EUROPE OF THE REGIONS

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It is particularly appropriate that I should be addressing you at this time in the format of the Mackintosh Lecture. As the author of the standard work "The British Cabinet", he was well aware of the extreme centralisation and inadequacies of the British system of government.

He was a pioneer as an advocate of devolution and decentralisation. As early as 1968, he published "The Devolution of Power" putting the case for devolution. This was at a time when the Labour Party, for which he was a distinguished member of Parliament was still hostile to the idea.

As an active politician, he was forthright in his support for a Scottish Parliament. Too much so in the eyes of ministers who attempted to secure devolution for Scotland in the 1970s.

Professor Mackintosh was also a convinced European. As an academic, he did much to develop the contacts between political scientists throughout Europe which are now taken for granted. As a politician he was amongst those favouring British entry into the EC. He was among the Labour rebels who believed that membership of the European Community was the supreme issue of politics in the 1970s and who voted with Edward Heath's government in 1971. It is no coincidence, as I hope to show, that support for Europe and devolution are so intimately connected.

I am very conscious that I am addressing you at a moment when a new Scotland is about to emerge. For those of us who are struggling to create new institutions in our own areas, the history of Scotland over the last twenty-five years is an inspiration. The creation of a Scottish Parliament is due to the persistence shown by many people in different political parties, in the churches and in society as a whole. Without the ability to work together shown by people with different views and ambitions, it is unlikely that the movement would have succeeded.

I am also acutely aware that I am in a part of Europe which is emerging from the shell of the old and worn-out institutions bequeathed to us by the various Acts of Union. Great Britain has suffered from extreme centralisation at a time when most of the rest of Europe has been moving in the opposite direction. This is particularly clear in the most successful regions of Europe. The British political system has also been smothered by its traditions. It is antiquated, a fact best seen in the ritual of the House of Commons.

In terms of the maturity and depth of the political debate over Scotland's future, the rest of us have a lot to learn. In terms of creating new political institutions capable of dealing with the changing economy and society in which we live, I believe you have made a major step forward. My colleague and friend, the late John Smith, recognised this over 25 years ago with his attempt to create new institutions in Scotland in the 1970s. I only regret that he is not here to see the opening of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Parliament will be a lasting tribute to the work of John Smith, who above all, was a great European. John Smith was, of course, also one of the pro European rebels in 1971 alongside John Mackintosh.

However, let us begin by reminding ourselves what the Europe that has brought us all together is all about. Very often and indeed in the major debates that have taken place in recent years on the subject of the Single Market, European Union and the Maastricht Treaty most of the arguments have been economic ones. The reasons for achievement of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe go much deeper than mere economic reasons. We should continue to remind ourselves of what those reasons are particularly as we witness the growing opposition to European Political and Monetary Union from forces within Britain in particular and in certain other areas of Europe. They are in essence the remaining voices of nineteenth century nationalism. They are also the voices, and I will return to this, that are opposed to developing a process of regionalisation and giving real authority to our regions. In many ways these people symbolise the world that we are leaving behind — the world in which the centralised nation state was the sole centre of power and decision making. History will not be too kind to the era created by nineteenth century nationalism because in effect the supremacist philosophy of nineteenth century nationalism the notion that unity means uniformity, that territory is more important that people is a philosophy that created two world wars and imperialism.

If we are to reflect on the real achievements of the Single Market and European Union we should cast our minds back some fifty years. The nightmare that was to have lasted a thousand years was brought to an end but it left in its wake a continent in ruins with 35 million people dead, millions more homeless and millions hungry. Once again the peoples of Europe, most of them the ordinary working people knew the awful price that had to be paid for conflict and for the dreams of conquest that lay at the heart of supremacist nationalism. This time the price had been on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world. Could anyone have forecast that in 50 years time the unity of the European peoples would have evolved to the stage of a Single Market without economic borders of 15 countries, over 400 million people, with free movement of goods, services and people? I doubt it and when we are debating Europe and its future we should never forget that. Thankfully for our generation and for the world there were people in the years following that cataclysmic war who vowed that such slaughter would never be repeated, people of

vision who saw the need to bury forever ancient enmities and create a new order of relationships within Europe, people of different cultures and backgrounds who recognised that what unites the peoples of Europe is far greater than what divides them.

