



Dr. Ingo Friedrich

VIZEPRÄSIDENT DES EUROPÄISCHEN PARLAMENTS a. D.
PRÄSIDENT DES EUROPÄISCHEN WIRTSCHAFTSENATS
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THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, MR. HERMANN VAN ROMPUY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE EU COMMISSION, MR. JOSÉ BARROSO
THE CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, DR. ANGELA MERKEL

Dear Chancellor,
Dear Presidents,

please allow me to address you with great concern in light of the crisis in Crimea and Ukraine, drawing on my 30 years of experience in the European Parliament:

One hundred years ago, in addition to the tensions in Serbia, the Alsace-Lorraine region was a particular bone of contention between Germany and France, much like Crimea and Ukraine are today a bone of contention between the West and Russia. Even then, people didn't want war, and yet cruel fate took its course.

And today: Once again there is enmity, sanctions, counter-sanctions, and no mutually acceptable way out of the crisis. This is absurd in the globalized world of the 21st century, where we are all interdependent. Apparently, all previous efforts to de-escalate and ease the situation have been unsuccessful. The opposing forces are still hurtling toward each other unchecked. In this situation, it would be reckless to continue solely along the well-trodden paths of diplomacy.

Now, new considerations and ideas must be introduced that go beyond the discussions held so far.

One hundred years ago, a solution and peace for Alsace-Lorraine were only achieved when the borders between Germany and France lost their divisive character and Germans and French reconciled within the framework of European integration. We must draw lessons from this course of history 100 years ago to resolve the current crisis.

One such lesson should be:

Russia concludes a treaty with the EU, within the framework of the so-called Eastern European Partnership, on the pursuit of Russian associate membership in the European Union. This would result in the EU, Ukraine, and Russia being integrated into a common treaty system with shared goals such as human dignity, democracy, and prosperity. All parties would gain the new perspective of peaceful development without having to accept the loss of national distinctiveness and identities. President Putin could fulfill Tsar Peter the Great's vision of Russia's "return" to Europe in the 21st century and thus go down in Russian history as its greatest statesman.

Russia concludes a treaty with the EU, within the framework of the so-called Eastern European Partnership, on the pursuit of Russian associate membership. While EU association with Russia would present Europe with a huge new challenge, it would certainly be easier to manage than, for example, Turkey's accession to the EU. Furthermore, it would open up extraordinary new possibilities.

Through such a European perspective, Russia would finally "arrive" in Europe, to its own benefit and to the benefit of millions of people in Ukraine and across Europe. Open borders between Ukraine and Russia would also significantly improve coexistence between people of Russian and Ukrainian identities in eastern Ukraine. The world would gain a zone of peace and stability stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

Implementing this idea may currently seem extremely difficult, but the reunification of Germany and the end of Franco-German enmity were also considered unattainable at the time.

I urge you to consider these ideas in your deliberations and decisions regarding the resolution of the current crisis.

To facilitate a public discussion on this topic, I am taking the liberty of publishing this letter.

March 30, 2014

With kind regards

Dr. Ingo Friedrich

Copie: Mr. Klitschko Chairman of the UDAR party

This letter was translated by Google Translate.