

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, Opening speech, Ryder Cup 2010

Celtic Manor, 30 September

Ladies and Gentlemen, Captains,

It's been two long years since Valhalla.

But finally we are here at Celtic Manor for the greatest team golf event in the world.

Here sportsmanship is as important as sport.

Here the fans on the fairway are the real mark of success.

It's amazing to see such passionate and knowledgeable crowds here at Celtic Manor.

Thank you for your warm Welsh welcome.

And from here the passion for golf spills over to the rest of Wales. In the past month thousands of local people have taken up golf and some 200 new holes have been created.

It is a great time for sport in Europe. An all-European football World Cup final. Now the Ryder Cup. And in two years, the Olympic Games.

As President of the European Commission, the Ryder Cup has a special significance for me.

It is the one sporting event where Europe is represented by a single team, drawn this year from throughout the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Spain and Germany.

Once the first ball is hit tomorrow, we will forget the borders of culture, language and nationality.

The European flag features twelve stars. So too does Colin Montgomerie's team.

As you'd expect, I very much hope to see him holding the golden chalice on Sunday night.

I wish both teams and their captains the very best of luck.