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Apologies from my colleague Stefano Zappalà who has recently suffered an injury and to whom goes all my solidarity. He is a good colleague and a hard working man. Politicians too, can be judged not only by how good or bad their work is but also on the basis of how hard and seriously they work. He is always present, available, kind and has always done a good job. I say this even though we belong to opposite political parties. This proves how simpler and easier establishing good amicable relationships in Europe is compared to our own country. It is easier also to establish a political collaboration, as in the EU we are not asked to support a unitary government. Instead, there is a government that represents 27 countries and this makes all the difference, as we European liberals often say.

I listened to all presentations yesterday and have very much appreciated the effort shown by all participants and organisers. I thank you the organisers for this. Above all, I thank them for the quality of the work presented, in terms of both planning and organisation skills. I believe that the outcome of yesterday and today's discussion was very important. Allow me to repeat myself by saying that I have very much appreciated the content, the proposals and also the simplicity and sobriety of many of your suggestions and proposals. I think that the real challenge is to complete that process of recognition by the institutions that we have started together and on which we European MPs elected in this region have given our total availability.

I think that our ultimate goal is continental challenge. Thus, we cannot avoid mentioning all the positive actions and active and proactive political activities regarding all initiatives carried out by the EU via various programs listed yesterday. Our wish is that the new EU members and members to be will work together with enthusiasm, efficiency and swiftness.

Of course, time must be used efficiently given the fact that the funding is granted in a time when the EU economy is suffering in terms of exports and production at the expense of all country members. At the same time, it is necessary to show that these resources are well and efficiently used.

I think that the Chambers of Commerce as well as the Forum, have a great role in this and their role will be even stronger if the aim of the Forum accreditation process is not only a physical presence in Brussels (i.e. legal, administrative and political, official relations) but also a collective and coordinated action. The Forum of the Chambers of Commerce should be able to efficiently intercept all funding made available by the EU for sectors that have been largely discussed here. Amongst these sectors there are small and medium enterprises which represent the driving force for European economic growth, but also something that I particularly care about, as Mr Giampaoli knows: cultural development. With this I mean education, training and research, which represent the fundamental basis of development. Cultural development is not only needed by big enterprises but also by small and medium ones as their competitiveness in these times of globalisation is based exclusively on professional skills and research. These two aspects must be supported by positive action and targeted funding. Yesterday the Polytechnic

University of Le Marche Rector Pacetti listed all initiatives in place: a lot has already been put into action but the rest is still in the planning phase. Therefore, we do hope that it will be seriously actioned as soon as possible in all countries interested in this project, in this program.

I think that the same could be said about other fundamental sectors mentioned yesterday: the security plan, the legality plan, the administrative transparency plan, the strengthening of democratic institutions plan in your countries. Therefore, we need to be more influential in terms of proximity and enlargement policies as these sectors will allow the democratic consolidation in your countries and will allow a faster and easier route to a European membership.

I was saying only yesterday that there have been issues regarding the European Constitution and the enlargement process. However, these issues must be faced and overcome. We need to look at the situation from a broader political point of view and provide a solution in the interest of all. This is what the EU is trying to do thanks to the daily work of the European Commission and Parliament.

The constitutional process will have to restart – the main points are already listed in the Nice Charter. Personally, I find it the only great civil achievement in a century that has given us many squalid and sad things. The Nice Charter, together with the success of Europe enlargement of May 2004, has provided us with an important milestone which no one ever talks about: 50,000 pages of EU rights that today are available to all 27 countries members; 50,000 pages that are fundamental to our future. Before, I heard people talking about arbitration, an arbitration system, etc. All this is referred to our EU rights, to our treaty system that I wish will soon be replaced by the European Constitution, to a European legal patrimony shown during all these years and on the basis of which 90% of our judges base their sentences upon. This is the real success, the real base, and the foundations of which importance I was previously talking about. These are the foundations on which we need to start building a broad discussion for further communitarisation. This is the real basis on which to build an EU that should not only be based on economy, on a unique currency – even though this is very important in terms of making people's lives easier and allowing a faster European integration. We cannot forget that all this favours the possibility of realising the political Europe which we all need.

It is not a negative step with regard to our national sovereignties. It is a step forward; it is delegating part of our sovereignty, a thing which we should all be able to do in the interest of us all. I remind you today of what I said yesterday: the competition on which we will base our civilisation in terms of culture, quality of life, protection of the environment, protection of its artistic, cultural and spiritual heritage can be achieved only on a continental dimension. This is undeniable. Either we discuss, approach and resolve this issue or we are doomed to be defeated by other civilisations.

President, I am not sure whether this has made the front page on the newspapers in your countries but I often hear the argument between those who believe that Europe should be based on Christian foundations versus those who believe that these Christian roots should not enter the Constitution. From my lay point of view, allow me to make a cultural suggestion based on my personal experience, on my studies. I say this every time I get the chance,

hoping that someone may listen. There is a respectable representative of *Il Sole 24 Ore* whom I hope will listen to my suggestion. I made the same suggestion in Rome but it didn't have much of success: probably only the powerful get listened to. Those who do not have power often do not get listened to. It doesn't matter. It is important to say something and to have enough enthusiasm and resistance to continue to repeat it. We need to repeat that Christianity is a false problem. The foundation on which Europe has been built is and will continue to be the Greek-Roman legislation, the Latin legislation which has arrived at the heart of Europe thanks to the inestimable work of hand writers of all times. Those people have allowed us to keep records of important cultural treasures that now are at the core of legislation in many European countries: Germany, France, Italy, Northern Europe and even that country that is finding difficult to adapt to this cultural scheme, England.

Therefore, I believe that we should not compare these issues because if we dig in our past we will find that those who decided that Saint Benedict should be the protector of Europe had it clear in their minds the message I am trying to get across today. The economy, growth, the chamber system, the arbitral system, the strengthening of democracy, the partnership activities, the possibility of intercepting European funding to support democratic development, quality of life, justice, freedom, equal opportunities all come from this concept of profound unity of the European continent and its people. A unity that is spiritual even more than economic. Whether this spirituality is expressed via Christianity, the Orthodox Church or other religions does not matter. This is not about religion but about the spirit of the intelligent man who does not think only of himself but looks out for a social and democratic dimension. Like our Christian New Testament says: a man that is not only flesh.

This is my message to you. In conclusion, I am very happy for the great contributions that all of you have been giving to this Forum and for all the things you will carry on doing by working together. Our proximity is about determination and, I hope, mutual sympathy which is not tinged by any form of exploitation. Thanks.