

## FINAL PRESS RELEASE

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### **Debate on the events of 1989 on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall**

On 9 November in Palazzo Lascaris, seat of the Piedmont Regional Council, was held a roundtable entitled “**1989 - Year of the Political Earthquake in Europe**”, organized by **The World Political Forum** and the **Regional Council of Piedmont**. The moderator of the debate was **Andrei Grachev**, former spokesman for the Russian President **Mikhail Gorbachev**, Chairman of the **WPF Scientific Committee**.

*“In a world that seemed crystallized - said the President of the Regional Council, **Davide Gariglio**, opening the works - in the two political blocs of western Atlantic Pact and communist countries in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, a peaceful revolution led to a change of epochal dimensions that seemed impossible, opening a concrete hope of freedom for hundreds of millions of people. All this can make us understand that changes in the political and strategic framework are possible even when they seem most difficult. And that is why young people must look to the future with confidence and accept with great hope the challenges of the globalised world.”*

According to the Executive Director of The World Political Forum, **Rolando Picchioni** “*the fall of the wall was a promise for freedom, justice and prosperity. An important and unavoidable step that anyhow has not concretely fulfilled all legitimate expectations. The process of European integration seems to mark its time and the new Europe is not able to play the crucial role of balance and world progress that - at some point - seemed within reach. This should be a warning to the EU to re-launch its role and action within international politics.*”

**Enzo Bettiza**, journalist, writer, columnist for La Stampa said that “*Europe, during his own process of unification, is imposing a long bureaucratic antechamber to each new state that applies for access and membership, thus betraying the lesson of German reunification’s process which was very ‘inclusive’ towards its ‘Eastern brothers’, avoiding a sort of unnecessary ‘obstacle race’ toward the desired goal. The last two decades of substantial decline of the European ideal, grow out of this unlearnt lesson.*”

According to **John Lloyd**, columnist for the Financial Times, UK “*The West has not been up to the challenge launched by Mikhail Gorbachev, not accepting and promoting the idea of building a truly unified Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.*”

**Wolfgang Schluchter**, professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Heidelberg, Germany noted “*the fall of the wall was truly like an earthquake. As an earthquake it was anticipated and prepared by ‘telluric’ phenomena and, similarly, it opened the way to a long and complicated aftermath. As a German I would like to also point out that this date has an ambivalent meaning for my people. In the night between 9 and 10 November 1938, the Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glasses), the German Nazis unleashed their anti-Jewish barbarism. Something that that no one would have believed as possible, in what was considered a civilized country. Many, including several German intellectuals, on this basis, believed that after all we had deserved the division.*”

For **Henryk Szlajfer**, professor of political science, member of the Academy of Sciences of Poland “*a crucial point was Gorbachev’s decision not to act, to let events and history unroll its own course. For Poland, the fall of the wall will always be a turning point in its history because it allowed my country to return and join in the new Europe, which Poland had always continued to feel part of and from which it had been so long exiled.*”