

JUNGE UNION



DEUTSCHLANDS

# Declaration of Cottbus

of the

## Deutschlandtag 2003 of the Junge Union

Cottbus, October 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> 2003

## **Declaration of Cottbus**

Cottbus in Brandenburg, capital of the Niederlausitz region, home and centre of the German Sorbs – traditional minority of western slaw language -, is situated at the eastern border of Germany and today still at the outer limit of the European Union. With its enlargement on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, Germany moves to the centre of the European Union. On occasion of this historic step, the Junge Union of Germany declares on its Deutschlandtag 2003 in Cottbus:

The European Union in its present form is the product of an enormous work of integration, which could only be accomplished in peace and freedom. The visions of a united Europe, shaped by political leaders like Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Charles de Gaulles, François Mitterand and Helmut Kohl, will now finally become a reality. The common market, the common currency and a constitutional treaty in the near future are the success of more than 40 years of common efforts. The results accomplished are recognized far beyond Europe's borders.

Economic data and legal harmonization dominated the negotiations on entry into the Union which were necessary for enlargement. Legal details, national specificities and the distribution of financial means sparked emotional debates. But next to these important elements of the legal community European Union, we shall not neglect the basis for our common political action in Europe. Europe is more than a common market and its citizens are more than just economic subjects. Europe is a community of values.

It would be an illusion to believe that the process of integration of Europe will proceed without tensions. The regions and countries of Europe, with their different and partly contradictory historical and cultural experiences, can only be kept together by the definition of a fundamental common ground. Like any other human community the European Union needs a basic consensus for common action. For this reason the Junge Union demands a foundational discourse on common values in Europe, in every nation and between the generations. A European spirit is the condition for sustainable integration.

The unification of Europe helps to avoid a repetition of the tragedies of our common past. Europe is a tree with different branches. Its common roots though are to be found in the Christian occident which is its integrating and inspiring force. The mental

and cultural diversity are expressions of this force. On the background of European integration, this diversity must be maintained. Unity in diversity is Europe's true strength. For this reason the Junge Union considers the durable existence of national, regional and local identities as cornerstone of our European policies. Because of this, the interests of historical minorities and ethnicities need to be particularly accounted for in the European discourse on values we insist on.

The interaction between Europe and the member states can only be comprehensible for citizens if competencies are clearly divided. Only under this condition political decisions can be attributed and responsibilities be made visible. A Europe with 25 or more member states can function in the long run only if it respects the principle of subsidiarity which implies that a unified European regulation should be sought only if a problem cannot be handled efficiently by the member states. The tendencies towards comprehensive European responsibilities with the consequence of increasing centralisation are indicators of democratic deficits in Europe and lead to politics unrelated to the reality lived by the citizens. Politics on the European level needs to be imprinted with the clarity of goals and the transparency of means. We hereby understand a vertical separation of powers and with it the distribution of power on different decision making levels. The Junge Union supports the strengthening of small units within the European Community.

We encourage local, regional and national decision makers and in particular the youth in the member states to participate actively in the unification of Europe, in the discourse on common values and in nurturing European diversity. We expect that the integration of Europe will be based on a common canon of values and law as the founding fathers of the European Union did begin it.