

# A Document for Our Age

*Defenders of the European Union and its ideology of 'political correctness' often pretend that any opposition to their universalism is equivalent to an anachronistic return to nationalism, extremism, and war. Nevertheless, the number of those endeavouring to ally conservative patriotism to the idea of a common defence of Western identity against its numerous enemies — both from within as well as from without — is growing daily.*

*The nations of the [Visegrád Group](#) are at the forefront of this movement. It is thus no surprise that Poland has taken the lead and launched a new project to foster reflections on the Europe of tomorrow. As a result, a conservative association of intellectuals called the [Stowarzyszenie Twórców dla Rzeczypospolitej](#) (Association of Artists for the Polish Republic), presided over by [Zdzisław Krasnodębski](#), MEP for the [Law and Justice Party](#) (PiS) and member of the [European Conservatives and Reformists Group](#) (ECR), invited historian David Engels to draft a Preamble for what they envisioned could be a constitution*

*of a future 'Confederation of European Nations.' The text of the Preamble, inspired by the [Hungarian Constitution](#) and emphasizing the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian heritage of the West, reflects the idea of "Hesperialism" as developed in Engels' recent book, [Renovatio Europae](#).*

*If Europe intends to survive as a genuine civilisation in the 21st century, it will require a radical return to the values and traditions that shaped it. It will also need to ensure greater cooperation among European nations in various strategic areas — while simultaneously seeking a clear diminution of Brussels' hegemony over other areas.*

*The Preamble that emerges from this initiative is both a political programme open to new ideas, as well as a potential rallying point for the various conservative political parties in Europe — still largely dispersed over diverse political families within the European Parliament — all of whom are keen on defending the West. The text has already prompted numerous reactions in the Polish media and in the international press. It is quoted here in its entirety.*

## PREAMBLE TO A CONSTITUTION FOR A CONFEDERATION OF EUROPEAN NATIONS

We, the peoples of Europe, fully conscious of our historical responsibility, decide to establish a constitution and to bring the unification process of the continent to its conclusion. This constitution will create a confederation of nation-states that, while conserving their rights, agree to pursue a series of common objectives for the good of all, and for the care and protection of European civilisation including: a coordinated foreign policy, the protection of European borders, the fight against crime, the extension of a pan-European mobility infrastructure, the coordination of norms and rules, access to natural and strategic resources, cooperation in the domain of education and research, and the provision of the funds necessary to pursue these aims.

This unification should put an end to numerous centuries of intra-European warfare. It is implemented in a spirit of profound affinity between the European people who, despite their conflicts, have always viewed each other as parts of a single common culture which is more than the simple sum of its components, and which has brought forth a specific and unique vision of the world and of mankind.

This culture is shaped by various sources: most notably, the teachings of the Old Testament, Greek thought, Roman art of state-building, Christian revelation, and the heritage of the Romanic, Germanic, and Slavic people. It came to light in an institutionalised form after the formation of the spiritual sovereignty of the Church and of the political authority of the imperial dignity restored in 800. In the centuries that followed, European culture realised its internal potential during the course of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Modernity. As a result, it also opened itself up to the world — a world into which it wishes to enter today, with renewed and strengthened connections, through the adoption of a constitution.

Proud of the great achievements of our past, our constitution is founded on positive adherence to our traditional values, conscious that the prosperity and progress of the present would not have been possible without the achievements of our ancestors. This is why we wish to firmly anchor the evolution of the future in the past and to protect, conserve, and promote the cultural, social, and moral heritage — be it material or immaterial — which has been bequeathed to us.

**W**e, the peoples of Europe, pledge before God and in accordance with our own conscience:

- to pursue, as the true mission of our community, the protection of our spiritual as well as our material heritage and the autonomous development of our cultural potential in view of our common aspiration towards truth, liberty, and the good life;
- to tolerate all religious and philosophical convictions in line with our established practices and, in particular, to care for, nurture, and maintain the heritage of the Judeo-Christian tradition and its links with rational philosophical thought, without which our European culture would have been inconceivable;
- to value and protect human life in all its stages of evolution and ages, as well as its dignity and unique individuality, as the highest gift with which we have been entrusted;
- to recognise as the ultimate source of all political decisions the democratic will of the people and to consider the interests of the peoples of Europe as a whole as the most important principle to guide all actions;
- to value the nations and peoples of Europe in their multiplicity and diversity as a precious and irreplaceable expression of the numerous facets of a common culture, to view them as the bearers of the European idea and of European institutions, and to respect them as autonomous political entities which henceforth wish to settle their disagreements through peaceful negotiation and arbitration;
- to intervene always to safeguard and increase the prosperity, security, liberty, order, peace, and mutual understanding of the peoples of Europe;
- to construct our community in such a way that all decisions are taken in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, as far as possible at the lowest competent and concerned level, while considering the nations as the main bearers of democratic self-determination and the expression of the cultural life of Europe;
- to organise our coexistence as a community under the rule of law, not only to guarantee equal and fundamental rights for all but also to always submit the creation of laws and the control of their interpretation to the will of the people;
- to consider the natural family, which results from the union between a man and a woman and the birth of children, and the rights and duties resulting therefrom, as the fundamental basis of European society and to give it particular protection, without however infringing on any alternative forms of cohabitation arising from the free decision of human beings;
- to guarantee the equality of men and women before the law, while taking into account particular qualities, rights, and duties associated with the sexes in line with their natural constitution;
- to educate our descendants in the spirit of the traditions and riches which have been bequeathed to us, instilling in them a desire to excel, both internally as well as externally;
- to protect the rights and duties resulting from ownership of private property while guaranteeing equality of opportunity, the right to honourable employment, the support of those in need, and the interests of the community;
- to wish to live in peace and harmony with our neighbours and all the other people of this Earth, particularly those with whom we are linked through positive experiences and a shared historical heritage, while securing the independence, interests, security, and survival of our culture;
- to take seriously our responsibility for our environment, and not only in the sense of justly safeguarding the balance of nature and ensuring careful stewardship of natural resources in Europe and the world but also of a morally responsible interaction with all living creatures.

*This text was originally drafted and published in French, German, and English; it was later translated into Polish, Serbian, Georgian, and Spanish. It appears here by kind permission of the author, **Dr. David Engels**, chair of Roman History at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and senior analyst at the Instytut Zachodni in Poznań.*