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MY 'EURO-COSMOPOLITANISM'

Everything is so similar that I feel at home everywhere. Everything is so different that I feel like I'm travelling all the time.

I am deeply attached to what I would call the three Europes. I grew up and went to school in France, one of the founding countries of the European integration movement; I've lived and studied in Poland and the Czech Republic, both part of the major enlargement of 2004; I was born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a potential candidate country. For me, further enlargement of the European Union would mean a deepening of my feeling of European citizenship.

An enlarged European Union would mean even more unity in diversity. It's about increased security, more trade and interaction, more opportunities, as well as more culture, more debate, more of all the things that make each of us stronger. Europe is a small world. It's about the chance to stay in Europe while feeling as though you've gone away to the other side of the world. It's the chance to pool the strengths of the whole continent. It's the chance to make new friendships that enable us to broaden our views on things.

Just last summer, I was asked if I could see any difference between young Bosnians and young French people. Why do people think these two parts of the continent are so different? Of course they are not identical, but are the north and south of France entirely similar? Yes of course, there are numerous ways in which young Bosnians and young French differ from each other. But in the end, both groups are European, made up of people from different religions, different backgrounds, with different dreams. And they're all part of this generation who know they don't just need to change the world, but actually need to fight to stop the world from falling apart. So yes, these two groups of young people are linked by a common destiny. Further enlargement of the EU could help these young people to realise that their ideals are closer than they imagined.

Of course, enlargement brings with it the challenges of reaching compromises between the various countries, but it is precisely the similarities in our vision of a shared future that should enable us to put an end to these conflicts. And would it be fair to leave some European countries out of the EU, creating a new, virtual iron curtain?

We Europeans are similar, but also different, we complement each other because we understand each other, but we each bring to the other slightly different nuances.

We are united in our struggles, in our sadness and in our progress. My Europe goes from Portugal to the Baltic, from Iceland to the Balkans, my Europe has no borders, my Europe is multifarious and that's what makes it interesting and unique. My Europe moves forward without forgetting its past.



As far as I'm concerned, Europeans outside the EU are no different from those inside the EU. They may not have the same obligations, or the same rights, but they are the same human beings. They fight for the same ideas and have the same goals for their future. They are just one step away from being decidedly similar to other Europeans.

I'm European, but I'm as much Eastern European as I am Western European or Central European, yet I am not schizophrenic. I'm just a fully-fledged European, a being as complex as Europe can be, but also as harmonious as Europe can be. All this intermixing creates a perfect equilibrium: the differences strengthen every one of us, but they could also keep us apart, which doesn't happen because the similarities and the desire to cooperate are too strong.

I currently live on a university campus where young women and men of 37 different nationalities, mostly Europeans, coexist. We almost all speak the same language, we almost all listen to the same music, we have visited almost the same countries, we watch almost the same films... almost, and that's the bonus. It is precisely the little differences indicated by the word 'almost' that are the added value in my experiences with these other people from the continent's different regions. They introduce me to new songs, recommend certain films, teach me new words, describe their trips to towns I don't know, and make me see events from another perspective. Bit by bit, drop by drop, we influence each other, we infuse each other with the different facets that Europe is composed of.

So, far beyond just feeling like a citizen of the EU, I feel European — a citizen of an entire continent.

For this reason, I already envisage the enlarged Europe of the future — I envisage 'Euro-Cosmopolitanism'.