

**Grußwort des Ehrengeneralsekretärs  
der "Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates"**

**Dr. Bruno H A L L E R**

**im Rahmen des FESTAKTES zur Eröffnung des  
29. EUROPASEMINARS des Internationalen Kolpingwerkes  
am 25. Juni 2007  
im "Palais de l'Europe" in Strasbourg / Frankreich**

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**Dear Mr Vice-President of the Assembly, Eduard Lintner,  
Dear Mr Honorary President of the Assembly, Louis Jung,  
Dear Mrs Deputy Secretary General of the CoE, Maud de Boer  
Buccquichio,  
Dear Mr Regierunsrat Anton Salesny,  
Dear Participants of the 29<sup>th</sup> European Seminar,  
Dear Friends,**

**Europe Commissioner Anton Salesny kindly proposed to me to  
conclude this official opening of the 29<sup>th</sup> European Seminar. I do it  
with great pleasure on an occasion where so many friends are  
gathered and in a room where I organised myself so many  
meetings.**

**Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the International  
Kolping Society for the nice ceremony organised today, for  
honouring persons who supported the organisation and its  
European activities. I personally feel very privileged to be among  
them and I am sure that all of us who are honoured today feel  
privileged to be considered as friends of the Kolping society.**

**I thank Mr Salesny for the kind words he found for everybody and  
we were pleased to listen to them. But our great satisfaction is  
that our support was useful and appreciated and that it facilitated  
the valuable activities of your organisation.**

**Secondly, like others, I would like to pay tribute to the Kolping  
Society for its permanent engagement for human dignity, social  
justice, peace and international cooperation. Your organisation  
was always faithful to its Christian heritage but adopted its action  
to the new trends and challenges in modern society. It is making  
an excellent use of its consultative status with the Council of  
Europe which became participative recently in order to**

**demonstrate the importance attached to the contribution of the NGO's to its work by the oldest European institution. At my knowledge, it is the only NGO having this status which is issuing every year a declaration on "European integration and the development of the CoE", a paper which gives regularly support to the CoE and its main activities, in particular the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).**

**The Kolping organisation has also in my view the clearest position in the complicated and often conflictual debate on the role of the various institutions in the European construction. Your organisation is defending the complementarity approach between the CoE and the EU which is the essence of Prime Minister's Juncker report presented last year to the Heads of State and governments of the member countries of the CoE following the mandate he received from the Warsaw Summit of May 2005. This approach pleads for the best use of both methods available in Europe, for building a united Europe, the integration method and the international cooperation method. The first one is more ambitious and efficient. But we still need both in Europe as it was shown by the Council of Europe when he opened its doors in the early nineties for the membership of the Eastern and Central European countries. The Council of Europe was then the only Organisation which was able to welcome these countries paving them the way for a membership later on in the European Union.**

**The implementation of Mr Juncker's report would lead to an organised complementarity between the two institutions and would avoid unnecessary overlapping and duplications. In my view it would be logical and reasonable to declare the Council as the European reference for Human rights and to permit the European Union to accede to the European Convention of Human Rights. We appreciate your support in this matter.**

**Thirdly I would like to pay tribute to Anton Salesny, the kingpin of your European activities and your sesame in Strasbourg. He initiated this series of European seminars, he opened all doors in the Council of Europe, in the European Parliament, in the City of Strasbourg and many other places. He succeeded to federate the good will of so many European personalities. We just commemorated the hundred anniversary of the birthday of Pierre Pflimlin, the former President of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the European Parliament, whom he convinced very early about the high relevance of the Kolping Society. It is not by hazard that we have here today the Honorary President of the Assembly, Louis Jung, who always supported the Kolping Society like other former presidents and secretaries general in particular the Austrians in both functions with whom he had the best relations (Karl Cermetz**

**and Peter Schieder, Lujo Toncic-Soring, Franz Karasek and Walter Schwimmer).**

**It is largely because you have a man like Anton Salesny, respecting everybody, always courteous and charming, but at the same time loyal to the Christian values of his organisation and believing personally in them. I would add his outstanding diplomatic skills which come probably from his Austrian Cultural heritage, like the Wiener Luft, the Mozartkugeln and Sachertorte he brought always with him when he visited Strasbourg. I personally would like to thank you very sincerely for your constant support and friendship.**

**Let me now conclude my wishing you great success in your important activities. Europe still needs you, needs your commitment. Europe makes progress despite the present difficulties. Please remain confident and continue to bring your most valuable contribution to the European unification.**