



Bruxelles, 18/03/2009

His Beatitude the Archbishop Mr Chrysostomos II,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I truly apologize for not being here with you, due to institutional commitments which held me up far from here.

It's a big privilege to speak in this moment, so important for the Church of Cyprus and for all of us named Christian.

Today is a bright day.

Today we are here inaugurating the new seat of the Church of Cyprus, in the town that gather, more than others, the idea of European pluralism: Bruxelles.

Here, in the middle of Europe.

Here, where Christian, Muslims, Jewish and non believers are living side by side, bringing up the new generation.

Unfortunately it's not the same everywhere.

It's not the same in all the nations around the world. And I'm not speaking only for the nations that we feel far away of us.

As a matter of fact, all this is happening in Cyprus, Member State of the European Union.

This latter affirms like one of the fundamentals freedom of Men the worship's freedom.

The Cyprus situation is special, all of you know that.

About 200.000 Greek Cypriots living in the north, nearly one quarter of the population of Cyprus, were forcibly expelled from the occupied northern part of the island where they constituted the 80 percent of the population.

A further 20.000 Greek Cypriots enclaved in the occupied areas were gradually forced to abandon their homes.

All that, without take into account that Christian worshipper have seen choke their faith through the lost and the debunking of their sacred place.

The cohabitation between different ethnic groups can't be defined pacific when one tries to prevail on the other, when a religious creed tries to overwhelm other or, worse, when the strong suppress the weak.

The dialogue can't be based on the appearance and on the illusion, it can't leave aside from the unceasing search of the truth.

It can't sprout from a preordained and ideological vision of the reality.

We can't allow that the right of the humans being had been trampled down, neither in Cyprus or in every other part in the world.

Admit it will be like accepting the defeat and give credence to the ones who have a cynic and disillusioned vision of the world, to the ones who describe this world like a hopeless place.

We have this hope:

The hope to say soon that the persecution and the discrimination don't exist anymore, in all the Cyprus's island, and not just only in one part.

The hope that the religious pluralism is something more than an empty formula used when is more convenient.

The Church of Cyprus is working hard with the object that all of this could become reality.

We don't want the clash between cultures.

We desire peace, freedom and justice for all people and for all religions.

For this reason, we should build an intellectual and cultural bridge on the Mediterranean sea.

We need to promote an open society in which everyone could have his role.

We need policies remarking that the education must be effective vehicle for the dialogue among cultures, the reciprocal understanding and the respect of the differences; an entire education that helps to build a new generation in the social involvement, in the help of whom are needy and in a critic understanding of the reality.

An authentic education, able to teach to new generations the respect for different cultures and able to promote the recognition of the richness of their History and of their values.

Is the education called to give birth to the essential elements for the development of an intercultural vision between people?

We think so.

We think that without education no hope is possible for the new generations.

A hope that we can live with one another in a way that reconciles the beliefs of each with the good of all.

For these reasons, for our sons, we intend to do everything we can to continue to participate in this process.

We want to help stepping up the existing dialogue and refreshing out mutual project.

We must proceed with dignity, mutual respect and, above all, dispassionately displaying respect for each and every person's religious convictions and their views, without seeking to eliminate the cultural differences between peoples.

Dialogue with fair-minded words is the way that the European values and those of other cultures interact constructively and positively to build a common future.

It won't be an easy work, we need to put aside years and years of hate, fermented in the memory of the own victims and in the pain suffered.

But there are always more people and groups of the civil society disposed to have a dialog and willing to turn the look, with hope and confidence, to a future of peace.

Let's help them, all of us, in order to make it possible.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mario Mauro', written in a cursive style.

Mario Mauro

Vice President of the European Parliament