

On the occasion of Rosh Hashanah 2012 the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso , sent a message to the Jewish Community

Dear friends of the Jewish community,

The time has come to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the great festival that marks the New Year in the Jewish faith.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to share with you the happiness and joy all Jewish people feel at this time, knowing well the significance this period of year has for all of you. In any culture or in any religion, New Year is no ordinary day : it is a moment when we move from one existence to another – a day that concentrates all the thoughts, all the memories, all the fears, all the hopes and all the ambitions of Mankind.

Due to the specific history of the Jewish people and community, so tainted with tragedy, the spiritual and symbolic dimension of New Year is of particularly great importance to all of you : Rosh Hashanah is not only a festival, but also - most importantly – a time of remembrance and repentance.

I feel enormous respect for these pillars of your faith and belief and consider that Europe should be built on many of these principles : the richness of history, the weight of the past, the power of remembrance, the promise of a new start and of a better future.

At a very difficult time, both economically and socially, when some people, even within Europe, are tempted to reconnect with old demons – populism, racism, anti-Semitism - , we need more than ever to uphold, to protect and to promote together our common ideals of peace, tolerance, reconciliation and respect for human dignity. This is the overwhelming purpose of the European Union and represents the key tenets of my political and personal philosophy.

Confident in the support of European Jewish communities to the European ideal and in their commitment to the struggle against all kinds of discrimination, I wish you all Shana Tova!