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**Speech by President Barroso to the
European Parliament prior to the
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European Parliament

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~~Check Against Delivery~~
~~Seul le texte prononcé fait foi~~
~~Es gilt das gesprochene Wort~~

Mr President,

Minister,

Honourable Members,

One year on from the start of the period of reflection, it is time to take stock. What point have we reached? What can we do to move Europe forward? What can we expect from the European Council?

I will start by warning of a spectre currently haunting Europe: the spectre of Euro-pessimism. We already had our traditional Eurosceptics who never wanted Europe as a political project, but now we also have the pessimism of the self-proclaimed Europhiles wallowing in crisis mode, each trying to show that he has a better grasp of the causes of the deep crisis enveloping Europe than anyone else.

What is the cause of this Euro-pessimism? To a large extent it is the fallout from the 'no' votes in the referendums held in two of our Member States, which has cast doubts on Europe and Europe's capacity to develop a shared life project. This is one of the reasons why we must find a solution to the constitution. And I would like to make this crystal clear. We at the European Commission support the principles, values and substance of the Constitutional Treaty.

First of all, we have to understand why we need this written constitution. What is it that we will be giving up if we don't have a Constitutional Treaty? We will be giving up a clear definition of the distribution of powers at the various levels, we will be giving up increased use of co-decision and qualified majority voting, we will be giving up a legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights, we will be giving up an EU Minister for Foreign Affairs, who would also be Vice-President of the Commission, we will be giving up more effective action in areas such as public health, food safety, and safe and secure energy because the Constitution increased powers in these fields. We will also be turning our backs on greater coherence towards the outside world.

On this point I must tell you – and my experience of eighteen months as President confirms this – Europe truly needs what the Constitutional Treaty offered in terms of its relations with the rest of the world: more effectiveness, more democracy and more coherence.

The existing Treaties will not allow us to achieve all these objectives in full. Let us be clear about this, Nice is not enough.

The question is, how do we move forward? Can we resolve the problem by talking about the Constitution day after day? Can we resolve the problem by confining ourselves to pragmatic measures? I say we can't. I say we must avoid two pitfalls. The first is the pitfall of saying, as some would like, that the Constitution is dead and we must confine ourselves to purely practical measures. This would put Europe in danger. And I must add, it would be equally dangerous for Europe if we now became bogged down in a purely institutional or constitutional debate, if we were now to claim that we are paralysed until the issue of the Constitution has been resolved.

This is why we must move forward on two fronts, as we said in our paper of 10 May on the double track approach. The first is the Europe that delivers results, the Europe of practical projects. However - and here we come to the second front - a Europe that delivers results cannot be incompatible with or an alternative to a political Europe. It is in fact a prerequisite for popular support for Europe as a major political project. So it is not a question of choosing between a Europe that delivers results and Europe as an institution; it is a question of choosing both. We need a project-based Europe that delivers results if we are to have a grand project for Europe.

What is this Europe that delivers results that we are proposing? We have in fact already achieved results. This is why I cannot share the views of all those who say that Europe is at a complete standstill. I think that unintentionally they are fanning the flames of the crisis. I understand that analysts may have to say this, but as political leaders we have a

certain responsibility. Do you really think that we can restore people's confidence simply by sending out negative messages? No! To move Europe forward, we must renew with optimism and confidence, and we must point up all the progress we have made.

The truth of the matter is that even in the wake of the two rejections at the referendum ballot box we have succeeded in resolving the question of the budget for the next seven years, and for twenty-seven countries at that. We have also succeeded, with the help of the European Parliament, in finding a political solution to the highly controversial question of the services Directive. We have relaunched the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment. We have launched a common energy strategy for Europe, which would have been inconceivable two years ago. In other words we are continuing to make progress based on practical projects. We are delivering results that will create the right climate in which to address the institutional question.

In our paper of 10 May, we set out concrete proposals. Without wishing to enter into the details of these proposals again, I would just like to remind you of one or two. To highlight those aspects of the single market that are not working to protect consumers in Europe. To identify the obstacles preventing the completion of the great European market. To assess the social situation: what are the obstacles to achieving greater solidarity in Europe? Progress with regard to the market must go hand-in-hand with progress on the social front. To use the existing Treaties to make progress on justice, cooperation, and the fight against terrorism and crime. These Treaties provide scope for us to do more with regard to immigration, to combat illegal immigration and at the same time resolve questions relating to lawful immigration. This is a major problem. If the Member States want to go further, they can do so on the basis of the existing Treaties. It is therefore not just an institutional question; it is also a question of political will. So let us move forward in the fields of justice and security. These are areas in which Europeans are calling on the Member States to do more, since it is obvious that nowadays we cannot fight terrorism or meet the challenges posed by illegal immigration if we each act on our own: we must work together.

