



Páneurópai Piknik
Sopron 2009

Speech of **Dr. László Magas** Chairman of the Foundation Páneurópai Piknik '89
on August 19, 2009 at Fertőrákos, Europa Concert

In the name of the organizers of that time and the foundation which they founded and in the name of the Páneurópai Piknik'89. I want to thank you that you have accepted our invitation.

I greet Mrs. Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, Mr. László Sólyom, the President of the Republic of Hungary, Their excellencies the men and women ambassadors, The Members of the European Parliament and many other countries and Dr. Tamás Fodor, the Mayor of the City and County of Sopron, in his name I want to thank the members of the City Council and people of Sopron who selflessly contributed to the important celebration of this 20th anniversary.

At 3:57 p.m. on August 19, 1989, was the historical moment of the Pan-European Picnic. We must thank the following people who make the event possible: 30-40 brave civilians – teachers, engineers, doctors, mechanics – whose faith in democracy made it possible to convince thousands of people to come here to a joyous festival to break the Iron Curtain, the symbol of the dictatorship, that all of us hated.

We must thank the border guards who were serving then that they refused their orders, and put themselves on the side of humanity. Later their officers said “They made it possible that this site is a memorial site and not a site to remember victims.

Most importantly we must thank each East German woman and man, fathers and mothers who carried their children in their arms, whose desire for freedom overcame every fear. Within a few moments, they burst open and broke the gate which had separated two worlds from each other. We could not dare to imagine that their deed would be the first sentence in the new history of Europe.

I must say a few words about the most important goals of our foundation, about saving the truth of the historical facts. This is still true after two decades. Today there are many false prophets, who want to take over the facts of that time for themselves or for their organizations. The clearing up of these of those facts is also important for the self respect of the organizers of that time. That is the reason we organized the conference of the past three days.

Twenty years ago we have invited everyone with a proclamation in eight languages to come to the Pan-European Picnic.

I want to tell about our thoughts of that time which seemed like only dreams: “The history which had proved to be true over the course of centuries that the only way that led to universal peace is the deepening of our friendships among peoples, and the destruction of the barbed wire and mental barriers, raised by political schemes.

One must reach the end of the twentieth century to see that Europe could become the common home of the peoples who live here, where without paying attention to ones heritage or ideology, only the purely human connections are the most important.

The next century should no longer be the era of wars and friction between people!”

What was accomplished up till now is the result of our common labor. We are thankful for the work up till now. What has not been accomplished up till now we must carry out together again.

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