

Address given by José Manuel Durão Barroso to the Portuguese nation (Lisbon, 29 June 2004)

Caption: On 29 June 2004, José Manuel Durão Barroso, Prime Minister of Portugal, informs the Portuguese nation of his intention to accept the invitation to become the next President of the European Commission which will be extended to him that evening by the Heads of State or Government meeting in Brussels at the Council of the European Union.

Source: Durão Barroso, José Manuel, Comunicação ao País sobre a aceitação do convite para a presidência da Comissão Europeia. [EN LIGNE]. [Portal do Governo]: Governo da República Portuguesa, [08.07.2004]. Disponible sur

http://www.portugal.gov.pt/Portal/PT/Primeiro_Ministro/Intervencoes/20040629_PM_Int_Presidencia_C E.htm.

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Address to the Portuguese nation on accepting the invitation to serve as President of the European Commission (Lisbon, 29 June 2004)

The Council will meet today in Brussels to appoint the next President of the European Commission.

Before I leave for the meeting, I should first like to announce my decision to you, the Portuguese people, here in Lisbon: I am going to accept the invitation from the European Heads of State or Government to stand for the Presidency of the Commission.

I am taking this decision at a crucial time for the European Union, following its enlargement to encompass 25 Member States and the approval of a European Constitution.

I believe that, when a politician takes on responsibilities in his country, he takes on responsibilities at European Union level. Nothing European is alien to us.

No national leader should avoid what is asked of him in the development of an ever stronger, more cohesive and more just European Union that has an increasingly prominent role to play on the international stage.

Portugal owes a great deal to Europe, so, when Europe asks a Portuguese citizen to cooperate in an important task, we should not refuse.

I am also taking this decision, however, in the firm belief that it will be in Portugal's interests. The office of President of the European Commission is undoubtedly the most high-profile position that any Portuguese citizen can hold in the European and international arena.

European integration is essential if we are to achieve our national aspirations. European issues are now, more than ever, a permanent feature of our society rather than merely an aspect of Portuguese foreign policy.

Working for the European project also means working for Portugal.

The decision was not an easy one, and, while considering it, I thought about you, the Portuguese people, and about how I could protect your future, too.

I should like to stress that I was given unanimous support by my Government today.

I should also humbly like to thank the President of the Republic in particular for congratulating me on my invitation.

I kept the President continuously informed throughout the decision-making process.

I wish to state here and now that I have complete faith in the independence of the President of the Republic in deciding how to resolve the situation that will arise when I present my letter of resignation in due course.

I should also like to assert my confidence in the solution that will be found. That the Prime Minister should step down for reasons of clear national interest should not undermine political stability, nor should it compromise the policy to be pursued by our country.

Portugal now has a responsible, mature and consolidated democracy. I therefore take this decision with an unshakeable confidence in our democratic institutions. I am convinced that, with complete respect for the powers of each sovereign body, political stability will be maintained, and the programme voted on by the Portuguese in the most recent parliamentary elections will be taken forward.

The primary duty of any Portuguese national is to serve his or her country wherever he or she may be. I shall continue to do so as a European but, above all, with the pride of being Portuguese.