

Pieter Feith – EU Special Representative

Speech at the Europe Day Opening Ceremony

9 May 2008 - University of Pristina

Dear Mr President,
Dear President of the Assembly,
Dear Deputy Prime Minister,
Dear Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations,
Dear Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia,
Dear Head of the European Commission Liaison Office,
Dear Rektor of the University of Pristina

- Let me thank first of all the Kosovo government for hosting this wonderful Ceremony on the occasion of Europe Day. I think I can speak for all EU presences in Kosovo when I say that we are truly impressed by the many events that have been organized in relation to this day. And by the enthusiasm that is tangible everywhere in Kosovo.
- Today we are celebrating Europe Day. Every 9th of May, Europe marks the anniversary of a new vision for Europe. The aim was to make war between Europe's nations unthinkable and today, almost 60 years later, we celebrate this vision that brought Western Europe an unprecedented period of peace. In Robert Schuman's unforgettable words – a de facto solidarity was established.
- The Schuman declaration that we specifically commemorate today as an act of statesmanship, as the piece of text and of diplomacy that we specifically commemorate today was a unique and, in fact, quite bold offer to set European countries on a path of political and economic co-operation. It was a choice for reconciliation and for consensus – so that future conflict would be avoided.
- All of us present here today – the speakers as well as you in the audience – demonstrate the firm commitment to Kosovo's European perspective and I know that also the Kosovo Government takes its European perspective seriously.
- The creation of the Agency for European integration is just one way of showing this commitment. It demonstrates that you are embracing the idea of the EU and the important fundamental values it represents.
- The road ahead seems long and I recognize that Kosovo faces some big challenges but there is a reason for significant optimism given Kosovo's own drive and commitment – a commitment we witness today.
- Let me finish by saying that “The EU is in Kosovo until Kosovo comes to the EU”. We have had a close cooperation so far and I am confident that this cooperation will continue in the future. Europe Day also belongs to you - I am pleased to be able to celebrate it with you today in Pristina and I look forward to travel along the path towards Europe together with you.