



Commemorative speech of the LAZARUS UNION president  
on the occasion of the “Lazarus Day 2015“ during the ceremonial act in  
the Vienna International Centre (VIC) of the United Nations,  
July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Excellencies!

Honoured guests!

Dear officers and comrades!

In 2006, when the LAZARUS UNION was founded under the name “Lazarus Hilfswerk Niederösterreich“, later „Lazarus Hilfswerk Ostarrichi“, not even in my dreams did I think that this organisation, now named LAZARUS UNION, would have more than 18,000 registered members and again that number as “affiliated members“ world-wide in 2015.

Not even in my dreams I would have thought that the LAZARUS UNION would be represented on all continents in more than 80 countries, with the organisation „Swords of Freedom“ even in more than 120 countries.

Not even in my dreams I would have thought that the LAZARUS UNION would one day become an organisation accredited with the United Nations and that I would have the honour to speak to you here.

For a year now all these dreams have become reality and the LAZARUS UNION indeed managed all that. Effective from May 1st, 2014, the LAZARUS UNION has been awarded "SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS" with the United Nations ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council).

I want to thank all here who participated in this success.

Dear audience, you can compare the LAZARUS UNION as such to a “group holding organisation“ as the LAZARUS UNION members are the various local LAZARUS UNION organisations and the various groups and unions affiliated with the union. Every one of these groups and local organisations possesses ONE vote at the general assembly. To this the members of the chair and the board of management, all nominated by name, are added so that the fate of the LAZARUS UNION is directed and guided by approximately 120 members entitled to vote. So every continent and every country in a democratic way are integrated into the decision-making.

In case of an emergency the LAZARUS UNION and its members cooperate with other national and international units wearing uniform. Without the corresponding hierarchy and command

structure every mission would be chaotic, most unprofessional, and therefore dangerous. For those reasons the LAZARUS UNION has decided to implement the usual international principles regarding the structure of such units and the corresponding identifications of rank and command structures by wearing uniforms representing those structures with signs of rank and function. This allows also other organisations to recognise the LAZARUS UNION members and their function.

In this place I want to especially mention that all of us who work for the union on a honorary basis and come from all age groups and jobs are open for all humans regardless of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, and social standing.

We meet all people with respect.

We accept them as they are.

Dear audience, we put the quality of human relations above all. We provide room for development of self-esteem and human skill.

We spend no money for representative offices, cars, furniture, or "trips by officials." All members pay for their personal expenses themselves. Be it telephone bills for duty calls from private mobile phones, necessary personal gear, or just the underground ticket to be with you today.

The pursuit of our mission statement is the most important goal for every member, not a personal benefit or even the money!

Because of this, absolute voluntariness is emphasised. NOBODY must be forced into doing something. Only personal honour may compel someone to carry on with a duty taken over until either a successor is found or the member is released from the duty again.

ALL officials, unions, and groups being members or associated with the LAZARUS UNION must follow this principle or leave the LAZARUS UNION. On this issue there is absolutely no tolerance from my side!

The LAZARUS UNION is proud that as a result of these strict guidelines less than 2% of the official budget are labeled "administrative cost." Most of those are for paper and ink for printing of various documents.

Today I have the pleasure and the honour to celebrate with you here the world-wide "Lazarus Day". The name "Lazarus" is a synonym for mercy, charity, and humanity. Also the names "Lazarett" (which is German for a military hospital) and "Lazarite" date back to St. Lazarus and were mentioned first in the context of a leper hospital outside Jerusalem in 344 AD.

Having been awarded the "special consultative status" has a great importance for us as LAZARUS UNION and is also considered a special honour. An honour we want to prove worthy of. So we have donated a special award for ALL people who want to assist us in supporting the spirit of the United Nations.

According to this dedication we want today to hand over the profit from this action which will be continued in the future. We hope that next year we can provide an even larger amount. It is clear that a donation, as high as it may be, will always be too small and so this can be but the proverbial drop in the ocean. Yet it came from the heart and is a sign of solidarity of the LAZARUS UNION with the refugees all over the world.

Everybody can do something. Let us TOGETHER provide new perspectives.

I thank you for your attention and may now hand over a donation for the UNHCR from the LAZARUS UNION to the UNHCR high commissioner in Austria, Dr. Christoph Pinter. At the same time in deep respect the LAZARUS UNION awards the UNHCR as an organisation the "Grand Cross of the UN-NGO Remembrance Cross of the LAZARUS UNION" and I ask to accept this award.

Thank you for your attention!

Wolfgang Steinhardt  
President  
LAZARUS UNION

Vienna, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015