

Address by Arnold Koller, President of the Swiss Confederation, on the occasion of the summit of state and government heads of the countries of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Paris, 19th September 1990

Mr. President,

We bear witness to a momentous event here in Paris. What we did not dare to hope for one year ago has become reality today. The division of our continent is something of the past. What the people have been aiming at for decades, has begun: a new era of cooperation between East and West to construct a new, unified Europe.

For years no other country has symbolized the painful division of our continent as much as our neighbour Germany. Earlier a symbol of separation, it has become the most visible embodiment for the unification of Europe.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Swiss people, I wish your country a promising future.

Today, the word Europe justifiably awakens hope again. All too often these hopes have been shattered, or even turned into despair. Our new Europe should rely on its great cultural traditions. It recognizes human dignity as its highest value. Everything is connected with this value: human rights and basic freedoms, which belong to each individual as an undeniable birth right; the constitutional state, which regulates the coexistence of men in our countries; pluralistic democracy, which best expresses the will of the people; economic freedom, which brings prosperity, and social justice which provides for the weaker members of society.

A Europe recalling the roots of democracy in Athens, building on the Roman concept of justice, bound by the Christian understanding of human dignity, continuing the tradition of enlightenment and the

great American Constitution and respecting as well the French declaration of human rights - is this Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural only a pipe dream or can it become a reality? We are of the opinion that the chances of attaining all of this today are better than ever. All of us in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, in the Soviet Union, in the United States of America and in Canada want to realize the same concepts of human rights, democracy, constitutional state, market economy, of security and freedom. Of course we still differ in many respects. We must not and do not want to forget this. The more so, as these differences will preoccupy us for years to come. What is new, however, is that we have never agreed more on the fundamental direction. Thereupon we want to build our future. Together we want to continue what has been started and also turn to new priorities such as economic support for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the protection of the environment.

The Paris summit is such a happy event primarily for these reasons. It expresses many things: the unrelenting desire for freedom of the people of Eastern and Central Europe, the foresight of the founding fathers of the Helsinki-Act - and the courage of those, who like the late Andrej Sacharov, always spoke out in favor of keeping the obligations of the CSCE agreement.

The CSCE has well fulfilled many of its tasks. With respect to military security, economy and human rights, it has produced valuable agreements and papers. Let me just mention the two rounds of negotiations in the area of military security. We made substantial progress with the agreements on confidence and security building measures. And I congratulate the 22 member states of the two military treaties, which worked out a breakthrough treaty on conventional arms in Europe within the framework of the CSCE and signed it today. Their treaty will enhance the security of all European nations. I am pleased that the negotiations in these two areas will be continued after the summit. After the next follow-up CSCE meeting in Helsinki in the year 1992 we should bring these negotiations into one single forum to enhance our security jointly and to strengthen stability.

The CSCE has fulfilled its tasks in some areas to an extent that it can slowly let other organisations take its place. The CSCE has thus brought human rights standards to such a level that several countries, among them most recently Hungary, are now in a position to join the European Council and to fulfill its strict norms. The final act of Helsinki had been worked out in a climate of confrontation. But it has reached many of its goals. Today we have to turn to new problems, too, which preoccupy our citizens and endanger our security: I am referring to the protection of the environment in all its forms, to the developmental discrepancy between North and South which is the cause of a growing wave of migration. Finally I am thinking of the connection between our security and crises in neighbouring areas, an interdependence which the gulf crisis has brought to our attention. But I also have in mind two areas to which Switzerland attributes great value and which should receive a strong political impulse here in Paris.

I particularly refer to the question of national minorities - one of the most important problems on the political agenda of the years to come. The minorities with their cultural heritage and their great achievements have culturally enriched most of the countries represented here. But in many places possibilities for development of these minority groups are limited. Moreover minority problems have come to the surface within countries and between countries with unforeseeable force since the pressure from totalitarian regimes has faded away. These conflicts could endanger the existence of young democracies just as it could threaten regional stability. This poses new difficult tasks. The new Europe which we want to build jointly has to have space for everybody. Minorities should not be considered a burden. They can be an enrichment if the majority and the minority groups try to take steps towards each other and to solve problems as partners. Many countries have had this experience, I hope. Switzerland, for instance, is a country of minorities; it is characterized by a coexistence of four different languages and cultures. The mutual penetration of different cultures is at the core of the Swiss *raison d'être*.

Democracies have to find solutions worthy of democratic countries. I am happy about the decision here at this summit to hold a meeting in Switzerland next summer on national minority issues. We shall thereby set a clear signal. Everybody will see that we are aware of the new problem, and all minorities should take note that we are earnestly looking for workable solutions.

A tolerant Europe needs something else as well: a stable framework for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. All of us agree that conflicts must not be settled by force. But who does not know from experience that conflicts can arise at any time. That is why we have to commit ourselves to settling such differences peacefully. And our experts have to work out a method whereby any party can call upon the aid of a third party to resolve a conflict, if the two sides cannot arrive at a peaceful resolution or cannot find a solution acceptable to both. Can we not take this risk? Don't we have enough mutual trust by now? The answer can only be: We have to get started, and fast, at the meeting of experts in Malta in two months' time.

Mr. President,

Times change, problems change, and the political institutions are also constantly evolving. Europe is experiencing a time of upheaval. It is striving for more unity. The European Community plays a very important role in Europe's economic and political development. It has become the decisive factor in the life of Europe. Together with the other EFTA Countries my country is trying in negotiations with the EC to work out a joint European economic sphere. It is entirely in our interest to reach this level of unification. It would have a positive effect on all of Europe.

In the domain of human rights and culture the Council of Europe has much to offer. We have an interest in making more use of its experience and in strengthening this institution. We should never forget that Europe is a cultural rather than a purely geographical term.

Until now the CSCE has been nothing but a conference. It had no institutional basis. The new Europe, together with the United States of America and Canada, intends to meet more frequently in the future for conferences, discussions and joint decisions. To handle these tasks the CSCE needs a secretariat, a conflict settlement office and an office for free elections. We want to build up these institutions sensibly, step by step, and examine them in the light of the experience gained at the follow-up Conference in Helsinki. The parliamentary CSCE assembly should also take shape by 1992. We would appreciate it if this happened on the basis of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe.

Mr. President,

This meeting in Paris should not just be a highlight, it should also shape our efforts for the coming years. Much work lies ahead of us because we have the unique chance to bring about a new quality of European cooperation.

President Gorbatschov called for this meeting one year ago. This was a great help. I thank him for it. But my thanks also go to President Bush, who took up this initiative and reasserted the transatlantic solidarity of the United States. Finally I would like to thank the host, President Mitterand and the French people as well as the executive secretary of this meeting. With the extraordinary organisation they made it possible that the summit would take place in this city which stands like no other for Europe's greatness.