

The democratisation of Central Eastern Europe

In February 1990, I was very quickly invited to address the Polish Sejm, where Solidarność was overwhelmingly represented. Solidarność, the broad movement that had changed Poland, was in total control.

In Czechoslovakia's case, I addressed the Senate. The Czechoslovakian process was much slower insofar as Czechoslovakia, which had been a pioneer in 1968, had suffered severe repression. I had the opportunity to express our interest in openness, union and support both in Prague and Bratislava.

And in Hungary, in Budapest, I also addressed the parliament, which is housed in a very interesting Gothic Revival building; but, moreover, I did so under the wing of a great Hungarian — after whom, moreover, a European Parliament building in Brussels has been named — József Antall, one of the European movement's most active members.

And the fact is that the message was not the only inspiring thing about these three visits. It was parliament's message I was passing on.