

# LAVDATIO DOMINI

## NORBERT LAMMERT

### PRAESIDIS PARLAMENTI GERMANIAE

**T**he University of Bucharest has today the honor of receiving amongst the members of its academic community the Honourable Dr. **Norbert Lammert**, President of the German Bundestag. Dr. Lammert is an academic himself. His field is Political Science. As he had served in many public functions over the years, he has been fortunate enough to practice his convictions and theories. He thus added to the theoretical reflection the doubts, the guesswork and the discoveries of historical action in the actual world. Dr. Lammert is an example to many of us also in another respect: he has begun his career as a youth leader in the Christian Democratic Union party. As such, he is a model to those of us, younger of age, who care for the problems of the students in society and have decided to enter a public career.

Dr. Lammert is a Catholic, and I remind this not only because he will be more at home knowing that in our University there is a Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, but because it is significant for us to meet somebody who has faith and who makes no secret of it. The modern times have been too often plagued by the domination of the unique ideology, and many are tempted today to replace simply one exclusive way of thinking by another exclusive doctrine, leaving no room for the difference and for the freedom of individual conscience.

The social doctrine of the Catholic Church has something to say to our globalized world and hopefully it can prevent us from repeating some of the mistakes of the past. Dr. Lammert had a humanistic training, in a high school devoted to classical studies, and studied Political Science, Sociology, History and Social Economics in the Universities of Bochum and Oxford. He defended a PhD thesis in 1972, at the age twenty-four.

He is a member of the CDU since the age of eighteen. He was born in Bochum, studied in Bochum, taught in the University there and became a Council member of the City of Bochum. There he was Deputy Chairman of the CDU at twenty-nine, and later became a member of the National Executive Committee of the CDU for North Rhine and Westphalia. Since 1996 he is Chairman of the Landesgruppe North Rhine-Westphalia. In 1971 he married Gertrude Wilmes and they are the happy parents of four children.

Dr. Lammert became a member of the Bundestag at the age of thirty-two, in 1980. In the Parliament he served as Vice Chairman of the Committee on Rules, Verification, Immunity. Then he was Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Education and Science, between 1989-1994, and in the same function to the Ministries of Economic Affairs, and Transportation, in the following years. Then he was the federal government coordinator for aerospace policy. Between 1998-2002 he was the cultural and media spokesman of the CDU/CSU group in Bundestag. Between 2002 and 2005 he was Vice President of the German Bundestag.

Dr. Lammert became the President of the Bundestag in October 2005, elected with a record of popularity, 93% of the valid votes.

He contributes also actively to the life of what we see as the civil society. His main field of interest, from this point of view, is culture. Since 2001 he sat as Vice Chairman in the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. He serves as volunteer

as a member of the supervisory board of Ruhr GmbH and of the Ruhr Festival in Recklinghausen, and a member of the programmes committee of RTL Television in Cologne. He is also as volunteer a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Bochum, member of the Board of Trustees of the Science Foundation Ernst Reuter of the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, of the Institute for Cultural Policy, of the Federal Cultural Foundation, of the German Language Foundation, and of the Foundation for Culture and Science of the Sparkasse Bochum. He is also a member of the Bureau of the European Movement Germany. We should mention last but not least that there is a Norbert Lammert Stiftung in Sankt Augustin.

Dr. Norbert Lammert is one of the political persons for whom culture is more than a word. He has actively contributed to the reflective work preceding the reform of the German higher education. His activity is pervaded with a deep sense of culture, of tradition, of European identity based on enduring beliefs and values. No need to say Christian values must be taken into consideration in the building of an European integrated society. Or, as Dr. Lammert stated, *„When we talk about Europe, in essence, we talk about an idea, and the core of the core of this idea is culture”*.

Our distinguished friend has often stressed that European culture and society is ever to be rebuilt and redefined in the concert of its nations. Europe is not primarily a market, nor a bureaucracy. It is indeed an idea. It is not a fixed idea, an *idée fixe*, as the French say. It is the very life of the consciousness of its citizens. In his welcoming address to the Berlin Conference „A Soul for Europe”, in November last year, Dr. Lammert said that cultural policy is in his eyes the very basis of European cooperation.

We know that today Europe has 27 members, and that each of these countries, younger or older, contributes inescapably to the European identity. We firmly believe that Romania has something to bring to European culture,

that it has done so in the past, and will do in the future. And the University of Bucharest sees it as its mission to contribute most directly to the development of Romanian culture. It seems now that we have to enlarge our mission, if it is not to presume too much, and to pursue a contribution to the European culture. Not only through the study of the European languages, of which we teach almost all among the 37 that are studied in our Faculties, and among which the study of German culture and literature is prominent, but also through our own cultural and scientific creation. The young generation of students is here to make this, out of a promise, a certainty.

We are honoured that on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Union, which was created in 1957 with Germany among its founding members, the President of the German Bundestag, dr. Norbert Lammert, can be welcomed here as an honorary member, but also a full member of our academic community.