

Just Society: the underlying vision of the European Project
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to speak once again at this informal forum of people who are deeply concerned and invested in the future of their countries: countries in search of the New.

“All virtue is summed up in dealing justly,” said Aristotle.

Pascal penned the passage: “Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.”

Pindar once said that, “Justice is the unshakeable foundation of the state.”

And finally,

In the words of Immanuel Kant: “When justice disappears, nothing is left that could give value to the lives of people.”

I have quoted the words of these great thinkers because the theme I would like to discuss with you today is justice.

In thinking about what binds us – since in reality we do not share a border with the European Union, and our economies are not yet deeply integrated – I have reached the conclusion that

the underlying process that connects us with the European Union is the construction of a just society.

We believe that the European Community is built upon a just foundation, which is the main reason why so many people aspire to live in Europe and why many developing countries strive to organize their societies and states in line with European models.

Justice, however, is above all about values. We are now witnessing a major shift in the European system of values: while the traditional values still persist, priorities have begun to change. The public perception of values shifts as the modern reality changes. The main problem is that the modern world cannot come to a consensus on the importance of justice in its spectrum of values.

Moreover, the realities of the contemporary world are coming into serious conflict with the very values upon which current systems were constructed. In the West, there is an ongoing dialogue about the need to review the political, economic, and cultural systems formed in the 20th century.

It goes without saying that perceptions of economic and social well-being should be in harmony with spiritual values. Otherwise, there would be a constant threat of violence and chaos. We need a stable Europe as a guarantor of stability in the region and of the peaceful resolution of existing conflicts.

Under these troubling circumstances, countries like mine are losing sight of their reference points, and a serious debate emerges within societies: is the current European development model the right one?

The question is complicated further because European values have not yet taken root in the minds of our citizens during this transition period. With a large gap between declared values and those that actually prevail in the minds of the public, certain groups find a platform to propose non-democratic, authoritarian models of development as an alternative to the Western paradigm.

Today, more than ever, Europe must demonstrate its interest in the construction of just societies in our states. The legislation we enact in the context of harmonizing the national legal framework with European legislation, the institutions we build with your support, and the principles and standards of conduct that are adopted and promoted by our government are all aimed at building a just society. The signing of a Free Trade Agreement will provide documentary evidence of Europe's trust in us, confirming that we are on the right track of building a just society. Justice will prevail.

Today, more than ever, we all need our joint projects with the EU to yield tangible results, which will inspire the confidence of our citizens and support political institutions in the

implementation of reforms aimed at the establishment of a just and democratic society.

Armenia is gradually recovering from the global financial crisis. Our team has significantly boosted efforts in the implementation of joint projects aimed at creating new institutions, promoting good governance, and implementing European guidelines and standards. The technical assistance and direct budgetary support of the EU are absolutely essential in ensuring that these efforts are fruitful.

We are looking forward to Europe's response to the challenges posed before all humanity in the 21st century. The fundamental values and ideals to which we aspire must be reconsidered. We are now facing the real threat of relativism and excessive conservatism (moving from a secular model to a confessional one). If we do not update our ideals, it will be impossible to accomplish a sense of justice.

Today, more than ever, we need to develop a common platform upon which to build our vision for the future of Europe. We need to move to the next level of interdependency. Forums such as this EPP meeting facilitate the crucial dialogue that will guide us through this process and enable us to successfully undertake the challenge.

Thank you for your attention.