From their vision of a new Europe was to grow the European Community of today, a community in which fifteen European peoples have irrevocably linked their destines. By sharing their sovereignty they have sought to achieve a greater freedom and a greater stability in a world which progressively becomes more inter-dependent. Together they have now embarked on a process which will lead them ever closer and aims at nothing less than the total removal of the barriers that exist between them, not from any thrust for power, or desire for prestige but in order to create the conditions in which best to protect common values and to promote common shared aims.

Above all in seeking unity in Europe, we are not seeking uniformity for we are convinced that one of the most precious elements of our common European culture lies in its diversity and we have at last recognised a fundamental truth which too often eluded our forefathers — in our difference lies our strength, not our weakness. The world is a richer place for difference and diversity. The answer to difference is not conflict but the accommodation of and respect for difference.

It is an accident of birth where we are born and what we are born so difference should never be the source of hatred or conflict. Humanity transcends nationality. The essence of unity is the acceptance of diversity. Those statements sound very simplistic but most deep profundities do and those principles are the principles which if applied will secure lasting peace in the world and indeed will resolve any of the conflicts in any part of the world today if the people involved in conflict would simply apply them. Indeed those are the principles that we are seeking to have agreed in Northern Ireland at the moment.

Let us not hesitate therefore to ensure that those voices that are raised against the evolution of the process of European Union are reminded of the price of beginning the process of dismantling the historic achievements of the past fifty years, both the economic and the human price.

Economics also argue for European Union and for a Europe of the Regions. We are living through the most far reaching revolution that the world has ever seen and it is transforming our world. I refer to the revolution in transport, telecommunications and technology. This has made the world a much smaller place and that is reflected in its effects on our political evolution.

Once upon a time we had city states, then nation states, now continental states, an evolution that basically reflects the evolution of the human condition. In today's world, because of that revolution we are inter-dependent and we cannot live apart.

But our identity remains and it is interesting that the main opponents of European Union fear that it will destroy their identity. This is their most powerful emotional argument but its weakness is exposed by examining it and reflects seriously on their self-confidence in their own identity.

Lord Tebbit boasts that he is an Essex man. Is he any less an Essex man because he is an Englishman? Why should he be any less an Englishman because he is a European. Have centuries of being English made Essex any less Essex? Indeed a Europe of the Regions is the only Europe that will ensure the preservation and development of identity at all levels because it will ensure the proper and adequate devolution of power at every level. In short it will ensure true subsidiarity.

Regionalisation makes economic sense. The true wealth of any country is its people. As I often say, if billions of pounds were sitting out on the streets and no people around they would just blow away. Without people there is no wealth and true wealth derives from harnessing the energies, talents and ideas of the people. One of the real ways of doing that must be to set up regional authorities which not only will harness the energies and ideas of the regions but will also make a substantial contribution not only to the preservation of but to the development of real identity.

It is hardly an accident that the most successful post war European economy was Germany, by far the most regionalised state in the EC. In addition it should be pointed out that the centralised government and parliament approach that characterised the nation state, and the UK in particular, was founded at a time when universal suffrage and indeed universal education did not exist when means of communication and information systems were extremely limited, and government was centred on and delegated to the privileged few. Today's world is completely different but in those states where centralisation has remained, and indeed Britain is the most centralised state in the EC, it is self-evident that an enormous amount of energy and talent and therefore real wealth, is not being harnessed.

If power is devolved to the regions, to put it simply, more heads and hands at more local level will be involved in developing our new Europe. That is the true meaning of subsidiarity. It does appear to some of us that those who are stressing subsidiarity as evidence of their opposition to a Europe centralised in Brussels are talking more of a Europe of the nation states than a Europe of the Regions. They are seeking to exercise power at the level of the member state's government rather than devolving it to regional or local authorities in their own country. This was quite clearly true of Britain until recent decisions about Scotland and Wales.

The lack of true subsidiarity in the UK was all the more serious given the extensive regional diversity that already exists but had no power to develop. The distinctiveness of Wales or Scotland or indeed the Highlands, the islands, Glaswegians etc in identity terms is self-evident. A Yorkshireman or a Lancastrian

are no less English because of the distinctive differences of identity with someone from Devon or Cornwall. Does it not make sense in the new Europe if each of these regions had the authority devolved to them to develop their regions that we would be facing up to the economic challenge of the new Europe with much greater strength and hope? Is it not common sense that in today's world of mass education, information technology and mass communication that real democracy no longer needs to be totally centralised in parliaments and governments!

