

SPEECH OF POUL NYRUP RASMUSSEN

Newly elected President 6th PES Congress

29/04/04

Dear comrades, dear friends and first of all dear Robin,

Robin my friend, I remember the first time you and I met some years ago. I think I was Prime Minister at that time and I think that you were becoming Foreign Minister a few months afterwards. Robin, may I say that sometimes it's not a positive argument to remain the same but in your case its a fantastic argument. No matter where I have met you, no matter in which political fight we have been together, no matter the responsibility, no matter the difference of different people you have met, you have always been so clear in your voice, so capable, so direct one could feel your feelings and you have been so honest. Robin, to tell you the truth, I have learnt so much from you and it began quite early and I feel that thanks to you, the party you now deliver to us is ready to take the next step and it wouldn't have been at that stage without you. Robin, you are a big inspiration to all of us and I thank you Robin for what you are and what you have done.

You know friends I know that Robin hates all this, but it should be said. I would also say to Ruairi Quinn who, on behalf of all of us thanked Robin, just a short while ago: Ruairi, I sincerely hope - of course its the decision of the Congress - but I sincerely hope that the Congress will follow us when I say that I hope you will continue on the team. You belong there, you have done so much for the party Ruairi and I really look forward to co-operating with you. Thank you for the things you have done and welcome to the new job.

And lastly but not least, may I thank the secretariat. Its General Secretary, the Vice Secretary, our staff. Ton, tell the staff that they are doing miracles. And often I remember all the times that we just take things for granted. OK the Congress will function. Ok, all the headlines will be there, the paper will be in order. We just take it for granted but dear friends, you know and I know that without our little staff which acts like an army we would not be here so well functioning as we are. Give them my heart felt thanks from all of us to all of them. Thank you so much.

And delegates and friends, today the party of the European Socialists has taken a decisive step. I believe it will influence the whole of European politics if we want so and I feel that we have decided that we want so. In democratically electing a President - through a vote involving 340 delegates from 25 countries of the EU, and from today 32 member parties - the PES is leading the way towards a more democratic and political Europe. But

remember one thing in the start of our new period: this is not only a presidential election, among others, it's something specific: It's an election where we are all winners. And I want to underline to you from the beginning; when I was elected to national president for the first time some years ago, an essence in my speech was the winner does not take it all. Giuliano Amato and I belong to the same team and I really look forward to co-operating with Guiliano. And we will have a team now, a team in essence where Guiliano and I will be the very signal to Italy to the South of Europe, to the north of Europe, to the east of Europe and to the west of Europe. That we are united - we will be the symbol of a unified Europe among socialists. We will do it in practice not only in words, we will be all over the place; we will unify the youth, with Anna's (???) and all the rest and the elderly guys like me and others, we will be a strong force where nobody will be superficial or nobody can be lost; we will be together in our common goal and our common political fight.

This Congress and this election are also taking place in a new positive phase of the European left, our spectacular victories in Spain, in France and believe me we will do all we can in the SI in the PES to assist Italy to be the next victory place. Why don't we decide that here today?

Dear friends, I feel that the pendulum is swinging in Europe now. I feel that people have got the experience of having right wing governments for some years and now they are coming back to us and I think its time to say "welcome home citizens". Because now when we are getting power again among a majority of governments in Europe, we will never forget how it was when the majority of Europe had right-wing governments. We will be as ruthless in the implementation of our ideas and values as they were. We will be as ruthless as they have been when it comes to creating a better world. When it comes to bringing this globalisation development under democratic control. We will be ruthless when it comes to reforming the international institutions and when it comes to strengthening the UN, we will be ruthless. And dear friends, I think that democracy at all levels implies freedom to choose. The European elections should offer citizens a united Europe and clear political choice. This choice - and let us decide this also today - is not for or against Europe. Let the right wing discuss that point, those who are against Europe belong to the right wing side of those who always hoped that things could be as they were in the past where the few had the power and the many didn't. No, we are *for* Europe, we are for a strong democratic Europe and I am so proud that we have decided the manifesto today with all its content. And let me say to my Czech friend, a trade unionist: in my young days I was a trade unionist myself. I learnt a lot and trade unionism and the trade union movement will always be with us. Because you belong to us and you are of the same family.

