

**José Manuel Durão Barroso**

President of the European Commission

**Speech by President Barroso: "Ever more united we must stand"**

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Doctor Honoris Causa

**Wrocław, 1st December 2011**

Dear Rector, Professor Więckowski,

Dear Deputy Minister,

Dear Mayor Dutkiewicz,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear students,

Dear friends,

Let me start by thanking Rector Więckowski and the Wrocław University of technology. I am deeply grateful to receive this honorary doctorate from such a great University.

I know that your tradition goes back to the prestigious Königliche Technische Hochschule Breslau and the Politechnika Lwowska. And your recent achievements have owed you to be selected twice the best technological university in Poland.

You also actively take part in European programmes such as Erasmus, Erasmus mundus, Leonardo da Vinci and the programme Marie Skłodowska-Curie.

So my warm congratulations for your brilliant past, your great achievements and your most promising future.

You are a perfect illustration of what modern universities' main qualities should be: excellence, mobility, cross-border dissemination of ideas and best practices; and openness to the worlds of research and innovation as well as to the worlds of industry and high tech.

It is also a real pleasure to be back once more in this great country, Poland.

Your country has been successfully holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union since July.

And that success does not come as a surprise.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk has played a major role in integrating Poland into the European Union and placing his country at the heart of Europe since its accession in 2004. And I want to thank him, his government and the Polish people for their leadership and their strong European commitment.

I am sure many of you will remember his message when he presented the programme of the Polish Presidency of the EU to the European Parliament in July. He then said: "we need more Europe and more integration". I cannot agree more and this is a message I am also conveying to all European citizens.

And it is in this spirit that today I would like to share with you some reflections on the way ahead: the way towards more Europe, a Europe of stability and responsibility, a Europe of growth and solidarity. In a nutshell a more united, a stronger Europe.

And there could be no better place than Poland and this very city to do it.

Wrocław is a meeting place for many cultures, religions, ethnicities and languages. At the same time is a very dynamic city; a strong economic, industrial, academic, scientific and cultural city, newly selected European Capital of Culture (for 2016).

It is a perfect example of a vibrant and confident city open to the future and ready to embrace changes. It is the home of the Wrocław Research Centre EIT Plus and the future home of the Humanitarium, a science and education centre. It is also the seat of the first regional representation opened by the Commission in the EU 12, which was inaugurated last July.

And your economic performance and employment rate tell us a remarkable story.

By many aspects Wrocław represents our priorities for the European Union.

But let's not forget that only 65 years ago, only two generations ago, our continent was on fire.

Less than 25 years ago, only one generation ago, an iron curtain kept us apart.

And this city, this country, know this just too well.

Less than one generation ago, challenges like the enlargement of Europe, the Single Market and a common currency were still ahead of us.

Each generation faces new challenges. And this is not meant to stop.

Our predecessors successfully stood up to the challenges of their times.

They have turned years, decades, centuries of divides, wars, sufferings and instability into six decades of a free, peaceful, prosperous and stable Union.

They have developed a Union of shared sovereignty, common interests and above all common values: democracy, rule of law, freedom, equality, solidarity and respect of human dignity. A Union open to the world.

Millions of people around the world have seen and see in our political values a source of inspiration for action against oppression.

For 60 years we have been a laboratory for successful cross-border supranational cooperation. Just the kind of cooperation we all need in today's world.

This world is a fast-changing increasingly competitive world. New spheres of influence are emerging. And the trend towards multi-polarity has been reinforced by the crisis. At the same time we are totally interconnected and most of the challenges we face are global challenges calling for global responses.

It is a world where size matters. If our Member states reverted to forging their individual destinies, they would not be better placed to maintain their influence and their lifestyle. The European Union gives them the continental size they need to be credible and effective international players.

It is a world where Europeans do not fear any longer wars among themselves. But changes, uncertainties and growing interconnectedness feed today's fears.

It is also a world going through the worst crisis since the Great depression. And, as I have said in my State of the Union address on 28 September, this crisis is financial, economic and social. But it is also a crisis of confidence, in Europe itself, and in our capacity to find solutions.

Fears and loss of confidence are manipulated by populist discourses calling for protectionism and nationalism whereas more than ever Europe needs to remain open and united.

Fragmentation would be a disaster for Europe. This would be a huge economic loss but also a huge political loss. And its impact would be felt well beyond our borders.

