

Palabras Almuerzo

Valores Occidentales e Identidad Europea
8 de mayo de 2006

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to have you here. I know that you have been working the whole morning, and you have earned your lunch. Thank you very much for being here today and for the effort that you have made to participate in this seminar.

Thank you to all of you who have travelled a long distance, especially Robert Kagan, our speaker this afternoon. I would like to express my gratitude also to the representatives of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung: Michael Borchard, Michael Daumer, Canan Atilgan, etc. for their effort in making this cycle of seminars possible. And, of course, to Ana Palacio, for her enthusiasm and hard work for the success of this seminar.

We are here now to discuss about values and identity. I am convinced of the importance of bringing the issue of values to the first line of the

intellectual and political debate. I strongly believe that many of the ailments of Europe, one of the reasons of the European crisis, have an origin in the weakness of our convictions, in the oblivion of the values that should base our identity.

The great challenges of the 21st century have to do with values and its universal validity. We speak about freedom and democracy. About equality among men and women. About responsibility and individual freedom. About the tension between liberty and security. All of them are in the first line of the political debate.

I know you have been discussing these issues in the morning. But, now it is time to talk about them in public. For that purpose, we have chosen an ideal scenario: the university. It is our duty to teach the new generations the importance of the values we defend: Freedom and Democracy.

Thanks again for your participation in this timely cycle of seminars and we look forwards to continuing our work after lunch.

Thank you