

ADDRESS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALBERT COHEN CORFU ASSOCIATION

23 JUNE 1994

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you all for your presence here today.

Special thanks are due to the representatives of the three States that joined the European Union in 1994 and are here today, honoring us with their presence. I welcome them in our island on behalf of the Albert Cohen Corfu Association.

Because of this island's constant geostrategic position as described by Thucydides, it has been since the beginning a pole of attraction for civilizations, travelers but also for conquerors.

In 1994, in this same palace where we are today, a significant event took place: it was the Summit Conference of the, twelve at the time, member states of the European Union. For us Corfiots this was a great honor but, at the same time, a serious challenge for preparing Corfu to receive with dignity all the foreign missions. The Corfu Summit of June 1994 was of considerable importance to the European Union and it was crowned by great success, as three great States joined the European family: Austria, Finland and Sweden.

1994 happened to be also the 100th anniversary from the birth of Austrian Richard Goedenhove-Kalergis, the first person that, as early as 1923, had proposed the creation of a Pan-European Union. As his name indicates, this Austrian had Flemish and Greek roots! Later on, the founders of the European Union were inspired by his ideas. As a consequence, he was the first person to be awarded the Charlemagne Prize, which is awarded by the European institutions.

And now I will leave the floor to the protagonists of the 1994 Summit, represented here today.

But please allow me to first express our gratitude to Mrs Despina Zerniotis, Director of the Asian Art Museum of Corfu, for graciously offering us, once more, the use of this splendid, historical venue.

Our gratitude also to our valued member, Mrs Madeleine Kogevinas, for her personal help in securing the presence today of the representatives of Sweden.

At this point I would like to welcome to our gathering the young student,, who has been awarded the prize at the 25th Student Competition titled "The European Union, the next steps for Development, Employment and Education", organized by the "economia" Group, the sponsor for communication for this event. Our Association is happy to have invited..... as our guest, so he could be present here tonight.

I finally wish to convey my thanks to all the members of our Managing Board that volunteered their unwavering efforts during the past year for the realization of this event.

Spiros Giourgas