

DRAFT SPEECH

By Prime-Minister of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Garibashvili

Charlemagne Prize

Aachen 29 May 2014

Dear Mr. Rompuy,

Heads of State and Government, Excellencies,

Dear Winners of the Charlemagne Prize,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure to address such distinguished audience at this very special occasion today.

For more than 60 years, the Charlemagne Prize has honoured exceptional work performed in the service of European unity. As characterized by its founder, Dr. Kurt Pfeiffer, the prize aims to create an unforced, voluntary union of the European peoples, in order to defend the highest earthly values—freedom, humanity and peace.

This year, we have gathered here to honour an extraordinary political figure: the committed leader, builder of impossible compromises and an ardent proponent of Europe and the European Idea.

Dear Mr. Van Rompuy, on behalf of the Government and People of Georgia and that of my own, allow me to extend to you my most sincere congratulations on the International Charlemagne Prize award 2014. I would like to thank you not only for supporting my country to advance on its European path, but also for your valuable contribution to the consolidation and further development of the European Union”.¹

This year the EU celebrates ten years of the Eastern enlargement. We have all witnessed tremendous benefits this historic expansion of the EU brought,

¹ The Charlemagne Prize Board of Directors: http://www.karlspreis.de/en/news/charlemagne_prize.html

for both, the new member countries, their peoples and economies, and the so called old member states. It has led to a wider single market with new, significant trade and investment opportunities, as well as to a more competitive Europe. Moreover, it reminded Europeans that the EU is at heart a political project – spreading peace, democracy, security and prosperity across the continent.

Europe is a unique continent where one can cherish its heritage and draw on it to prepare the future. This is what Europe is ultimately about: a place where countries with a common history and a shared future can come together, and find freedom in peace – the aforementioned fully depicts how Mr. Rompuy once characterized Europe.

Georgia shares this dream of a free and prosperous Europe—an area of peace and stability that unites different cultures, traditions, languages and religions. As a representative of a free and democratic country, I am convinced that Georgia can also make a vigorous contribution to the continued success of the European project!

Once again, I would like to express my cordial congratulations and wish Mr. Rompuy every success in his exceptional activities!