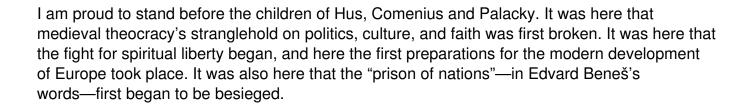
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Excellencies,
Excellencies,
Excellencies,
Excellencies,  Dear Students,
Dear Students,



And I am especially proud to be the first ever Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia to address Charles University—one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe.

This cultural metropolis, this living, beating heart of Prague, was once defined as "škola slovena", or the School of the Slavs, by the great Serbian scientist and alumnus of this venerable place, Nikola Tesla.

He too was a brainchild of the Czech lands—as were the countless other Serbs who came here in ever-growing numbers during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, seeking an education they felt only Charles University could provide. The catalyst for this educational migration was the Prague Slav Congress of 1849—at which a decision was reached to work together to liberate our respective nations from foreign rule. What was begun there continues to provide the thread that has woven a fabric of deep friendship and genuine understanding between our two peoples for more than one hundred and fifty years.

This bond was forever cemented during the First World War. A few days ago was Armistice Day—the day we remember those gallant many who helped change and democratize the map of Europe forever. I was in London on that day. And as I stood in silence on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, I thought back to the shared sacrifice of our two nations to the cause of liberty in Europe. I thought back to the Czechoslovak Legion—to the volunteer military units composed of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war—and to its origins in 1915 as a Serbian volunteer division on the eastern front. Tens of thousands of Czechs and Serbs fought and died together on numerous fields of battle against the Dual Monarchy, perhaps inspired by the memory of the Czech František Zah, my country's first Chief of the General Staff and the founder of our Military Academy.

And I thought back to the alliance forged in war and consolidated in peace—to the Little Entente and the conviction of its founders that survival depended on coming together on the basis of democratic values, to defend against those who wished to deny our nations their rightful place in the European constellation.

Let us not forget that this was a time dominated by isolationist sentiment—a time of fear and uncertainty, of financial crisis and self-doubt. Oswald Spengler had proclaimed the Decline of the West, the Middle East was stirring, the established European democracies were both restless and timid, and a former World War One corporal was about to seize power in Berlin.

And yet statesmen such as Foreign Ministers Edvard Beneš in Prague and Bogoljub Jevtic in Belgrade did not waver. With the signing of the Pact of Organization of the Little Entente in 1933, they seized history by its reigns and tried valiantly to alter its course.

In a sense, these men of vision helped pave the way for the creation of the European Union decades later. Their failure was transformed over time into a success they could not have believed was ever possible.
And so we owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to these and other Serbian and Czech forefathers of the post-war European project to secure the peace and deliver prosperity to what Jan Patočka once called the "sole rational civilization."
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Today, we stand on the other side of those historical events. The peace has been largely secured, and Europe is no longer a place of great divisions. The European Union has become a strategic reality—a new political form in which a growing number of democratic countries freely pool their sovereignty to create something novel: an entity that is more than an alliance, and less than a country.

In a bitter twist of fate, our two nations were excluded from its early development. Yet we maintained our solidarity as much as the circumstances permitted. In 1968 for example, Belgrade played host to the largest demonstration anywhere in Europe against the suppression of the Prague Spring. In the 1970s and 1980s, we sheltered many Czech dissidents, and opened up our printing presses, theatres and concert halls to the artistic expression of resistance that helped to bring about the Velvet Revolution and, together with it, the renaissance of Europe.