Let us also not forget that one of the major objectives of European Union is to harmonise the living standards right across Europe and that continuingly developing policies are in place to achieve that, in particular to develop the poorer regions of Europe. Indeed it is hardly an accident that those who oppose European Union, also oppose regionalisation and are also opposed to what they call Euro bureaucrats, by which they mean the Commission.

Those of us from the poorer regions of Europe know that it has been the European Commission that has been to the forefront in protecting and developing the diversity of Europe — largely because its own composition reflects that diversity — as well protecting the interest of the poorer regions. Indeed the whole technological revolution reinforces the argument for regionalisation and decentralisation.

The industrial revolution by its very nature led to centralisation, to urbanisation and to capital cities because of its very nature and because of the nature of communication. Today's technological revolution is leading in precisely the opposite direction. For example it is no longer necessary for Government or business to centralise its office work in capital cities. In today's technological world the office work can be carried out anywhere and instantly communicated, another powerful argument for regionalisation and indeed a return of populations to the regions. That is clearly the direction of the future and is the direction for which political leaders should be planning ahead, not following.

What do I mean by regional authorities? I certainly do not want the European Commission to set about defining in detail what a region should look like. Belgium, Italy, Spain and Germany already have a highly developed regional structure. Each country has developed a system that is in harmony with its political and administrative traditions and with the basic identity of its peoples.

Spain has 17 regions or "autonomous provinces" ranging in population from 260,000 in Rioja to 6,500,000 in Andalusia; Italy has 20 regions and two autonomous provinces ranging in population from 113,000 in Val d'Aoste to 8,900,000 in Lombardy.

Germany has an explicitly federal structure composed of the 10 Lander from the former West and 5 from the former East Germany plus Berlin. Their populations range from 659,000 in Bremen to 17,000 in Nordrhein Westphalen;

Belgium has recently reformed its already highly regionalised structure and is moving towards a federal system composed of Flanders, Wallonia and the Brussels region.

(I have quoted population figures because some governments claim that they cannot regionalise because their national population is too small).

The form of regional devolution differs widely from country to country, but there are certain common characteristics: the regions have elected regional governments; — they have significant or exclusive competence for policies such as education and training, cultural policy, social services and regional planning.

In some areas responsibility is shared with central government; they have revenue raising powers and control over their budgets; they are free to establish relations with regions in other member states.

Of the remaining Community countries, Ireland, Portugal, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark and Britain do not have elected regional authorities. France has 26 elected regional councils but their powers have tended to diminish in recent years.

Ireland uses 7 regional bodies for administrative purposes, as required by Community legislation, in implementing the Community Support Frameworks for its regional development; Portugal has 5 similar administrative regions but has elected regional governments in the archipelagoes of the Azores and Madeira. Greece has a decentralised administrative structure and 13 development regions but no elected regions; Holland has 12 provinces with elected administrations but few strategic economic powers; Denmark has 14 counties with elected administrations. It is difficult to keep abreast of changes in the public sector structure in the United Kingdom but there is no regional structure. While the delegation of power to nominal institutions in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast supposedly goes some way to alleviate centralism, these institutions are clearly much more accountable to Whitehall than to the communities they govern. The British Labour Party's proposal for democratic devolution would emancipate and enable the regions whereas current arrangements emasculate and impose on the regions.

I am not worried by this extreme diversity, indeed I welcome it. I recognise, however, that it would not be sensible to impose a regional system on top of existing structures without some degree or rationalisation. Big government is no longer popular, citizens want a responsive, flexible and easily understood system, and they are concerned about cost. When I drew up a report for the Regional Committee of the European Parliament in 1987 on Ireland's regional development I looked closely at this question. While I was convinced then, as I am now, that Ireland would benefit greatly from having regions I qualified my recommendation that 9 regional bodies should be created, based on the then Regional Development Organisations, by making clear that there should also be rationalisation of the highly complex system of existing bodies. Over the years almost every government department had established its own regional or local system and the scope for saving was great.

Why do I think that a Europe of the Regions is likely to emerge in the face of fierce opposition from some member states?

First because as I have made clear, I believe that closer economic and political integration in Europe is inevitable and political institutions will have to be adapted to meet this change.

