

"Building bridges - pooling public and private creativity to meet global challenges"
 Conference with the participation of Visit of Shimon Peres, President of Israel, and José Manuel Barroso

Type: [Complete press conference](#) Référence: [I076485](#) Durée: 01:25:14 Lieu: [Brussels - EC/Berlaymont](#)

On 7 March 2013, José Manuel Barroso, President of the EC, received the visit of Shimon Peres, President of Israel, in Brussels. On this occasion, they held a press conference on "Building bridges – pooling public and private creativity to meet challenges" and answered journalists' questions.



HEURE	DESCRIPTION	DUREE
00:00:00	Arrival of José Manuel Barroso, President of the EC, and Shimon Peres, President of Israel, to the press conference titled "Building bridges - pooling public and private creativity to meet global challenges", in Brussels (2 shots)	00:00:22
00:00:22	Cutaway of the audience applauding	00:00:02
00:00:25	Soundbite by the moderator (in ENGLISH) giving some introductory words	00:03:29
00:03:54	Soundbite by José Manuel Barroso (in ENGLISH): Thank you very much for your kind words of introduction. Mr President, Ladies and gentlemen, It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome to Brussels President Shimon Peres. I am glad he has accepted the invitation I addressed him to visit Brussels when we both met last July in Jerusalem. During the talks we held back then, we immediately agreed that besides the	00:16:42

that because the traditional bilateral meeting which we had this morning, we should also have a public conversation on wider issues, on the challenges that the world faces today and the best ways to address them. One of the biggest problems political leaders have today is the lack of time to communicate policies, decisions and their vision of the world, which in the end is what guides our everyday choices. And some of the biggest problems with which our societies are confronted are I believe the fragmentation of knowledge, the lack of memory and the lack of time to think. It is therefore a privilege to reflect on these matters together with a man of such merit, a Nobel Peace prize laureate who is proof of the strength of personality in politics, of the power of ideas. Someone who has shown that finding and creating the middle ground is the hard but honourable task of political leaders. In today's world, we need the power of ideas more than ever. We need new thinking, a new narrative to tackle the new challenges facing us all. President Peres will certainly forgive me if I share with you that back in July he told me candidly 'he remembered to have met one of my

to have met one of my predecessors... his name was Jean Monnet'. And it is inspired by Jean Monnet that I would like to speak to you today about the undisputable logic of interdependence, and how we can manage this interdependence, namely through education, science and technology, to build bridges and secure peace. Ladies and gentlemen, Europe was born from an idea. The very idea of European unification was there long before the political mind-set and reality were. When Victor Hugo, the great French poet and novelist, chaired the International Peace Congress of Paris in 1849, he already spoke of European unity as both a prediction and an aspiration. 'A day will come,' he said, 'when war will seem as absurd and impossible between Paris and London, ... between Vienna and Turin, as it would be impossible and absurd today between Rouen and Amiens, between Boston and Philadelphia. A day will come when you France, ... you Italy, you England, you Germany, you all, nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, will be merged closely within a superior unit and you will form the European brotherhood A day will

come when the only fields of battle will be markets opening up to trade and minds opening up to ideas.' He was right - but he was also much ahead of his time. Sad to say, it took another century for minds to open up; for the nation-states of the continent to agree slowly but surely to create one European community, the European Union. This only came about after the blackest page in the history of mankind, after a century of absurd and impossible wars; of crimes against the brotherhood of humanity; of which the Shoa was the most horrendous. European integration only followed once the old nations of Europe started to realise that the degree of interdependence had surpassed and eroded their national sovereignty and that nation-states needed mechanisms and structures that made cooperation inevitable and war impossible. The man who first came up with the idea to pool Europe's industrial resources, thereby making the linkage of states a political reality, was precisely Jean Monnet. At a time when many politicians – the kind of great statesmen for whom countries erected statues – were still celebrated as fathers of independence. Monnet

