

Brussels, 12 July 2005

Statement by President Barroso and religious leaders

Recent events concerning the ratification of the draft Constitutional Treaty have highlighted the challenges facing the Union.

If there is one common theme running through the various challenges, it is the need for Europe to be able to act in achieving concrete results that meet the concerns of the citizens.

A period of reflection and of debate is needed to enable citizens to appreciate the significance of the European project and therefore to reconnect Europe with its citizens.

The European Commission, as the guardian and the promoter of the common interest, has a particularly important role to play during this period. It should assist in creating greater trust in Europe, enhance the availability of information and encourage the emergence of a new consensus on what Europe is for. This can only be achieved through a process of open communication and dialogue.

Churches, religious communities and spiritual leaders of the three monotheistic religions bear great responsibility in this process.

On the occasion of the meeting between President Barroso and Christian, Jewish and Islamic religious leaders in Brussels on 12 July 2005, President Barroso and the religious leaders reaffirmed that they are dedicated to building a free, united, prosperous and peaceful Europe characterised by solidarity, where all citizens and nations, regardless of their religion, convictions, language, culture, tradition and ethnic origin, may live together and feel at home united in diversity.

The European Commission and the religious leaders are dedicated to continuing their dialogue to make this common vision of a united Europe a reality.

All participants strongly condemn the terrorist attacks against innocent people in London. No reason, in particular not a religious one, can justify such acts against humanity.