Secondly, because the institutions of the Community are likely to seem distant from the average citizen despite the communications revolution; they will insist on having a political structure much nearer to them that will deal with those matters that are best tackled close to home. Real subsidiarity!

Thirdly, because the system has been tried and it works. We saw it work dramatically in Spain in 1992 with the Universal Exhibition in Seville and the Olympics in Barcelona. In both cases the Regions were instrumental in bringing these events to the regions and then making them work spectacularly well. Indeed the success of regionalisation in Spain in the post Franco era is another powerful argument of its benefits in economic regeneration. And indeed the single straightforward argument for power to the regions is that given that the only wealth we have is human beings and their creativity, now that we have mass education, power should be as close to the ground as possible so that the creativity of all our people is being used.

The increased importance of regions throughout Europe is a response to impulses from both 'below' and 'above'. From below there are demands in the name of efficiency and democracy and for recognition of the historic and cultural identities of regions and minority nations. From above states have engaged in regional policies aimed at correcting territorial imbalances in economic development. Regions have discovered their own territorial identities, encouraged by state policies which invited them to articulate their demands in spatial terms

In recent years the priority, led by the European Commission, has been to find mechanisms by which regions themselves can enhance their prospects for development. There has been a corresponding decentralisation in the political realm. In some cases territorial politics has developed around historic nations such as Catalonia or Scotland. In others the focus is on administrative regions, created in the post war era, which have taken on a life of their own, such as most of the German Lander. European integration has strengthened those trends.

In the eighties when the Single Market was proposed there was much concern about the Periphery, that all development would occur in the centre. These concerns were well founded but experience since then has shown that matters are more complex.

Look for example at what is happening in the run up to the Single Currency. Far from being embarrassing laggards the peripherals have been the best performers. The

most rapidly growing countries have been, in ascending order, Spain, the UK, Portugal, Finland and Ireland, with Ireland of course winning all the prizes. Their record on inflation has been just as good and they stand to benefit most from the increased price competition that the Euro will bring.

Look at the results of the European Union structural Funds. Over the 5 years to 1999 170 billion ecu will be spent on structural and cohesion policies, with a 70% concentration of expenditure on the poorest objective 1 regions. It should be said in passing that this level of spending would never have been agreed were it not for the concerns expressed and the lobbying carried out during the run up to the Single Market. There has been a closing of the gap with the wealthiest regions of up to 5%. There have been significant concrete achievements; in Greece the number of towns with waste water treatment has doubled to serve over 70% of the population in Ireland 50% of the places for students in secondary vocational education are provided by the European Social Fund.

This is not to sound starry eyed about the prospects for the regions. Despite the significant progress in some areas overall regional disparities persist; in particular the record on job creation in the regions has not been satisfactory. But overall the efforts at regional development have borne fruit and a significant number of regions have shown that they can compete and prosper in an ever-more integrating Europe. New confidence and competence has been given to the regions not just through the economic impact of structural spending but through the way it has been delivered and implemented. The Commission's pursuit of decentralisation, getting responsibility as close to the ground as possible, promoting partnership between the regions and encouraging co-operation and exchanges has led to a transformation in the capacity of the regions.

In the 10 years to 1995 the number of regional representations in Brussels has grown from 2 to over 100. Several organisations lobby for regions as a whole at European level, notably the International Union of Local Authorities, the Council of Communes and regions of Europe, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and the Association of European Frontier Regions. As part of the Maastricht Treaty there is now a Committee of the Regions with formal rights of consultation on Commission proposals.

The Maastricht Treaty also in its amendments to Article 146 allows a state to be represented by a Minister of a sub-national government in the Council of Ministers. This clause was designed for the Federal states of Germany and Belgium. It does not, it must be admitted, allow regions to represent themselves at the Council. A regional Minister appearing there represents the state and there needs to be a prior agreement among the regions and states as to what their interest is.

A number of member states have appointed regional observers in their delegations to Brussels. Within the UK delegation the Northern Ireland Office, The Scottish Office and the Welsh Office have a role in determining the British position in the Council of Ministers and may be included in the Delegation. But these offices are in no real sense representative, they only lobby within the limits of UK government policy. Nor can they be said to be powerful actors in Whitehall or Brussels so that there is always the danger of the territorial interest being traded off against other objectives which the UK government is pursuing. The failure to date for example of Northern Ireland to escape from the ban on Beef Exports is a case in point.