So today it is our turn to stand up to the challenge of our generation, probably the most serious challenge of a generation.

This is a fight for the economic and political future of Europe. This is a fight for what Europe represents in the world. This is a fight for the European values themselves. This is a fight we cannot lose.

To restore confidence, we have to capitalize on our strengths and address decisively our weaknesses.

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, the first of our strengths, the core one, the one from which all the others stem from is our union. United we are, united we must stay.

We must not allow new dividing lines to form in Europe. We must never forget that the worst threat that could weigh Europe down is that it should itself become divided. We will not stand by and let that threat materialise.

It is precisely because we have remained united over the last decades, whatever the challenges and the temptations of disunion might have been, that we are today the leading trading power in the world, the top destination for foreign direct investment, the second reference currency in the world and the world's biggest donor of development aid

And today, in this globalized world, we need more than ever a strongly united Europe to preserve our way of life, to protect our values, and to promote the prosperity of our citizens.

But a chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

To be united means that we need solidarity and responsibility, convergence and discipline.

To be united means that we have to recognize that a common currency and a Single market cannot be viable without more convergence of our economies. The monetary union has to be completed by an economic union. That is what we are doing.

To be united means that the rules agreed by all have to be respected by each of us. We need a reinforced governance and more surveillance. That is what we are doing.

To be united means that you cannot save some of the members while letting the others sink or go. We have to reinforce the euro zone but it cannot be done in a way that would be detrimental to the whole of the Union. That is what I am fighting for.

To be united means that together we need to do whatever it takes to get the recovery right. This means ensuring fiscal consolidation, and sometimes painful reforms, without undermining our growth potential.

This means capitalizing fully on our strengths in trade and foreign direct investment. This means completing, and not damaging, our Single market. This means drawing the most from the untapped potential of the services sector.

All of these strengths are common strengths, built upon our common political will, and turned into a strong reality thanks to our common commitment to fully implement them.

They cannot be fragmented. If we do not stand united they will be lost for each of us. That would be a zero sum game.

More than ever united we must stand to put Europe's economy back on track and grasp the growth that is so badly needed.

As you know very well, our competitive advantage will be increasingly as a knowledge economy. That is why we have chartered our route out of the crisis on education and research and development. Not later than yesterday the Commission adopted its proposal for the new research programme "Horizon 2020" with a total budget of 80 billion Euros. I hope that member states in the Council and the European Parliament will support our proposal.

We have to train and to keep the best and the brightest. But in this globalized world we also have to attract and retain the best and the brightest from outside Europe. Only a strong united Europe will be able to develop this power of attraction.

These difficult days we are living through should not be seen as gloomy days. Those who want to tap into fears of change must be confronted.

The truth is that these days are our chance to go through changes for the better by turning the challenges into opportunity and the crisis into a European renewal.

And your talents, your skills, your creativity and your commitment are more than ever needed to make it happen.

These qualities fundamental to the excellence of your university - imagination, creativity, openness hope in the future - are exactly what we need to energize our shared European destiny

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I strongly believe that it is driven by our pride in being European that we could exit the crisis stronger.

And this is not only about our great culture, not only about our great civilisation, not only pride in the past.

It is pride in our future.

I would like to conclude by quoting a very well-known historian of Poland, Norman Davies.

He recently said in a radio interview that one of the aspects which fascinated but also impressed him greatly about Poland was and I quote "the way that its language and its culture and its religion had survived all the worst oppressions that came Europe's way. The fact that a country can lose its independence, can lose control of its own political destiny, can become extremely poor from having been a great power and a rich power in the 16th century, is wiped from the map at the end of the 18th. And even that doesn't finish Poland off, somehow through the strength of its culture, it can survive and eventually re-surfaces in a new form and so on".

Indeed Poland history is for all of us a superb lesson about trust and confidence, about resilience and perseverance.

Yes, it is a great lesson about the strength of our fundamental values starting with the strong belief in and respect of human dignity.

Such an unwavering strength must be our compass for the future.

We must stand for our European values. We must act, and work together, to achieve the European renewal we need.

I am confident that we will come out of this crisis stronger and more united.

And as Jean Monnet once said "I am neither pessimist nor optimist, I am determined."

I trust you will share the same determination. Together we can succeed in achieving this European renewal, and first and foremost with your dynamic and promising generation.

More than ever to stand firmly united is our only way forward. This is our future.

I thank you for your attention.