

**Toast of Mr. László Kövér, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly  
at the dinner of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union  
Parliaments**

*(Museum of Fine Arts – 11 May 2025)*

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

As Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, I welcome all our guests to the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments. Welcome to Budapest.

Travelling to Hungary, you have arrived in a country that is an island of safety in an increasingly uncertain world, where not only public safety and legal security, but also political stability is one of the strongest in Europe, making it an excellent location to share our thoughts, concerns and hopes for the future of Europe at our conference tomorrow.

This is the second time that the National Assembly has hosted the highest level forum for interparliamentary cooperation within the EU, as the first Speaker's meeting was held at the beginning of Hungary's EU membership, exactly twenty years ago. Then, as now, there was a lively debate about the future of Europe.

However, today's changing global political and economic realities require a fundamentally different interpretative framework compared to the situation twenty years ago.

The impacts of the global financial crisis of 2008, mass illegal migration and its societal consequences since 2015, the pandemic of 2020 and its economic consequences, the war on European soil that started in 2022 and its geopolitical implications call for a new realpolitik in Europe.

This means that instead of ideology-driven politics, Europe – including all leaders of the European Union and all responsible political classes in European countries – must face reality.

Tomorrow's conference aims to contribute in its own way to this vitally necessary process of political self-reflection.

Dear Colleagues,

Amidst the growing disorder in world politics today, our common European spiritual heritage is becoming increasingly valuable: our two thousand years of Christian cultural identity and our centuries-old modern national identities.

In the greatest storms of world history, it was this spiritual heritage that always protected and preserved all European nations, so we have no reason to believe that this will be any different in the historical storms that lie ahead of us.

The motto “*United in Diversity*” only acquires historical meaning and a forward-looking direction through this spiritual heritage, i.e. the European Union can be nothing else than the intertwining of the diversity of national localities in the universalism of Christianity.

Let us remember the words of the late Pope Francis, whom God has called to Himself, spoken during his visit to the European Parliament in 2014: “*Unity (...) does not mean uniformity of political, economic and cultural life, or ways of thinking. Indeed, all authentic unity draws from the rich diversities which make it up: in this sense it is like a family, which is all the more united when each of its members is free to be fully himself or herself.*”

The choice of the theme of tomorrow's conference is also a reminder that Europe's greatest strength, as in the past as in the future, is its national diversity rooted in Christian cultural unity.

Dear Colleagues, we could ask ourselves what reflects this diversity most authentically in European culture. I believe that it is the centuries-old folk attire of European national communities.

I became convinced of that when I picked up a book by a Hungarian photographer, which, to our knowledge, is unique in Europe, presenting the traditional festive attires of the national communities of the European Union. European national diversity is revealed in a literally wonderful array of colours in this book, in which all our guests can search for and find the traditional attire of their own communities. On the occasion of our meeting, allow us to present each of our guests with a copy of the photo album *GeoFolk* as a gift at tomorrow's conference.

Dear Colleagues,

Hungary is not only located at the crossroads of historical military routes and at the point of collision between world powers and their ambitions for influence, but it is also a place where cultures meet and intertwine, and as such it can serve as a bridge between East and West, North and South. I trust that tomorrow we will be able to continue our useful discussions in this spirit.

The venue for our dinner tonight is the Museum of Fine Arts, which preserves the masterpieces of European culture for posterity. Please enjoy the magic of the place, Hungarian music, dance, and delicious Hungarian cuisine. Bon appétit, everyone!