

**José Manuel Barroso**

**President of the European Commission**

**Presentation of the European  
Commission's 2007 Work Programme**

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

European Parliament

**Strasbourg, 14 November 2006**

President Borrell,  
Honourable Members,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

When the lights went out across Europe last week, our interdependence as Europeans was laid bare for all to see. In a flash, greater integration ceased to be some abstract ideal. For millions of our citizens, it became a necessity.

The incident – dare I say it – was illuminating. The argument for more Europe has not so much been won, as rendered superfluous.

It is now clear to everyone that we face more shared challenges than ever before - thanks in part to the forces unleashed by globalisation. And shared challenges demand shared solutions, whether they relate to growth and jobs in an increasingly competitive world, climate change, energy security or, indeed, international terrorism.

We can be proud of our response so far to this rapidly changing landscape. First, we renewed the Lisbon Agenda and placed the emphasis squarely on growth and jobs. As a result, it was possible to restore confidence in the Stability and Growth Pact, putting it on a more realistic and workable footing.

Europe's leaders agreed to put globalisation at the centre of its policy agenda, and the Commission has been busy equipping the EU with the tools it needs, and using those tools, on a whole range of concerns that European citizens share.

To boost growth and jobs, European Institutions have continued work to unleash the full potential of the Single Market.

At the same time, we have renewed our commitment to social solidarity, including the setting up the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, a useful shock absorber to the powerful motor of globalisation.

To ensure that Europe thrives in the knowledge economies of tomorrow, innovation became a central part of our economic and social strategies. The establishment of the European Institute of Technology will help reverse the fragmentation of research, education and innovation efforts, which has stunted progress so far.

The document 'Europe in the World' tackles the need to develop a global voice which matches our economic weight in the world. This will also reinforce our efforts in areas where we have already exerted leadership, notably in the debate on a future international climate change regime.

And we have successfully steered Romania and Bulgaria towards EU membership. We have proposed the two new Commissioners and allocated the portfolios. One will be responsible for consumer affairs and the other for multilinguisme, to protect and to reinforce European cultural pluralism and diversity. I am very proud that this further step in European unity has taken place, and that my Commission has given an important contribution to it. I think we should all be very proud of what has been achieved through successive enlargements.

Let there be no doubt: in centuries to come, historians will say that enlargement was the greatest instrument for peace, prosperity and stability of our generation.

And on that note, I would like to say it is more than time we stopped talking about 'old' and 'new' Member States. More than ever before, we are now one Europe, united in all our diversity, and that is something to celebrate.

We have also laid the groundwork in many other areas that concern us all – sustainable development, maritime policy, and energy efficiency, to name just a few.

And, we still have much to achieve until the end of this year. I hope that the European Council will approve the enlargement package we adopted last week. We need to move forward on immigration and innovation policy and we still have important proposals to adopt in areas like labour law, copyright levies, neighbourhood policy, CO2 emissions from cars and emissions trading.

So the first years of this Commission, working in a spirit of partnership with this Parliament, have meant renewing, reorienting and re-tooling, to create a Europe of results, a Europe fit to face the shared challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And these efforts are already bearing fruit: growth has been revised upwards to its highest level in six years, unemployment has dropped to its lowest level since we started collecting EU25 data in 1998.

Now 2007 – the year we celebrate 50 years of European construction – will mark a turning point.

It will mark the moment when a Europe of 27, after careful preparation, throws the full weight of the Union's re-tuned machinery behind the delivery of solutions to our citizens' shared concerns.

It will mark the moment when a new budgetary framework unlocks modernised financing programmes, which move towards Europe's new agenda.

So this is the context for our 2007 Work Programme. A new type of programme that has greatly benefited from input by this Parliament, the Council and the other institutions - valuable input which will continue with this debate and the resolution you adopt.

This Work Programme addresses many of the Parliament's past concerns. It is more political. It is focused on a smaller list of 21 strategic initiatives. The Commission is committed to delivering all of these next year, and they will not be subject to a mid-term review. A second list of priority initiatives fills out our work in other important areas.

