

The **main topics addressed by Ambassador Valensise in his keynote speech** were the following.

- 1) The **challenges connected with maintaining and strengthening the internal cohesion of the European Union** at a time when sovereignist political forces are asserting themselves in several countries, intolerant of calls for European unity: here the current situations that immediately come to mind are for example those connected with the approach that Viktor Orbán has given to the Hungarian Presidency or with the difficulties encountered (and not yet completely overcome) by President Von der Leyen in composing the delicate puzzle of the new European Commission.
- 2) The **increasingly worrying situation of the conflicts that have developed near the eastern borders of the European Union**, to the north between Russia and Ukraine (in direct contact with border areas in the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania), to the south between Israel and its neighbours, also here a short distance from the eastern borders of Greece and Cyprus, not to mention the explosive situation created by the conflict with the Houthis which, although further away from the borders of the EU, is nevertheless causing serious difficulties with respect to one of the most important maritime communication routes for commercial traffic between the EU and the countries bordering the Pacific.
- 3) Obviously, since our one will be a meeting between Rotarians from France, Germany and Italy and Ambassador Valensise is now co-President of the Italian-German Center for the European Dialogue of Villa Vigoni, in his speech will make some reference to **the role that the three largest EU Countries have had and have (or have not yet had and do not still have, but could have in the future) in making more effective the management of these contemporary critical issues** that are presenting themselves internally and externally nowadays.
- 4) Moreover, the (very general) title that was given to the afternoon session of Saturday 19 October is: "The challenges to maintaining internal cohesion and peace outside the borders of the European Union: **what role for CORE?**". And this final question was introduced precisely to recall **the importance of Italian-French-German cooperation for the future of the EU** and to invite the delegates of the Rotary Districts of Rhone Alpes, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Lombardy) among whom there are many important stakeholders and also decision makers of the three countries) **to reflect together on the very positive role that Rotary networks can have in facilitating the sharing of a line as common as possible between France, Germany and Italy** (which evidently is not the case today) as they had, immediately after the war, to help not only the reconciliation, but also the construction of a privileged axis between France and Germany.