

Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn, tijdens de conferentie van de Voorzitters van EU-parlementen, in Boedapest (Hongarije)

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Dear Colleagues,

The future of the European Union is strong.
The way the Member States have reacted to external threats to our common security and economy is proof of that.
But this doesn't mean that we can rest on our laurels and sit back.
We need to continue our common efforts to make sure the future of the EU stays strong.

The strength of the EU is its unity in diversity: with respect to each other's differences the Member States are capable to work together in ensuring an even stronger future for the European Union.

As parliaments we have a role to play as well.
Although the external threats to our European democracies, such as the anachronistic and illegitimate invasion of the sovereign state of Ukraine by Russia, are on top of everyone's heads these days, in my contribution today I would like to focus on the threats from within.

Especially on the internal threats to democracy, the rule of law and the European values enshrined in the Treaty of the European Union.
When these values are under threat it is the duty of the EU parliaments to protect them.

Colleagues,

Trust is the foundation of our democratic legal order, of peace, security, and prosperity.
It is an essential counterpoint in today's world, where humans increasingly struggle to get along with their peers.
Where trust is eroding.
Where frustration and shame lead to aggression, violence and terrorism.

Where government and citizens drift away from each other.
Where powerful but not unbreakable democracy is threatened, from outside and within.

And that touches on geopolitical security.
Liberal freedoms are under threat.
Indifference and open hatred are rearing their heads.
In the Netherlands too.

Colleagues,

In my country we are investigating through dialogue, and with parliament in the lead, how to make common values and the rule of law a shared responsibility of society, of all citizens.
This process can be of value to the European level and to all Member States as well.

I look forward to hearing what your ideas are.

Thank you.