of interdependence, member
became what one of his
biographers called 'the
first statesman of
interdependence'. That is
the main idea behind
European unification.
And it is probably the
greatest contribution that
post-war Europe has
given to the world. A
shared future is built by
international cooperation,
regional integration and
common structures
where differences can be
overcome. This logic is
as relevant today as it
was 60 years ago;
relevant for Europe, now
27 member states, very
soon 28, instead of the
original 6; and relevant
for the world, so long
dominated by 2 blocs
succeeded by 1
hyperpower, and now so
much changed that even
the idea of a 'G20-world'
doesn't adequately
reflect its
multipolarity. That, for me,
is the main lesson to
draw from the crisis since
2008. Our economic
interdependence was
never as obvious as it
was in the middle of the
financial crisis. In a world
of global supply chains,
global financial streams,
global companies, global
competition for raw
materials and so on...
there is no country, large
or small, that can ignore
the international context
in which it operates. And
this economic
interconnectedness is
just one example of the
issues we must confront

together: climate change is by its very nature blind to political borders; terrorism cuts across national frontiers as never before; underdevelopment is a threat to developed economies; and internal instability in one country can unbalance neighbouring countries as well. Limited environmental resources, as President Peres well knows, may pose a threat to peace and security in the whole region. If we try to tackle collective problems individually, we end up failing - or indeed, even making them worse. But if we work together, delivering concrete results for everyday problems, we make political institutions and minds rise above local, regional or national limitations. That is why we, as European Commission, are supporting exchanges in the field of science and technology, of trade and investment across our Southern Neighbourhood and the Middle East region. I hope that one day shared water, food and industrial goods will do for the Middle East what coal and steel have done for Western Europe many years ago: promoting cooperation, preventing conflicts, turning the logic of interdependence into a force for good. I hope to

...for good. I hope to see one day Israel and Palestine living side by side in secure and recognised borders, sharing Jerusalem as their capital. I hope that one day walls and checkpoints will be replaced by bridges. I hope that one day parents will be able to send their children to school in the morning with the certainty that they will embrace them again in the evening. This is possible with strong political leadership and by working from the bottom up, because we need to gain our public opinions and popular support for this endeavour. Ladies and Gentlemen, The world has become more globalised than ever before. We need to welcome such evolutions and make the most of them. The narrow-mindedness and the Westfallian vision of sovereignty that some still have in official chancelleries is being challenged by business leaders, scientists, researchers, artists and creator, intellectuals, but also by common citizens, especially young people. There is today already a global community that moves beyond the official and political interactions between States. Technology makes it easier now for young people to follow trends and friends

around the world, and for citizens of any country or any regime to voice their concerns and claim their rights. Collaborative science and international cooperation is also fundamental to address tomorrow's challenges. This is a deep belief that I share with President Peres (and I remember the very good exchanges we had in the past about this), the role of science in shaping a better world. That is why the European Union has developed international scientific cooperation (INCO) as one of its key priorities in its research framework programmes. And international cooperation in research and innovation will remain a cross-cutting priority of our new programme Horizon 2020. Some of the problems we are facing in the world stem precisely from the resistance of a few to modernisation and science, opposition to industrial revolution in the past and to scientific progress in the present, opposition to other revolutions like democratic revolution. So we must find ways to adapt our political institutions and policies - and most of all our mindset - to this new reality, for it will never work the other way around. We are all in this together – and the people we represent realise this

...we represent... and
very well. We need to join
forces, political leaders,
but go beyond political
leaders - businessmen,
researchers, artists,
youth and work together
to promote common
public goods at world
level, with peace
certainly being the first of
these common public
goods. 19th century
nation-states are
powerless against 21st
century challenges. 20th
century thinking will not
save us from 21st
century problems. Ladies
and gentlemen, While
Europe has brought
about peace between
nations we need to
remain vigilant as ever to
our inner peace. The
current situation in
Europe is fertile ground
for populism and
nationalism. But the
strength of Europe is not
only based on peace
among its members, but
also on making the
diversity of our societies
an asset for
all. Anti-Semitism or
xenophobia have no
place in European
society. We are a Union
that treasures diversity
and protects the rights of
the individual to lead the
life they wish to lead – as
long it is in line with our
European values of
democracy, freedom and
human rights. As
President of the
European Commission,
let me reassure you that,
together with the other
European institutions and

