



College of Europe  
Collège d'Europe

Brugge



Natolin

## Student Representative's opening Ceremony Speech – Manuel Marín Promotion 2018/2019

By Anmol Sodhi-Kaur and Jesús Urios Culiañez

Monsieur le Président du Parlement Européen Antonio Tajani,  
Honorable Président du Conseil Administratif  
Honorable Recteur,  
Vos Excellences,  
Chers camarades,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

On behalf of the College of Europe students, we would like to thank President Tajani for his speech and for being with us today. I am sure his words have given us much to think about and discuss.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are the Erasmus generation, one can say we are the Marín generation. We are part of the generation that has never felt borders in Europe, never truly experienced using a national currency, we only knew Europe, and we cannot imagine life without it.

As students of the College of Europe we are inspired by our patron and his achievements. Thanks to him and the creation of the Erasmus scheme many young people like ourselves have benefited from experiencing life in different countries, making friends from all around the world and learning how important it is for Europeans to work together in a cross border cooperation in order to ensure peace and prosperity on our continent.

Next year is an important year for Europe : a year when European citizens will be asked to vote in the new EP. The future will bring many challenges for our elected representatives but also many opportunities.

And yes there are challenges !

Firstly we regret that the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the EU but we fully expect excellent cooperation together. The remaining members in our opinion must continue to build a stronger, even more unified Europe.

We like to think of the E U as a marriage . We are together in the good times and IN the bad times and sadly then, we are living through our first divorce. The EU is not done yet - let's not take it for granted ! Like in a marriage , we need to work on making it work !

Secondly, Europe is also facing the challenge of Euroscepticism from its own citizens. We must fight this and fight for the EU as we -College of Europe students- feel that this IS the best framework we have so far to find common solutions to everyday challenges. The global challenges we face today require more than ever unity, ambition and civic engagement.



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Many occasions show us that not only does the EU need its Member States / but the Member States also need the EU.

Europe is for our generation also the best way of guaranteeing individual and collective rights : three good examples of this can be seen in our collective fight for gender equality, social justice and solutions to climate change.

Our generation needs Europe more than ever and, ladies and gentlemen, one can also say that Europe needs us ! It is up to us now to defend Europe and to continue the work of Europe's esteemed-founding fathers.

But Europe has to inspire again we need clear messages about what Europe has achieved and what Europe can achieve.

We look forward to an inspiring and informative campaign. Too often Europe is seen as a distant concept. Citizens need to be correctly informed and made aware of the issues Europe is tackling together just as much as national governments inform their citizens about national policies.

Thanks to, amongst others, the generosity of the EU institutions and Member States, we are privileged to be students here at the College of Europe where we live and breathe Europe in all its dimensions on a daily basis. Let's make the most of this year!

Mr. President you can count on us - students of college of Europe - to help spread the message about what Europe is and what it means to its citizens.

And let's remember we are united in diversity and we all stand stronger together.