Let me now say something about where I think we should be going Firstly I am disappointed that in its proposals for the future financing and policies of the Union — 'Agenda 2000' the Commission was not more ambitious in relation to Regional Development. In essence the Commission is proposing to mark time in the existing regions and to effect a slow build up of support in the applicant countries. The relative success of its programmes to date and their impact on lessening the stresses and strains of integration together with their popularity in the regions would argue for a greater commitment to the growth of regional expenditure.

Secondly there is a risk that the Commission will lose control of the level of national state aids as the spread of regionalisation continues. The Commission has a duty under the Treaties to ensure a level playing field.

Thirdly we need to be more creative in devising proper representation at all levels for the regions in Europe. The hostility of the previous British government to any notions of Federalism had a very inhibiting effect of political and institutional thinking. What was the point in making proposals which were doomed to peremptory dismissal? We need to react to the new opportunities the new government has opened.

Fourthly as the new regional entities emerge and strengthen let us ensure that they are open, co-operative, pluralist in spirit, and are vehicles to respect diversity and bring people together, not to disappear into some self regarding laager. Let us ensure that in years to come there sill be no need for Interreg Programmes designed to compensate for the neglect of border regions and the absence of cross border planning. I am glad that in the last round of funding cross-border measures of development were agreed between Ireland and Wales. Let us think to a future where there will be similar programmes between Northern Ireland and a new Scottish entity and between Scotland and Ireland.

As a result of the technological, telecommunications and transport revolution, the production of learning and knowledge are being transformed. We expect a great deal more from the educational system than every before. It is not just that educational institutions are major employers, they are now major economic factors in their own

right. A university, for instance, must be intimately involved in the economy of its region, as well as maintaining international links.

Traditionally people went to universities. Now the universities have to go to the people as well. This is not just a question of the economic exploitation of the knowledge held within the institution. Universities and other institutions also have a major role to play in the transmission of knowledge and new skills to citizens and workers. Education is not something you finish in your twenties any more. Open and distance learning are becoming increasingly important to society. The concept of lifelong learning is crucial, which is why the European Commission has devoted so much attention to it. In the real world, skills will be measured not in terms of what you know, but in terms of your ability to find out what you will need to know in the future. In that respect, universities will play a vital role.

I am laying so much stress on universities because they are regional institutions par excellence. It seems to me for a number of reasons that the future of European society will depend on the capacity of its regions to respond to the challenges of globalisation in the information society.

Let me elaborate. I believe there are substantial economic, political and social reasons to believe that the future of Europe lies with the development of a Europe of the regions. The region cannot thrive without Europe. Europe needs the regions.

It is patently obvious to me that national borders in a global economy are of dubious relevance. It is clear that no one country can isolate itself from the consequences of the global economy. It is equally clear that the global economy has to be regulated. Only at a European level can we do that. We cannot have 15 different legal frameworks for intellectual property rights, nor 15 different regulatory codes for the uses of biotechnology. Electronic commerce obviously needs a single European legal system if we are not to exclude ourselves from the global system. As the right-wing Tokyo regionalist and management guru Kenichi Ohmae memorably termed it in this context: "political borders are little more than an artificial externally imposed source of inefficiency".

The European Union is therefore vital for the success of our regions. That is why I am also a strong supporter of the single currency. Individual countries cannot order global markets, but a Europe-wide currency will lessen the disorder on those markets. Pooling the sovereignty of the nations and regions of Europe is the only way in which we can make an impact on the global system, and guide it in the directions we would like it to go.

The regional policy dimension of the European Union has been extremely important, particularly in recent years. But experience shows that the policy has been most successful where regions have had a substantial degree of involvement in the implementation of regional policy and where a sense of regional ownership of regional

policy exists. A centrally administered regional policy is no substitute for a situation in which regions take responsibility themselves.

Regions need strong local institutions and autonomous institutions. Particularly important are financial and educational systems. After all, investment and knowledge are the key to success in the global information society.

