

## Success and the City in the Twenty-First Century \*

### 1. Things Change

After the upheaval in Europe in recent weeks, nobody needs reminding that things continue to change with bewildering speed. Technology and its handmaiden globalisation link us closer together as a species while alienating us as individuals. The population of planet earth grows, while Europe's share of it shrinks and its relative economic weight declines. How are the values of Europe to be defended in the twenty-first century? We will need minds resolutely open to change and a ruthless concentration on our strengths and their relevance in the context of the future. The European method that has brought peace and stability to much of Europe truly is from Venus when compared with other forms of establishing global reach. Europe with its environmental concerns, its high standards and its respect for law encapsulated in international treaties holds out the best prospect for planetary survival. Those who believe in such values have a duty to ensure the means, norms and platforms of humanity should be dominated by such ideas.

### 2. Who are the Dutch?

All too often other Europeans gloss over the complexity of the Dutch inheritance and the Dutch approach. However even after the shocks of recent months we can say with certainty that the Dutch remain respectful of law, realistic in behaviour and global in their perspectives. They have a strong parliamentary tradition and a history of co-operation despite difference that dates back to the construction of the polders. The Dutch are a people who understand that great problems need great solutions from which great benefits can flow.

### 3. Stork and Talk

The looming environmental crisis of our generation will dominate the twenty-first century. It rather than terrorism, security fears or civilisational clash is the real challenge. The institutions of the "global political space" are inadequate for the challenge. Reform of the United Nations is painfully slow. Moving the institutions of global governance is politically impossible. We argue therefore for a new 'environmental campus'. A negotiating space to be built in The Hague as the spearhead of a new approach to free flowing, democratically directed, continuous negotiation on environmental issues. This is the period when Multi-lateral Environmental Agencies will be both maturing and converging. We want The Hague to have influenced the shape of the MEA network in 2025, while infusing their discussions with the powerful values of Dutch and European society.

Tom Spencer, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2005

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