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Schuman Declaration 2.0 Speech:

The need for a shared language and armed force in a united Europe

Ladies and gentlemen,

I come here to speak about the legacy of one man, Robert Schuman, and what his life meant for the continent we inhabit. A continent until then ravished by war and its own self-destruction after world war II.

Schuman was ideally placed to strike at the heart of Europe's dilemma, having both a german and french citizenship. He understood that nationalism and the whims of dictators to fight over imaginary lines had brought Europe to its knees and needed a solution.

70 years on Schuman would look to us now to fulfil his legacy and soothe the souls of a continent again disillusioned with the community he set up. It is our job as responsible Europeans to finally end the plague of nationalism and restore Europe to greatness.

We need a United States of Europe and a joining of the people that had once made the West great.

This closer union could ensure the smooth transition of funding and resources to best combat the sweltering inequality in Southern and Eastern Europe.

We could, united, regain our tenuous position on the global stage rather than relying on the unreliable and being beholden to pariah states.

The great question, therefore, is this: how do we go about achieving this? A question that many a mind spent years pouring over and that Schuman couldn't reconcile in his lifetime. This task is left to us, and as citizens of Europe we shall take it up with no small amount of willpower.

In this new state, a union between people can only occur through communication. A shared language is necessary. Many of our languages: Slavic, Germanic and Romance are different. L.L Zamenhof proposed Esperanto as the world's first international language that could potentially serve this purpose. But you don't need me to tell you that this has not caught on. No matter its simplicity, the creator's hopes of an "international auxiliary language" have not come to fruition. Instead, the very language I speak to you today seems like a better bet.

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Even after Brexit, 44% of Europeans can speak English as a second language, indeed English has already become the de facto language of international correspondence. It is well known that the Netherlands and Sweden have large numbers of English speakers at 88% and 90% of people being able to speak it respectively. Even larger countries like Germany can count on over half the population to understand it. *Here* is a strong foundation for a language; *here* is the sole voice for Europe and one that *can* transcend borders.

The aim should be now for all citizens of Europe to understand English. The subject should be of critical importance in school and campaigns should be run to promote its usage. Schemes should be set up for workers to gain the skills already so sought after in the workplace.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once said “The limits of my language means the limits of my world” and in this we should find inspiration in extending the reach of *our* language to obtain a greater understanding of others. Our native languages hold our culture, our beliefs and our stories and should still be protected.

I am not calling for its destruction! Rather its cooperation with one official language!

Even now external threats pose a danger to the union. Emmanuel Macron this year noted the fragility of the NATO alliance with an unwieldy Turkey provoking a humanitarian crisis against the Kurds and a breakdown of US relations. Coupled with the aggressive actions of Russia, Europe’s response has seemed lacklustre. Putin has exposed our faults. our member states meanwhile stay squabbling and disunited.

It is clear what needs to happen: Europe’s armies need to join under one banner. Together the EU military force would be larger than that of the US and be on par with China’s at 3.1 million personnel. Cost-effective measures could be brought in at this point to streamline our armed forces into a situation where money is not idly pumped into out-of-date equipment. We could finally control our own destiny and put our force to use in safeguarding civilians and upholding international law. In this new form, Europe can claim the role of a new benevolent superpower.

Jean Monnet, a colleague of Schuman, had proposed a European defence community in the post-war years that nearly took shape. Incidentally missing only ratification by France. Since then the vision for an army has narrowed to speech-making and the feeble attempts of organisations like the CSDP. To stand on the world-stage again and gain a sense of shared European identity so desired by our forefathers, differences and power-blocs must be put aside for the common good.

Vive L’Europe!