SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE FIRST CONVENTION OF THE
PROPERTY AND FREEDOM SOCIETY, BODRUM, TURKEY, MAY 2006

[Notes compiled by **Robert Grözinger**]

For **Paul Belien**, Belgium is not only the host country for the EU's unofficial capital Brussels, it is also the model country for the New Europe. From the time of its founding in 1830, Belgium, which contains three nationalities (Flemish, Walloons and Germans), has been a political attempt instead of a political reality. Belgian governments have always had to search for unifying elements. Whereas equally multinational Switzerland grew organically, Belgium was constructed and can thus be called „the laboratory of Europe". The Belgian establishment could uphold a semblance of national unity only with help of the redistributional welfare mechanism. Any economic policy was transferred to the institution of „social partnership" between workers and entrepreneurs.

In the 1930s a movement arose that saw the Belgian multinational corporatist welfare state as a model for all Europe. „Charlemagne was a Belgian", it was said, and therefore the Belgian way was to be expanded to Europe. When Hitler invaded Belgium and France in May 1940, the leader of the Belgian socialists, Henri De Man, saw this as a unique opportunity to establish a united Europe. He asked his followers not to oppose the German victory because "far from being a disaster, it is a deliverance. The Socialist Order will thereby be established, as the common good, in the name of a national solidarity that will soon be continental, if not world-wide.".

After the Second World War, characteristic features of Belgium have indeed become European:

1. Corruption has had to replace national adherence. i.e., adherence has to be bought. Growing unemployment, subsidies, social security.

2. Absence of the Rule of Law.

In this way, Belgium foreshadows Europe.

But can constructivist society be morally superior? Not according to Hayek: Feasibility is limited.

(More on what Paul Belien said in Bodrum can be found here.)