And now its time also to connect to ordinary people again and again. This party is nothing without the national party and this party and the national party is nothing without direct connection to ordinary people. What are they worried about? Unemployment, insecurity, pollution. These are the fundamental challenges for us because these are the fundamental worries for ordinary people. These are our fundamental concerns because these are our *common*

fundamental concerns. So many people come to you and to me and ask how can I get control in my life in a world out of control? So many people look at their tv each day and see the problems and worries, the deep social inequalities in the world and many say; "lets turn off the tv and lets make another film to look at the good times". Apathy, dear friends, apathy, is our worst enemy for the moment and the only way to get people to look at this tv is to get people to look towards hope and a vision and we are the hope and new vision for ordinary people. That's why we should focus so much on getting people away from apathy and getting people into a new direction, a new hope which we can present.

The debates that set nationalists and federalists against each other hide too often the true nature of political challenges and choices. In this spirit that the next European elections should be seen, our political action and multilevel governance in which every citizen - and we must really learn here - every citizen should understand that his or her future is not only decided in the local area, not only decided in the regional area, not only decided in the national scene in the parliament, but also decided at European level. It is those 4 levels, together with our SI friends, and the global scene which counts together. This is the new connection between people and us because we are a part of people and the political fight has to go on and on, on all these 4/5 scenes. Because otherwise we cannot reach our goal. And that is why we have to use exactly the same values, regionally, locally, nationally and at the European level. In each one of these elections, when they come again and again, voters are faced with a political debate and a political choice and we should make the choice easy and clear for them. Now I hope that we can bring our European party closer to our national party. We have decided, as you know, in the Presidium and in Congress, that just after the June election we will establish a working group to look at the new reforms of our party. I hope you will all be there, I hope you will think progressively and I hope you will understand that the future of this European party will also depend on our common decisions to make it strong, to make it a real functioning party, to make it possible, may I repeat that, for members among our party to be direct member of this European party. I hope you will support me in this ambition.

The next five years will be decisive for Europe's longer term future. We all have the questions including, will enlargement go hand in hand with new and shared prosperity? Yes it will because we wanted it to be so. Will Europe fulfil its ambitions defined in 2000 Lisbon. Our baby, our vision, our social model? Yes it will, because citizens have tried the right wing way and they have found out this is not the way for them or for Europe. Will our institutions, our way of taking decisions and of designing our policies, become both more efficient and democratic in the new constitution for Europe? Yes it will! Because you know our history in Europe is a history of taking 2 steps forwards then have a crisis, then taking two steps forwards again. Believe me, we have seen it and we have seen it again and again, we now have a window of opportunity and we will certainly use it to get our constitution on board before the new summer time comes. Let us underline that also as a message from this Congress.

Social democrats at the European level will now face all these challenges we have been discussing at this Congress - peace. Sometimes my grandchildren ask me: Poul, "Why don't Germany and France go into war any longer?" And I figured out what it is; the reason why Germany and France could not possibly go to war is one word: integration, integration and integration. And therefore my vision is also that the EU have documented that by integration, by strong political, cultural, economic co-operation between all of us, war is impossible. If I should talk about one export good to the rest of the world, I should say "integration". And therefore dear friends, I sincerely hope that what we see in Latin America now, what we see our good friend and old trade unionist, President of Brazil, Lula, what we see Lula is going to do now, should not only be his job, but ours, to create a Mercosur which is a new role model for Latin America based on integration. My vision is that the EU can help and assist and tell Lula and all the Latin American countries about our failures but also about our successes. My vision is that we will see the planet in the future where we will have lots of "EU-like" regional organisations, not copy of ours, but based on integration and peace. And dear friends, thanks to our enlargement we are now, as Robin has said, the biggest economy in the world, 10 percent more than the US. And we are the potential strongest political force in the world. This gives us obligations, obligations to tell our American colleagues that the time, this 21st century is not fitted for pre-emptive wars but for pre-emptive policies. It's pre-emptive policies not pre-emptive wars we need. And I really believe that the vision in Europe is not between new Europe and old Europe, where the old Europe is ours and the new Europe is our new members of the EU, this is not the dividing line. No! The division between old Europe and new Europe is historical time. The old Europe was the time when we were nationalistic when we didn't have any co-operation, when we didn't have any common vision, when we thought we could manage in our own nation state, even if the globe has changed. The new Europe is ours. The feeling that we belong together and the understanding that we can only realise our goals when we co-operate together.

I think also that it's time to be clear as far as Iraq is concerned. I think that now we should make some prudent and wise decisions. Let's now say to our American friends, you cannot act alone any longer, you have experienced it and now we have to act together. And in our common interests, let Iraq with all its splits with the world, let Iraq from the present phase be a new start for a strengthening of the UN in a new step forward for a new global legal world. Let Iraq be the case as it was for all our defeats, let Iraq be the case for new progress as far as bringing a stronger UN to the place and lets really try to come into dialogue. I know we can do it with our democratic friends in Europe and in the US and I know in the upcoming elections in the US that we will see a good progressive partner there. That will be an enormous positive signal to the world.

