Majestades, Premiados, Autoridades, Señoras y Señores

I am happy that thanks to the decision of the Princess of Asturias Foundation, I am receiving tonight the Award for Concord European Union. And at the same time I am very proud that the same award - for Literature - is being received today also by a Pole, a great poet, Adam Zagajewski.

We met forty years ago, even if he doesn’t know about it. I was still a student when I read his brilliant poem about censorship, in the time of the Communist dictatorship in Poland. Together with my friends, we printed this poem in our illegal printing house in several hundred copies. With time, Zagajewski became for my generation a symbol of the freedom of speech, of the independence of thought, and of our longing for Europe - not in the geographical sense, but in political, intellectual and axiological ones.

We both participated in the mass “Solidarity” movement, together with millions of our compatriots. We were beaten, thrown to jail, forced to go on exile. But we never gave up on a few simple principles: that violence doesn’t solve anything, that dialogue is always better than conflict, that law should be respected by all the actors of the public life, and that harmony is better than chaos.

For all those years we both dreamt about a united Europe, where concord and truth prevail. And today we are in fact receiving the award of Concord, at the same time bearing in mind that there is no genuine concord without the truth.
In many parts of our world, people feel that they are surrounded by lies, manipulation and fake news.
But I deeply believe that truth is invincible. And that this ceremony is also an expression of this invincibility.
In fact one of the most beautiful poems by Adam Zagajewski talks about the truth. Together with my friends we have translated a fragment into Spanish:

El territorio de la verdad es claramente reducido,
Estrecho como un sendero al borde de un precipicio
Eres capaz de no salirte de él?
Acaso ya lo has abandonado.