

## Speech of 14 July 2016

By Dr B Engalbert – Mayor of Saint Chinian

Honorary Mayor

Elected Members

Presidents of the Veteran's Associations and the French Remembrance

Flag Carriers

Representatives of the National Gendarmerie

Representatives of the Brigade of Firefighters

Ladies and Gentlemen

Three weeks ago, last Friday, 24th June, I took a strong blow to the head. That morning it was announced that our distant cousins, the British, were leaving us. I spent a very unpleasant day and was not on top form at my work. That evening, I attended a performance. The first words uttered were the following, first in German, then in French, of the libretto of the Abduction from the Seraglio by Mozart.

VATER (*aufstehend*)

Ich wende mich an euch mit ergriffenem Herzen. Ich sehe uns an, und ich bin von Stolz erfüllt. Wir sind Söhne und Töchter der Aufklärung, des Lichts, Söhne und Töchter der wunderbarsten Philosophen, die die Erde hervorgebracht hat, wir sind Söhne und Töchter Europas! Wir wollen dem heute Abend Ehre machen, wenn wir unsere Helden begrüßen, die der Welt gezeigt haben, daß unsere Zivilisation sich nicht dazu hergeben wird, auch nur eines ihrer Kinder den Händen von Dunkelmännern zu überlassen en.

Je m'adresse à vous le cœur ému. Je nous regarde et la fierté m'envahit. Nous sommes fils et filles des Lumières, fils et filles des philosophes les plus prodigieux que la terre aura vus à sa surface, nous sommes fils et filles de l'Europe ! Cela, nous allons l'honorer ce soir en saluant nos héros qui ont prouvé au monde que notre civilisation ne saurait se résoudre à abandonner le moindre de ses enfants entre les mains des obscurantistes.

I am addressing you with an emotional heart. I look at us and pride overcomes me. We are the sons and daughters of light, sons and daughter of the most admired philosophers that have ever walked the Earth, we are sons and daughters of Europe. This we shall honour this evening by saluting our heroes who have proven to the world that civilisation will not find a resolution by abandoning any of its children in the hands of obscurantists.

The British people took the decision to leave the common union for the wrong reasons, notably their fear of immigration. It was perpetuated by the most disadvantaged, the most fearful and the least informed. It is a sign that, when we don't take care to inform the whole of society of developments,

we end up shattered. Brexit is a political game of chess, it cannot be neutral from a human, educational, scientific or economic perspective.

The diversity of Europe is what gives it its richness. Losing a country and its culture is losing its richness. The British Prime Minister is losing his place and is putting his country and Europe in danger. All this because of personal ambition at the highest level.

One day a young member of the electorate asked me how he could begin to understand politics and what books could he read to understand the actions of the people in power. I answered that it was really quite easy to understand political figures. One has to simply put oneself in their shoes and understand what makes them tick in order to move forward. There are only two motivations: the most common is to 'manage from the armchair'. The most noble, and unfortunately the least common, is to 'place the people's interest before personal gain'. In all countries, including ours, elected people rebel against the grey men in Brussels. A large number of national leaders are responsible. Here we also have anomalies. Our president, since taking office, has shown little interest in Europe. In the 2005 referendum he appointed a foreign minister to lead the opponents of the European Treaty. Being governor means being aware of the signs.

Our leaders, national and European, must stop administering and they must govern. To govern means having a long term vision. To govern well, is to place the public interest before the interest of the individual. Three in one year, in 2017 we will have the national elections. Presidential and legislative. Last year we saw the regional elections. The results stopped me in my tracks. It has to be said and repeated : 41% of voters voted for the National Front. 43% of the total of the communauté de commune in South Herault. 36% in our department and 28% on a national scale. In our democracy, each individual, with his own vote, is responsible for the path on which we find ourselves collectively.

Know that he who votes National Front, is voting for liars who are proposing the end of Europe. It's an indisputable fact : the first conscious thoughts of a European people dates back to the age of Enlightenment. This consciousness will never be extinguished. The National Front tell us part of the truth which entices 40% of our electorate. But do not forget that they are also telling us lies. You must believe that the leaders of this party are less professional than all other politicians put together. Like the leaders of the National Front, Boris Johnson, the blond Mayor of London, encouraged the people of Britain to leave the European Union. One week after Brexit he was asked to become Prime Minister to which he declined. He said nothing.

It is 227 years ago today, on the 14 July 1789, Necker said: Perfection is what signifies the difference between men.

Political action requires a minimum of moral scrupulousness that the leaders who are responsible for Brexit do not possess. The electorate see politics as a sclerosis, taking a short term approach, corrupt. But sometimes one must remember that exceptional men do exist, without sectarianism, without cruelty and without conspiracy. Michel Rocard was one of those men. This great statesman would never have compromised, putting society in danger in order to assure his career. He left us 12 days ago and I would ask all those people of Saint Chinian, to salute his integrity.

Long live men of honesty, long live Europe, long live France.