

Address by Mrs. **Rosa Moro de Andrés**.

Director of the Instituto Cervantes in Sofia.

Your Excellency, Ambassador of Spain, Mr. Juan José Urtasun Erro

Rector of the University of Cyprus, Professor Cristofides

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Papapavlou

Ladies and gentlemen, friends:

It is a real privilege, and at the same time an honor, for me to attend this academic ceremony, that marks the opening of the Aula Cervantes in Nicosia, a space in which, from now on, many activities will be held, among others, the DELE exams for accreditation of the level of Spanish, one of the world's most beautiful languages, a language that is shared by more than half a billion people worldwide and whose community is joined by thousands of people every day and which will now include hundreds of citizens of this ancient, welcoming and emblematic city.

Firstly I would like, if I may, to express my gratitude and my appreciation to all those who have helped realize the objective which brings us here today and especially Ambassador Urtasun Erro, without whose efforts and personal involvement, the opening of this Aula would not have been possible.

In the words of His Majesty the King of Spain, Don Juan Carlos, the Instituto Cervantes has become the backbone of the cultural influence of Spain in the world. The centers and the Aulas that the Instituto Cervantes has opened around the world, are not only an essential reference point for the teaching of the language of Cervantes, Garcia Lorca or Jorge Luis Borges, but are also the axis of the articulation, expansion, dissemination and outreach of the expression, achievements and the greatness of the art, the science and the Spanish culture and of the Spanish language.

The Spanish language is not just words but also a reflection of our conception of world, in which our history is present. We know that the limits of our language

are the limits of our knowledge, and those are also the borders of those who come to us and to our language, which is becoming also their own. By offering Spanish, we are offering them Don Quijote, Borges' library, the novels by Garcia Marquez, but also the Cathedral of Burgos, the aqueduct of Segovia, the boulevards of Buenos Aires and a corner in Old Havana. We offer them our memories, our present and our future. Our life.

Every new speaker of our language, like those about to become one in Nicosia, receives the baton from the previous Spanish speakers, who used it to narrate their lives, their emotions and their creations. Because creation is eternal, every reader continues the dialogue proposed by the writers of our tradition. Cervantes speaks today with the voice of every reader. Spanish language, the Spanish culture is not only our heritage but also the world's heritage.

Language is the seed and is the fruit. In this precise moment, somewhere, there is someone who is making up a new word in this language which we use to name the world. And also in Chicago, Beijing, Tel Aviv, Budapest or Kuala Lumpur, the fruit of this seed is beginning to sprout inside of someone, opening the door not only to a language spoken by half a billion people, but also to the enjoyment and the delights of a great variety of cultures, with a brilliant past and a glorious future. Spanish is definitely an example of vitality and wealth. To paraphrase Gabriel Celaya, our language is a communication weapon, loaded with the future.

In less than one month, on March 21st, we celebrate the 20 years, since His Majesty the King of Spain endorsed the law, approved by the Parliament, which the Instituto Cervantes was created by. During the parliamentary debate that preceded its approval, it was clarified that the objective of the Institute and the reason for its creation was to promote and extend the Spanish language as the very own of the Hispanic community. Since then, our Institution has not only continued to grow, present now with 76 centers in all continents and in 42 nations, but has also made it possible that our language has climbed to second place among European languages in terms of international dissemination and not just as a vehicle of knowledge and culture, but also as an ever-present

language in the world of business, the internet, the new communications technologies and in the social networks. To give just one example, tens of thousands of Brazilian students are studying Spanish in their country every day, and every day an average of 27 cultural events are taking place at several centers of the Instituto Cervantes in the world. Learning Spanish has become at the beginning of this new century, something not only practical but also necessary. The masterpieces created by the poets, thinkers, writers and narrators of our language, which are already part of the cultural world heritage, are continued by the geniuses of the written language who move and delight the world these days, like the recent Nobel Prize in Literature, and who foretell a future for our language even more open to a progressive, universal and unstoppable expansion.

Ambassador, Rector, Dean:

Allow me to congratulate you once again for the opening of this Aula and, at the same time, congratulate all of us because today, with this academic ceremony we open an infinite window to the freedom of thought and the wonders of the Spanish culture and language and we do it, precisely, in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, our common ocean of encounters, stories, dialogues and understandings.

Thank you very much. Eftaristó.

Rosa Moro de Andrés

Director of the Instituto Cervantes in Sofia

February 2011.