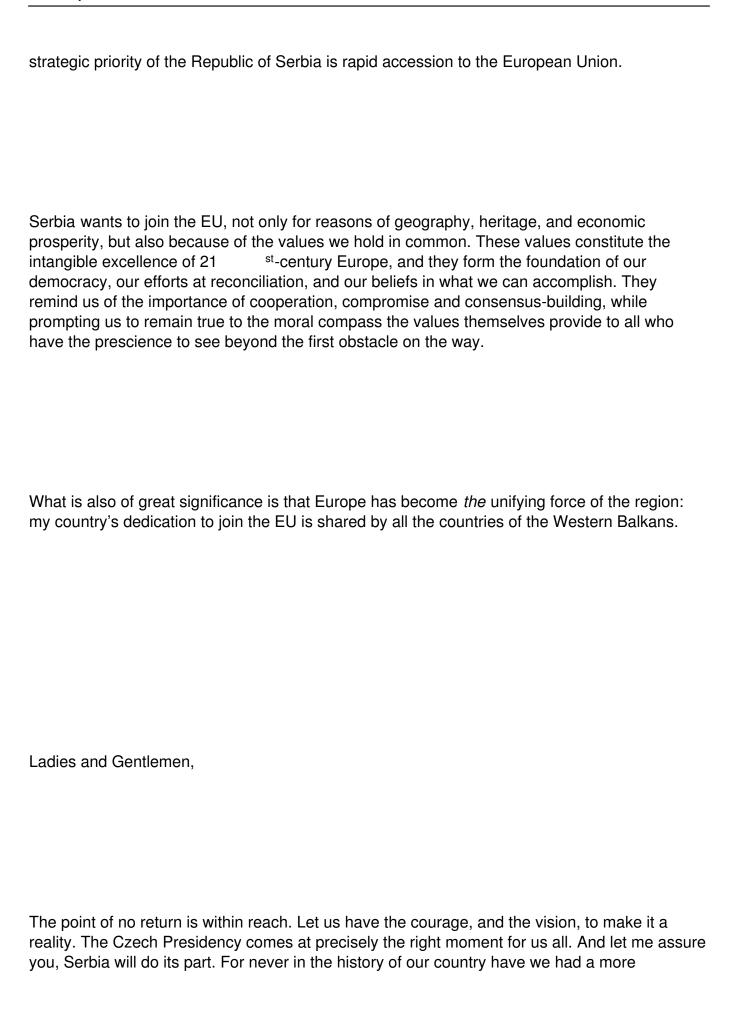
The delayed enjoyment of what we helped to create perhaps helps to explain our complicated view of the European Union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

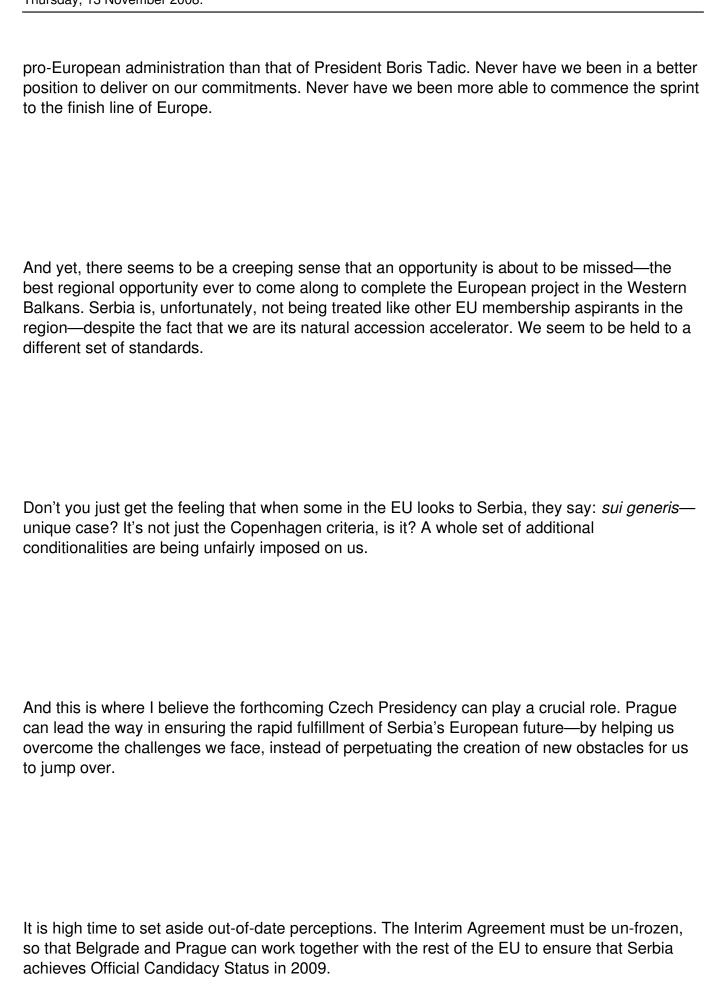
We embrace the fact that there is no doubt the European project has, since its inception, built up its credibility by delivering lasting peace and sustainable prosperity. But the truth also is that decision-making has become overly bureaucratized, whilst recent efforts at reform have not yet born fruit. We feel that the noble construct of soft power that is the EU has entered into a seemingly profound crisis of confidence. Institutional malaise and enlargement fatigue are amongst the symptoms of the democratic deficit all of us are becoming too familiar with.

While sharing a constructive realism towards the EU, rooted in a common recollection of the sacrifices our nations have made to be counted amongst the sovereign states of the Old Continent, the perspective from which we gaze at what has become the European achievement is different.

