



50th Anniversary of the Treaties of Rome
23 March 2007

Speech by the President of the Senate, States General, the Netherlands
Mrs. Yvonne E.M.A. Timmerman-Buck

Mr. President

Dear Colleagues, Esteemed Guests,

Michelangelo once said: "I hope that I may always desire more than I can accomplish". Does not this reflect the minds of our the hearts of our European founding fathers, fifty years ago? We may compliment our predecessors that they indeed accomplished what was desired. Europe is not simply about rational power politics. Europe is about ambitions and dreams.

Today we celebrate the realisation of our European dream of no more war. We celebrate our partnerships in the extraordinary cooperation mission – called the European Union. Fifty years after the signing of the Rome treaties, we should also state our desires in the hope that they also will be accomplished. The success of the past is encouraging. And as Plato said: "We are twice armed if we fight with faith."

The EU needs a further reform. This is also the strong view of the Dutch. We need a decisive Europe that makes its voice clearly heard on the international level. A Europe that truly acts on the challenges such as climate change, energy sufficiency and terrorism. Our European social model has proven that we can take on such big challenges. No large continent in the world has been so successful in enhancing the well being of its citizens: tackling social exclusion on such a large scale. Furthermore, we need a Europe that holds its ground in international conflicts. We need a Europe that cherishes its values, principles and democratic foundations. A Europe with a strong contribution and involvement of the national parliaments. Let us continue together on the road of peace inspired by the words of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza who taught us that "peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice".

We owe it to our founding fathers, our citizens and to future generations that we build a Europe that is in the hearts and minds of all European people. Let us not limit our ambitions, because as Goethe once said: "Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men".

Grazie.