It is also increasingly clear that the most successful real economies in Europe are not those of nations, but of regions — Hamburg, Baden Wurtemberg, Rhone-Alpes, South East England, Lombardy, etc. In many cases, these are units which do not pay that much attention to national frontiers, engaging in substantial cross-border co operation. It is striking how many of the richer parts of Europe are border regions, looking beyond national capitals to partners in other countries. That is very different experience from ours in Ireland where the border regions have been the most affected by the division of the island.

What these regions have in common, along with counterparts in other parts of the world, is that they provide a fruitful environment for clusters of firms, financial institutions and educational institutions to work together. The existence of a highly skilled workforce is absolutely vital to their success. It seems that it is beyond the power of national governments to facilitate the emergence of such clusters but that regional authorities can do a great deal to promote these kind of networks.

There are also good political reasons to support the concept of a Europe of the Regions. Within the EU framework, much can be clone to challenge the peripheral status of the regions within the nation state. When I am in Westminster, I realise that Northern Ireland is a peripheral region. When I am in Derry, from our point of view, that is the centre. When I am in Brussels and Strasbourg, the perspective shifts again. Northern Ireland is among the many regions of Europe, all of whom have access to the highest levels of decision-making.

It is important to realise that the status of regions with the EU is different from their status within the nation-state. In the nation-state, power is concentrated in the capital. This leads Eurosceptics to misread the European Union. They assume the purpose is to replace the 15 national capitals with a one central capital in Brussels. This is profoundly mistaken. The truth is that there is no concentration of power at all in the European Union. Most of the action takes place in Brussels as a geographical location, but is not a political location in the sense of London, Paris or Madrid. The reality is that power is so diffused within the EU between the member states and regions that Brussels is simply where people from all over Europe meet to take decisions and to pool sovereignty in our collective interests. Talk of the "Brussels Empire" is mere fantasy.

If you approach a national administration, you will be provided with the relevant information on programmes and applications. However, if you approach the European

Commission, its databases allow you to search for partner organisations throughout the EU, Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union. The Commission facilitates rather than co-ordinates. Instead of a situation in which "all roads lead to Brussels", it is more a case of "some roads pass through Brussels". That is a major psychological and political difference which the regions are well aware of and are exploiting to the full.

The information society also demand more efficiency from political institutions. With rapid changes the Westminster — Whitehall is called into question. The idea of ministerial responsibility to Parliament is nowadays very hollow. Westminster and centralised government do not provide the conditions for rational debate or rapid response. Without wishing to pre-empt the decisions of the Scottish people, it seems to me that government in Scotland will be able to react much more rapidly and responsively to meet the needs of Scottish society with a First Minister making the decisions rather than the Secretary of State of Scotland.

There are also very powerful social reasons for the Europe of the regions. Our societies are very different, even within single countries. Europe's glory is its diversity. It is also one of the strengths of Great Britain that it is such a diverse society. I am told that in one London borough along there are 160 languages spoken. It is hard to believe that one centralised system can serve the needs of London, of the North-West or Devon and Cornwall. On a European level, this diversity is multiplied several times over. One indicator is that over 100 political parties are represented in the European Parliament. We need institutions that reflect diversity.

Furthermore, economics is not everything. There are many other issues in politics, such as environmental protection, education, cultural politics, urban and rural development. These can best be addressed often at a regional level as well as a European level. Increasingly the counterpart to globalisation and the information society will be an emphasis on a sense of place. It seems to me that strong regional identities are emerging all over Europe. In geographically peripheral areas particularly, this is facilitated by the knowledge that they are no longer necessarily economically peripheral areas. Emigration is no longer inevitable.

All these developments open a vigorous future for regional institutions. At the same time, much responsibility will be placed on the leaders of the emerging regions. We must avoid the mistakes of the emerging nation-states of the 19th and early 20th centuries, who too often defined themselves in terms of their rivalries. The interdependence of regions, particularly across borders, must be recognised. I am looking forward to a Scottish administration working in co-operation across the Irish Sea and in Europe.

Above all else, the regions of Europe must be inclusive. They must respect diversity within their own borders. Few regions will be completely homogeneous. Regions must be defined in terms of the people who live in them, not on some artificial historical, ethnic or political criteria. Everyone who lives in a region must be considered a

citizen of that region. If we expect our rights to be recognised within the wider Europe, we must recognise the rights of all within our own territory.

As we move into the new millennium we are in a very new world as well and let us ensure that it is the real wealth of that world — its people — who have the power — A Europe of The Regions.