

Our deep gratitude goes, first of all, to the Canadian government, to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, to you the Right Honourable Minister, Joe Clark, and to the friendly Canadian people for their constructive initiative and generous offer to host this conference.

It would have been difficult to find a more suitable venue. Symbolically, the sky above Ottawa today on the opening day of the conference was also cloudless.

We meet here in Ottawa after having witnessed, some of us after having participated, in history-making changes in Europe. Minds and hearts have come open to a new reality. Frontiers are no longer obstacles to contacts among people and nations. Walls which were built on prejudice, fear and suspicion, are falling down.

In order to regain its freedom and dignity my country had to pay with the blood of its sons and daughters. A totalitarian police state crumbled down. A total and irreversible break with the past is now doubled by an entire nation's firm commitment to the values of democracy, pluralism and human rights, to a market-oriented economy and to a foreign policy of openness to all horizons.

We have come to realize that freedom has to be won; but democracy has to be learned, not taught. We in Romania are learning it the hard way.

I am glad of this opportunity to express the deep gratitude of the Romanian people and government for the solidarity and support that all peoples and governments represented in this hall have extended to us at our time of need.

Free and democratic Romania now proudly rejoins the European and world concert of nations.

Just a few words on our view of the future structures of European security and co-operation. After listening to the speakers who preceded me today, I feel strengthened in my belief that the recent events in Europe have revealed, among many other things, a lack of proper permanent institutional framework for debate and possibly also for joint decision on European matters of general interest.

As a result, military-political alliances may tend to take upon themselves tasks that they are normally not supposed to handle. It becomes increasingly obvious that the CSCE process, which started as a bold initiative, then gradually became a frame of mind rather than a structured framework, will have to evolve, and quickly, into a real institutional structure. My government believes that an agreement, at least in principle, could be reached