If you ask ordinary people what is your number one priority, they will say jobs, jobs and jobs. And again we have to understand that Germany's standstill for the moment is not only a German problem, it is ours. France's economic situation is not only France's problem but our problem. We hang together and

we cannot reach full employment objectives any longer in the 21st century without having full employment and jobs and jobs as our common goal. We should know how to pursue and achieve this goal. We know how to do it and those from the right who tell us that the only way to obtain full employment is deregulation and out with the welfare state and a race to the bottom as far as social security is concerned, we should say to them: no. We know better. And again dear friends; it would be a mistake to say we are against reforming we are against modernisation; we are *for* reforming, we are *for* modernisation. But we must say this to ourselves - and Tony Guterres the vision we created together in Lisbon 2000 - when for the moment we are not making progress nationally as far as the Lisbon goals are concerned, that is not necessarily the cause of having right wing government - in some cases, maybe yes - but the problem is we cannot make progress on the Lisbon goals without having growth, without having economic growth and more jobs. More jobs and economic growth is the way to break the vicious circle of not realising the Lisbon goals and thereby standing still. We have to reach common decisions which will ensure that as in Poland and other places that we are having economic growth and at the same time progress in terms of the Lisbon goals. Reform and growth go hand in hand which will ensure that social security, in a new form and new concept, and competitiveness are not enemies but friends and preconditions for each other. This is enormously important to understand.

We have to take our women seriously (I know you always do!) I think that this party should in labour market policy and in practical gender policy show that this party also, as far as gender policy and equal treatment between women and men and equal chances is number one in Europe. I think we should invest in more possibilities for women to get their children cared for while they are at work, its about equal access in practice to education. We are the party of equality, we are the party of gender policy, we are the number one party in all these issues.

May I just repeat what my Spanish colleague said here today: I think that the proposal you made about comparing terrorism was right, your words were good - people can understand them. It has been said that we were all in these trains that day in Madrid and I think that is our common feeling and I tell you that we are all in it together in the combat against terrorism on the value basis you so nicely explained to us today. But I think dear friends it is important to underline that the fight against terror is not only a fight against terror without mercy but also a fight against the root causes of terrorism. Therefore, the Barcelona process is essential as it is but even more than that, we have to put much more energy in the Barcelona project than we have up until now. That goes for the Middle East as well as for an independent Palestinian state. Since I was a young milk boy, dear friends, I have always been physically big, but I was subjected to fights in schools. I always said to myself; "Poul, if you want peace, the strongest one should be the first one to take the hand of the weakest and make peace". As Jan Wiersma said that we cannot compromise on the borders on which they settled in the Middle East in 1967; we cannot accept Sharon's attempt to give something away in the Gaza Strip and stay in his settlement in the West Bank. This is not a deal which will

lead us to peace; its a deal which will lead us to further conflict and further bloodshed. Therefore we have to unite.

And lastly do you know that in the Arab speaking world half the population are below 18 years? Do you know that all these young men and women, all these young kids if you ask what chance they have of obtaining social security; they will say none. If you ask whether they have access to education and free schooling, they have none. If you ask whether they have job opportunities, they have none. It doesn't exist. Therefore, I really feel its time for the EU not to make two choices to its neighbours: either you are a member or not. I feel we should strengthen very much our obliged co-operation with regions and the most important region at the moment is the northern part of Africa, the Arab world. We could be an alternative for those young kids who are told by their parents and grandparents about all the suffering they have undergone. They are told in Koran school that they could avoid this suffering by attaching a bomb to their body and being directed to paradise. Dear friends we must create together with them an alternative to the choice of saying good day to your life and welcome to a more peaceful world.

I would like to end now by reminding you of our pledge card for our national campaigns. I say take it with you, keep it close to your heart and I ask you could you imagine more important messages than these five here:

Sharing prosperity in a social Europe - for all people and not only those who are born to it;

More and better jobs - we know how to do it if we decide to do it and we do

Managing migration and pursuing social integration - I cant tell you any more important thing to do, European like and national like
and lastly

Fighting terrorism and its causes - here is the key to having a victory on the 13 June in our European election. Lets make that key to the benefit of all of us.

I know it will be hard work. But I am not alone, I am with Guiliano Amato and I would ask you Giuliano to come here to show that we are a team.

– END –

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