

Speech by Wolf D. Prix

Laying of the foundation stone for the ECB's new premises, 19.05.2010

President Trichet,

Distinguished members of the Executive Board, the Governing Council and the General Council,

Mr Bini Smaghi,

Ms Roth, Lord Mayor of the City of Frankfurt,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Not only does architecture have the job of providing a shell for functions, but its architectural aesthetic must also allow three-dimensional cross-references to be produced to the culture of our globalised society without denying its location. The dialectic of old and new – the carefully renovated *Großmarkthalle* and the new set of towers – will mirror this synchronicity.

Towers are archetypes of architectural history. They convey an overview and are symbols.

In this case, the towers on the new site are aligned in such a way that there is a visual axis to Frankfurt's city centre. I am convinced that the towers' new typology, which creates a preciseness and significance of form, will make them an icon and three-dimensional symbol of the European Union.

Laying the foundation stone not only marks an important moment for the owner and future users, but is also a pivotal one for us architects. After all, it

is a moment that takes us across a threshold, from blueprint to building, as a conceptual structure becomes a real building.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all those who have made possible and supported this project. Since architect and owner are indivisible, my particular thanks go to the Decision Making Bodies of the ECB and to all those people who have provided critical and helpful input in terms of the structure's optimisation. I would like to thank the political decision-makers for supporting this project, as well as the competent authorities, not only for ensuring the project's harmonious execution, but also for providing advice and help towards resolving difficult historical preservation issues.

Last but not least, my thanks go to our team and the consultants who have contributed a wealth of ideas during the implementation of planning for this project.

I wish all of us who are involved in the building work an accident-free completion and hope that we shall see one another again at the building's opening.

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