



Toespraak

Toespraak van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer mw. Ankie Broekers-Knol ter gelegenheid van de ontvangst van de Hongaarse Parlementsvoorzitter dhr. Köver

24 november 2015

datum 24 november 2015

Mr Speaker, dear colleague,

On behalf of the Senate of the Netherlands, I wish you a warm welcome to the Netherlands, and to the Senate in particular. I am very glad that I am given the chance to return the incredible hospitality you showed me during my visit to Hungary in November 2013. As it was my first official visit abroad as President of the Dutch Senate, it will always hold a special place in my memory.

During your three day visit to the Netherlands, we can only hope to provide you with an equally pleasant and diverse programme.

Mr Speaker,

It is astonishing to realise how much has changed in the two years since my visit to your beautiful country. In November 2013 Crimea was not yet annexed by Russia, ISIS was not as large and influential as it is today, the number of refugees coming to the EU was a lot lower and the terror attacks in Paris, Brussels and Copenhagen were yet to come.

Today, we can genuinely state that the world order is being challenged. And in these times in which there are many threats, both outside and within EU borders, it is important for member states to stand together and to act united.

At times, Europe may seem a patchwork of differences, but compared to many other regions in the world, we are in fact a unique force of like-minded nations, created to prevent a war such as the Second World War from ever happening again. Let us not forget that. And let us not forget how successful we have been in that respect.

Recent events have shown us just how fragile our freedom and our security are. The tragic attacks in Paris once again materialized the threats we face within EU borders. The huge migration flows demonstrate that we are faced with many challenges.

Let us view our shared history as the foundation for the strength and courage that are needed today to deal with the current crises. Let us find the answers to these threats and challenges together. Side-by-side. Because the measures we take today, can have serious repercussions tomorrow.



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In view of this, we must keep developing our own countries. We must continue to uphold the rule of law, we must continue to develop the rule of law and human rights, and we must ensure that we are not drawn into a spiral of violence, aggression and lawlessness. We must maintain a system of checks and balances in our own systems. And we must remain open to dialogue and discussion, both within our countries and with others.

Mr Speaker,

I believe parliamentary diplomacy is a highly valuable tool when it comes to this open dialogue and discussion. Just the other week we received the President of the Senate of one of your Visegrad- partners, the Czech Republic. The day after tomorrow we will receive the Ukrainian President Mr. Poroshenko, and in December I hope to visit the Bundesrat in Berlin in the light of our upcoming presidency of the EU.

The Senate of the Netherlands stays in close contact with other parliaments. I believe, this way, the national parliaments of the EU can play a great role in building the mutual trust and commitment which is necessary to address the very demanding problems we are currently facing. In that respect we hope to continue the interesting and fruitful discussions we had in November 2013.

Mr Speaker,

Once again a warm welcome, and may I give the floor to you.

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