European institutions and the governments of the member states, we will stand up against all forms of Anti-Semitism, Racism and Xenophobia. That too is part of the mindset needed to overcome the divisions of the past and tackle the issues of the future. Ladies and Gentleman, The process towards European unification was never meant to be an end in itself, or even the final stage of the integration process. As Jean Monnet wrote in his Memoirs, a sentence that I also recalled when on behalf of the European Union I was speaking at the ceremony of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize, Jean Monnet said: 'The Community itself is just another step towards the forms of organisation of tomorrow's world.' European political integration was always considered to be a stepping stone towards more forceful multilateral cooperation, the start of multipolar global governance: one region in the world that was joined together more closely, in order to work more effectively with other countries and regions in the world. It was an exercise in building bridges, starting from our part of the world and hoping to meet others halfway. And I believe this is still the

generate and to gain the meaning of European integration. In that sense the EU has played and is playing the role of a kind of laboratory of globalisation, and we can share this experience with others – not to give lessons, but to share experiences and propose partnerships that can build a conscious and managed interdependence. One example is how our trade policy and the web of trade agreements we are developing around the world can bring not only economic and social development, but also play a role in securing world peace. This is not something new - already 300 years ago Montesquieu wrote his famous sentence that 'Peace is the natural effect of trade'. But today, in this globalisation time more than ever, trade is part of the solution to foster peace in the world. By linking Europe's economy with our partners' economies we are promoting integration, fostering human contacts, creating a common set of rules and building interdependencies. For instance, there can be no peace across the Southern Mediterranean as long as prosperity seems beyond reach. And neither peace nor prosperity can be achieved as long as countries look inwards

Regional cooperation can bring people, businesses, researchers and intellectuals closer together. Regional trade and investment across the Mediterranean can release the creative and constructive forces that were so long repressed by the old regimes. This is why I would like to call on business leaders. I believe business leaders have for this a better understanding than many politicians. I believe that that ideal of the global community can, to a large extent, be driven by the civil society. If we are waiting only for political leaders, we may be waiting for too long. It is extremely important that also in the Mediterranean region and in other parts of the world we are able to understand what is going on in terms of the shaping of the global community. And Europe, which is the biggest trading partner for Mediterranean countries, including Israel, can play a key role in bringing this about. Interdependence should not be a side effect of globalisation but a conscious policy choice of today's leaders. It is the way to seal our future, to seal a cooperation that can create unbreakable bonds, to tie our destinies together. It is the way to make cooperation inevitable and war impossible.

and war impossible.
Finally, it is the way to consolidate the idea of a 'global citizenship', a single mankind. And let me tell you how much we owe to the classic secular Jewish thinkers for this, from Isaiah Berlin to George Steiner, how many great secular Jewish thinkers brought to this idea of a global citizenship of mankind and how important this idea was also as a source of European integration as well. It is present also in the DNA of European integration. President Peres, Dear friends and guests, When Victor Hugo made his appeal for European unity, people were not yet ready to accept it and put it in practice. They could imagine peace between nation-states, but anything that transcended national boundaries was beyond people's imagination. And yet, Victor Hugo was right. And he also knew that 'an invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come'. Eventually, the time for the European idea came through. Similarly, today, the undeniable logic of interdependence is only starting to really reach people's minds. I believe we can do something for that to happen. I believe that we can, namely through education, science technology to

	<p>science, technology, to create more conditions for this idea of interdependence and peace to flourish. We need to convince our citizens – with the strength and conviction that matches President Peres' engagement throughout his life – that we must not hesitate to adapt our mindsets, our behaviour and our political attitudes to the unquestionable power of an idea whose time has come. I thank you for your attention.</p>	
00:20:36	Cutaway of the audience applauding	00:00:05
00:20:41	Soundbite by the moderator (in ENGLISH) thanking José Manuel Barroso for his speech and inviting Shimon Peres to take the floor	00:01:47
00:22:27	Soundbite by Shimon Peres (in ENGLISH) on the future of his region and the role EU could play	00:46:08
01:08:36	Soundbite by the moderator (in ENGLISH) thanking Shimon Peres and opening the questions/answers session	00:00:53
01:09:29	Questions/answers session with José Manuel Barroso and Shimon Peres	00:15:46
01:25:14	end	00:00:00

