

# ***Our Ode to Joy Our Ode to Europe***

## **Our Letter to Ludwig van Beethoven, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of his birth**

Manuscript of Beethoven calling us to "Change the Tone" in his 9th Symphony  
Sinfonie Nr. 9 d-Moll op. 125, 1822 (4. Satz, 281-41 et 42)  
Credits: [Staatsbibliothek Berlin](#)

***Dear Ludwig,***

In the name of Europa Nostra, the European Voice of Civil Society committed to Cultural Heritage, we would like to express our most sincere congratulations on the occasion of your 250th birthday.

Speaking from such a distance in time, you are dearly remembered throughout Europe and the world as the artist who personifies, through his magnificent music, the ideals of justice and humanity which remain the cardinal values for the wellbeing of our societies. The call for joy and fraternity which you so brilliantly integrated in your Ninth Symphony, providing a new frame and dimension to the words of the great poet Friedrich von Schiller, represent, more than ever, an inspiration and encouragement for all those who "want to change the tone". No other text, no other work of music could better define the great aspirations of humanity than this call for unity and solidarity.

The world, as you can imagine, has changed a great deal since your time. Today, we are faced with a number of challenges that you probably would have never anticipated. Someone like you, who was so heavily affected by the dramatic consequences of the wars that were fought in your time, would be interested to learn that a group of European countries initiated in 1950 a vital process to prevent future wars on the European continent and to manage collectively their competences in a number of key areas. This visionary project, known as the European Union, chose a slogan directly inspired by the values that you so prominently translated into your work, "United in Diversity". Above all, it adopted your own "Ode to Joy" as the official hymn of this unique endeavour. In this respect, your "Ode to Joy" has also become our "Ode to Europe", as shown in the [video tribute](#) below, which honours your memory and contribution to Europe's rich cultural heritage!

***Click on the image to play the video***

Our video contribution to the [Global Ode to Joy](#) project  
Edited by [Felix Q Media](#)

The world of Cultural Heritage plays, obviously, a prominent role in the development of this common project. Firstly, because culture is one of the main elements that continues to link Europeans together – and you have duly contributed, with your divine music, to this global richness. And secondly, because culture is directly connected to the founding values of our common project. This probably explains why your music continues to inspire generations of European citizens, and why it is so closely connected to our aspirations of peace, freedom and democracy.

We remain convinced that the profound emotion, feelings and messages that you expressed throughout your incomparable musical career remain as strong and lively as when you created them. The world of culture, creative arts and cultural heritage is composed of so many colourful and meaningful voices, which together blend into a harmonious chorus, just as the choirs of Fidelio and the Ninth Symphony are composed of the concordant voices of many singers. Together, we contribute to spread throughout the continent and beyond, the values that we owe you so dearly.

We would like to thank you, again and again, for your unique creation and inspiration, and promise you to continue to honour, with all our commitment and energy, your immortal legacy!

### ***Your EUROPA NOSTRA Family***

#### **EUROPA NOSTRA**

The Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe | La Voix du patrimoine culturel en Europe

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