In addition, we have responded to calls from the Parliament to include a list of simplification measures and withdrawals of legislative proposals in the Work Programme. This underlines the message that Better Regulation is now an integral part of the Commission's day-to-day tasks.

Today, we have adopted our strategic review of Better Regulation that takes stock of progress to date and sets out an ambitious programme of new initiatives. This includes new action in the areas of:

- impact assessment, where we will establish an Impact Assessment Board;
- simplification, where we will add important new initiatives to our rolling programme;
- administrative burdens, where we will suggest a target to the Spring European Council next year to cut such burdens at EU and Member State levels by 25% by 2012. In parallel, we will present an Action Plan in two months' time defining priority areas for action.

We are also continuing to screen, and in a number of cases to withdraw, pending proposals. We are recommending to future Commissions to do the same at the beginning of their mandate, as an expression of the changed political composition of a new Commission.

This review responds to a very large extent to the priorities of the Parliament, as expressed in several reports earlier this year. I hope you will give your full endorsement to this package, including to its practical implementation.

So what does the 2007 Work Programme feature? Let me highlight some key areas.

First, energy. Building on our Green Paper and measures for greater energy efficiency earlier this year, we will present the first ever Strategic Energy Review for Europe. This will include the building blocks for an integrated EU energy policy, for example measures to complete the internal market for electricity and gas; to accelerate take-up of new low carbon technologies; and to diversify and secure supplies both within and outside Europe.

The goal is a common European energy policy which will ensure our security of supply, while maintaining Europe's competitiveness and safeguarding our environmental objectives.

Closely linked to this, will be action on climate change. We will put forward options for EU climate change policy, and perspectives for international co-operation post-Kyoto. A revision of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme will provide greater stability for investments, and accelerate the momentum to cut greenhouse gases.

Europe's demographic squeeze calls for greater efforts to attract economic migrants, particularly those who are highly skilled. A European regime for labour immigration will give such migrants a secure legal status, while clarifying their obligations and rights.

In order to reduce illegal immigration and exploitation of workers, this will be coupled with a clampdown on unscrupulous employers of third country nationals who enter Europe illegally.

European public policy can have a fundamental impact on the way people live their lives. To be effective, it must be properly attuned to the needs of modern society. The Commission will undertake a fundamental stocktaking of European society which will serve as a basis for European policy making into the next decade.

Our core business will not be forgotten, either. The Commission will continue to defend, extend and modernise the single market. A key target for 2007 will be the defence industries and markets, which have been fragmented for far too long. We will also set out the way forward on services of general interest in the coming weeks.

A final area of concern to all our citizens is security. The Commission will bring forward additional measures to combat terrorism, with a particular focus on fighting terrorist propaganda and the sharing of expertise – on explosives for example – for terrorist purposes.

2007 will also mark a turning point in our search for an institutional settlement. The Berlin Declaration, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, will allow Europe's leaders to renew their commitment to an enlarged, global and competitive Europe, where solidarity is a central principle. It will be a short and sharp political declaration, affirming what unites us and – above all – making clear where we want to go and what we want Europe to be for the next 50 years.

I am pleased to see that the search for an institutional settlement is also a priority for the German Presidency. So I am confident that the elements are in place for a major breakthrough.

This is important, because Europe needs an institutional settlement. There are indeed serious costs derived from not having a constitutional treaty. We need the constitutional treaty to be more effective in our decision-making, more coherent in our external action, and more transparent and democratic in our working. And make no mistake: the Commission will be an active player in the search for solutions here.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When this Commission took office, there was unfinished business to deal with and to reform.

With the help of this Parliament and the Council, these things have been dealt with, put behind us, or turned around. As the example of the Services Directive, to be approved by parliamentary vote tomorrow, clearly demonstrates.

It has been hard work, but it is already bearing fruit. The 2007 Work Programme builds on these new foundations.

So as we celebrate Europe's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, we can do so with much greater confidence. Once again, Europe has proved its continuing vigour and relevance by reinventing itself for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To show our commitment to concrete results and to work hard for a stronger European Union, this is a fitting birthday present - for Europe and all its citizens.

Thank you.