The Czech Republic is a member of the EU, while Serbia is not there yet. I do not intend to enter into a long discussion of the reasons why we have not yet joined you in Brussels. I do wish to point out, however, the important political distinction between divorce and integration on the one hand, and conflict and division on the other.
What I would like to do for the remainder of my remarks is to focus on how we can draw on the deeds of our political ancestors to channel the present moment into a common future—how we can, in a sense, re-consecrate the special relationship and come together as sovereign equals in the House of Europe.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Serbian President Boris Tadic once said that "in politics, through a prudent determination of the end, we can change the situation. We can add something new to it, something of our own. For a small nation, this constitutes political statesmanship, political creation." Quoting Masaryk, he added, "This is the poetry of life."
It is to this poetry, to this promise of statesmanship, to which I now turn.

pursuing policies that will propel the region generationally forward—and why the central

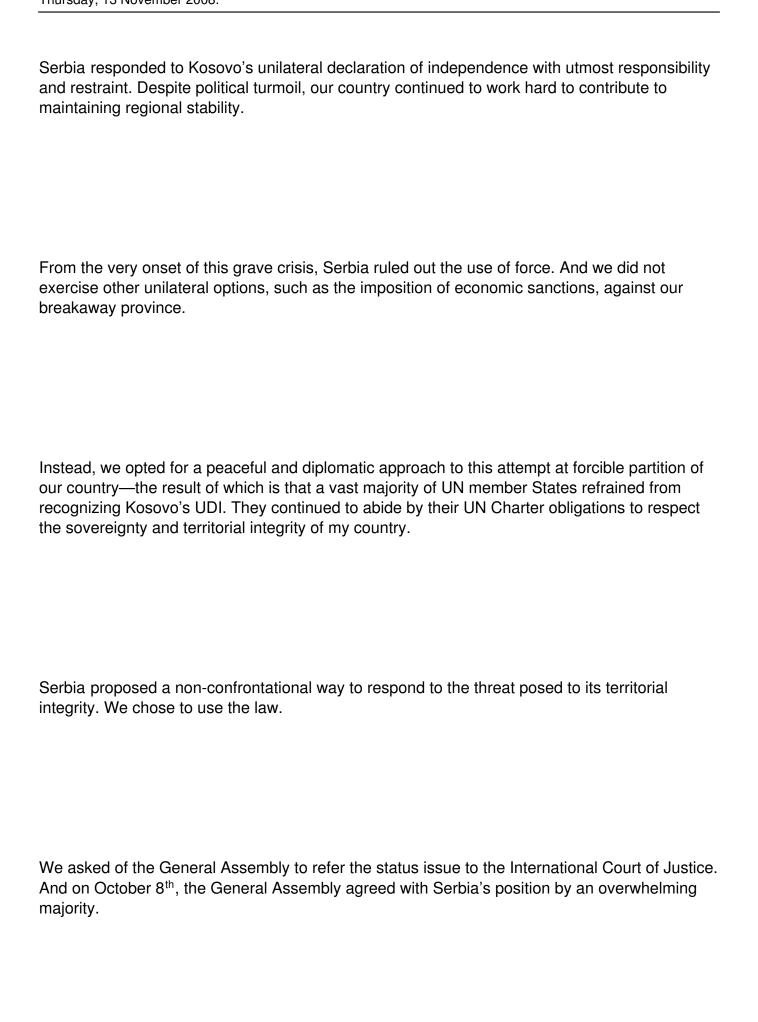




Address to Charles University by H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of States of the Republi
Ladies and Gentlemen,
If Europe fails to deliver on its promises to Serbia and the rest of the Western Balkans in the very near future, there is a real strategic danger that the destructive potential of the 1990s could be revived. If we are not very careful, the specter of Kosovo could return to center stage and haunt us all in the years to come, as our European membership perspective gets stuck in
neutral gear.
We are already standing on very thin ice as it is.
On February 17 <sup>th</sup> , the ethnic-Albanian authorities in our southern province unilaterally declared their independence from Serbia—in blatant violation of our democratic Constitution, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, as well as against the will of the Security Council, and the language of resolution 1244 (1999).

But there was another reason—one that struck a blow to the very core of the values of Europe.

Before, and especially during, the negotiations on status, the Kosovo Albanians threatened violence—against the Serbian community in Kosovo and against the international civilian presence tasked with administering the province. This threat was seen as credible. After all, they had carefully orchestrated and carried out a pogrom in March 2004 that killed a number of unarmed civilians and destroyed countless Serbian homes and businesses, as well as 35 churches and monasteries—including a number that were built in the 14 <sup>th</sup> century.
Instead of rejecting this fundamentally anti-European threat, some felt the need to give in—to capitulate. Instead of standing up to the bullies in Pristina, a decision was made to appease them.
And a grave commission of injustice against a young European democracy was the immediate result.
Ladies and Gentlemen,



by H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Se

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Thank you for your attention.