

Europe's Place in a Changing International Order

EVENT IN MEMORY OF ACHILLE BOROLI

Bocconi University | 4 March 2025

Welcome Address

Andrea Boroli Vice President, Fondazione Achille e Giulia Boroli

I would like to thank everyone in attendance and welcome everyone, especially the students. Thank you for being here and thank you to those who are online following this event in memory of my father. Throughout his life, Achille Boroli supported many causes, including Europe as an enlarged homeland, young people as bearers of hope and the future, and education and culture as formidable means to understanding and sharing principles and values, overcoming hostility and differences, and deciding and acting for the authentic common good.

Also on behalf of my siblings and the Achille and Giulia Boroli Foundation, I express my gratitude to Bocconi University for their hospitality that every year allows us to celebrate our father Achille – a courageous, far-sighted, innovative and always profoundly human entrepreneur.

Thanks to the President, Professor Andrea Sironi, and the Rector, Professor Francesco Billari; as well as the Managing Director, Riccardo Taranto; the University's Alumni & Fundraising Function and its extraordinary staff capable of organizing events like today's. Thanks also to CIVICA, Professor Francesco Saita, the outstanding European universities – Bocconi above all – that are part of the consortium, and its professors. And thanks to the young people who work with intelligent commitment to promote the European Union, that is increasingly indispensable for both individual and collective peace and progress.

A special thanks to the Chair in European Studies where Professor Gianmarco Ottaviano, Professor Carlo Altomonte, researchers and students support the European Union with perseverance and a lot of hard work.

Thanks above all to Arancha Gonzales, Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain.

Her exceptional experience allows her to understand and participate in complex contemporary scenarios and their possible developments with clarity, wisdom and forethought.

I would now like to talk about my father Achille. Much has been said about him as an entrepreneur: the great publisher of atlases, encyclopedias in installments and great works divided into volumes. As a man and as a father I can say that his life was marked by lifelong passions: freedom, goodwill and respect. And at the same time – and inseparable from all else – Europe.

Many of you will recognize these famous words from John Donne's *Meditation XVII*:

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee."

In more prosaic terms, it can be said that depriving people of their individuality is a form of evil no less serious than taking away their dignity.

This is why my father defined freedom as the desire to be and act fairly.

This is why he believed there can be no good politics without truth, integrity and wisdom.

For the same reason, he believed that political parties should be a transparent home, with the goal of individual and collective wellbeing in both their ideas and their actions.

As a true liberal, he had internalized John Stuart Mill's aphorism according to which one is happy only when one dedicates one's life to a cause worthy of being pursued, where freedom "to", freedom "from" and freedom "for" are increasingly accessible to all. And everyone can contribute to responsibly producing and consuming in defense of life and the environment that hosts us.

For Achille Boroli, this meant first of all putting in place a new kind of humanism in economics, starting with the implementation of academic studies.

To then reinvert the roles between economics and politics, restoring the primacy of politics.

And also to promote a radical change of pace in the relationship between capital and labor, that are allied and not opposed to each other.

Above all, to understand work as an end and not only as a factor of production, considering mutual respect and human capital as an essential condition.

Are these visionary ideas and projects? Of course they need space, energy and goodwill. According to my father, they can be achieved only in a Europe of women and men free from biases and more or less legitimate self-interest. People capable and educated to overcome petty objections linked to local interests and, ultimately, substantial ignorance or, worse, devastating ideologies already condemned by history.

Your Europe, dear young people. May you be able to fight to make it a reality.