security needs.

Many of the problems of modern Europe stem from the frustration of young people, whose prospects are often worse than those of their parents.

The middle class is eroding everywhere in Europe.

A world in which the richest 1% accumulates more wealth than the remaining 99% is outrageous. And this is happening today.

Tax havens, which might more aptly be called tax hells, rob the middle class and the state budgets of Germany, France, Spain and Poland.

Europe's strength comes primarily from the strongest foundation, which is its robust middle class. The belief that prosperity and growth can be shared not only by a group of rich, but by society as a whole - has been the driving force behind the development of the West since the fifties.

Unfortunately, this conviction is disappearing - and inequality is increasing. This is very dangerous because, on the one hand, it strengthens radical movements demanding the destruction of the current economic and political structure. And on the other it discourages work and development.

We must reverse this process. Because we are in danger of losing the race against our competitors - tough, hardened and uncompromising civilizations, which arrange social and economic relations differently.

Our job as political leaders is to ensure conditions under which everyone can make an honest living. The European labor market should provide decent wages, facilitate young people's entry into careers and give them a sense of stability.

We must also create the best possible conditions for having families.

Then Europe will have a bright future. Well-functioning families are the foundation of a healthy, happy and stable life.

We also must prevent Europe from becoming dependent on others. Cooperation with China is a great challenge. It is a huge country, with great ambitions.

As Europe, we must be at least an equal partner for China.

Dependence on China is a road to nowhere. And this is something towards which Europe must urgently strive. In addition to Ukraine winning the war, this is another great challenge for the upcoming years.

There are no errors that cannot be fixed. In part, at least. When I hear that our government was right about Russia and Ukraine, I feel satisfied. But I would gladly exchange

even the greatest sense of satisfaction for the European will to fight.

For an even stronger political will – to continue support for Ukraine. And for a will to confiscate 400 billion Euro of Russian assets. Freezing them is not enough. Russia must answer for its crimes and the material destruction it has caused. Brutal aggressors must know that sooner or later their country will pay for the losses caused by violence.

Today, I call again on all leaders of the Europe – it is time for the full and permanent confiscation of Russian assets. To rebuild Ukraine and to reduce energy costs for European citizens.

Europe is much stronger than Russia. But in addition to our potential, we need to have the will to use it. If we let Russia win this war, we risk more than just losing Ukraine. We risk marginalizing our entire continent.

The basic conclusion is simple. In the world, only strong, efficient, self-confident countries count. Putin attacked Ukraine because he considered Europeans to be on their last legs, weak and idle. One year later, we see that he was wrong. At least, in part.

Europe is not yet lost. As long as we still live. But she is not yet victorious.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning, I mentioned that many Poles also graduated from the University of Heidelberg – doctors,

lawyers, philosophers. One of them was our great poet, Adam Asnyk. In the spring of 1871 – exactly when a united Germany was being born – Asnyk also dreamed of reviving an independent Poland. He understood that great tasks could be achieved only through patient, systematic work, through the collective effort of the whole community. He wrote:

"Have always scorn for vainglory triumphant,
Do not applaud the violent oppressor
But neither worship your defeats abundant,
Nor take pride in staying ever lesser."

Europe must prove its strength and its worth. This is our "to be or not to be" moment. But unlike Shakespeare's Hamlet, we cannot hesitate. In 1844 when Germany was still like the ruins of Heidelberg Castle – impressive but incomplete - the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath warned: "Deutschland ist Hamlet!" The Germans are hesitating too much instead of clearly standing on the side of good.

John Paul II was one of the leading advocates of the European unification. He played a key role in the liberation of the nations of Europe. And together with his great German successor, Benedict XVI, this unique Polish-German duo was an important voice on the future of Europe - its direction, its culture and civilisation.

SO FINALLY – ALLOW ME TO SUMMARISE THE FOUR MAJOR MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF MY ADDRESS.

1. Firstly, we cannot build our future without learning from our past. History shows that a politics that does not respect sovereignty and the will of the people will sooner or later dissolve into utopia or dictatorship. Europe has a bright future if it respects the diversity of its nations.

2. Secondly, the future of Europe is being forged by Ukraine's **fight for freedom on our behalf**. It is our duty to support Ukraine. The Ukrainian's fighting spirit should be an inspiration and guide for our actions.

3. Thirdly, a democratic community of nations, based on an Ancient Greek, Roman and Christian heritage, one which fosters peace, freedom and solidarity, **is the bedrock of European values**. These values have formed the basis of European integration, and they can continue to be the continent's driving force.

What threatens to undercut those forces is **centralisation**. The rule of the strongest and the arbitrary entrustment of Europe's future to a heartless bureaucracy, that is trying to "reset values". **Such a "reset", that is - bureaucratic centralization under the guise of "federalization", is the seed for great future conflicts and social rebellions.**

4. Fourthly, if Europe is to win the race for global leadership, **--it must transform**.

It must be ready to accept new countries but also, in the face of a larger community, to limit some of its competencies.

In the face of external threats, it must strengthen its defensive capabilities. Facing economic and social

challenges, it must build an egalitarian and ordoliberal type of prosperity and **fight tax hells dressed up as tax havens.**

Europe must maintain wise alliances, but it must also foster independence and not become the victim of energy or any economic blackmail.

Europe was once the center of the world, respected on every continent.

Do we still care if Europe and our civilization survive?

And not only if they survive - but in what form?

Do we have the drive to be a leader?

Or, perhaps, have we already come to terms with taking a backseat?

Do we have the courage to make Europe great again?

To make Europe victorious?

I believe so.

Europe has great potential. It stems from its history and heritage but continues today in its innumerable qualities and advantages. What Europe needs however is determination and courage.

And I am deeply convinced that if we work hard – on behalf of our respective homelands and the continent as a whole – Europe will prevail. Europe will be victorious!

Thank you very much!