

**"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 accented the invitation I	00:16:42

accepted the invitation . . . 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 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

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 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

...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

was probably seen  
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 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

more to the 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

...that our and our 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  
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

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 -



mentations 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 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

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 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

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 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

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

...to create a cooperation that can create unbreakable bonds, to tie our destinies together. It is the way to make cooperation inevitable 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

	<p>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 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

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