We can also do much more when it comes to foreign policy. There is a good solution in the Constitution: a Minister for Foreign Affairs, who would also be Vice-President of the Commission. We must pool our capacities and resources on the external front. However, as there is still no Constitution, a few days ago the Commission presented a proposal setting out practical proposals for making the Union more effective, more coherent and more visible vis-à-vis the outside world. We have also put forward major proposals on subsidiarity, transparency and better regulation for Europe.

So we have here a whole set of practical projects, not to mention the two important areas which, I believe, will shape Europe's future: energy, following our Green Paper, and research. These are two big priorities.

The fact is that, in the next seven years, our research budget will be 60% higher than in the previous period. For that reason we have already proposed the establishment of a network-based European Technological Institute to lend a European dimension to our research achievements and to attract the world's best researchers. Why are the best European researchers now in the United States? Why can't we attract the best Chinese, Indian, Latin American or American researchers here to Europe? We also need a flagship project as a focus for our research capabilities.

So we must rally round a number of tangible projects capable of rekindling confidence in Europe: a project-based Europe. But a project-based Europe is not enough; we must also resolve the institutional question. What are our proposals here? We propose to move on from a period of reflection to a period of engagement.

The first important step will come next year when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the European Community - the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. I do not believe that the Heads of State and Government can let the 50th anniversary of our Union pass without making some commitment to our shared life project. There are two possibilities here: either we make a declaration directed entirely towards the past – in other words a

mere commemoration –or we make a declaration that looks to the future, a renewal of our commitment to our shared life project.

As President of the Commission, I believe it is my duty to ask the Heads of State and Government, who provide the backing for our projects, to renew their commitment. I believe that you too, as Members of the European Parliament, have the right to ask our Heads of State and Government if they want to invest in this shared life project, which today is more vital than ever in a globalised world. That is what we plan to do.

So I have proposed a declaration that is more than just a new version of the Messina Declaration, which, you will remember, was made after the failure of the European Defence Community. That Declaration relaunched Europe and paved the way for the creation of the European Economic Community. It was signed by the Foreign Ministers. This is no longer possible today. As I have said before, Europe will not be bureaucratic; nor will it be technocratic or merely diplomatic; Europe must be democratic. That is why we must involve all Europe's institutions and that is why I am proposing that the declaration be signed not only by the Heads of State and Government, but also by the Commission and by the European Parliament, which today plays a central role in building Europe.

If we succeed - by investing all our energies in it - we shall have an opportunity next year to relaunch the process of forming a European constitution, of building a wider Europe, which implies a debate on enlargement.

I do not believe in a miniature Europe; I do not believe in a divided, multi-speed Europe; I do not believe that the response to the current situation and to the difficulties that we know Europe is facing is to say, "Let's go our separate ways". Are we going to let a few of us create a more advanced Europe, leaving the others behind? I think not.

I believe our duty is to do everything possible to make the enlarged Europe work. And I speak with a certain degree of experience here. If I compare the situation now with the negotiations back in 1992 with our partners in the US, China, Russia and others, I can tell you that today Europe is more respected outside its borders than it was in the past. Having an enlarged Europe is a condition for having a powerful Europe.

Let's have a debate on enlargement. We recognise that in some cases the public has doubts regarding both its pace and scope. Let's have a debate on absorption capacity, but at the same time let us stress the added value which enlargement has already brought Europe.

This is the Europe I am fervently hoping for. An enlarged Europe, an open Europe, a more competitive Europe, a Europe that is much more than a market, a Europe with a political project - and a political project that is based on the idea of solidarity, because, without solidarity, the very idea of a Union does not exist. This is Europe's great project for the 21st century. Not a closed Europe, not a scaled-down, miniature Europe, but a great, enlarged Europe that is capable of shaping globalisation rather than suffering its consequences.

This is a great project for Europe. To make it a reality, political leaders must escape from the vicious circle of Euro-pessimism and begin to build a virtuous cycle of confidence, with tangible results of course, but also inspired by this grand vision of our great Europe.