

## Statement by José Manuel Barroso at his swearing-in ceremony (21 January 2005)

**Caption:** Statement by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, at his swearing-in ceremony before the Court of Justice on 21 January 2005.

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## Statement by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, at the swearing-in ceremony before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg on 21 January 2005

Mr President of the Court of Justice,

Honourable Members of the Court of Justice,

Mr President of the European Parliament,

Fellow Commissioners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to stand before you today.

My experience of seeing my country pass from dictatorship to democracy, an experience shared by numerous other members of the present Commission, has taught me the true value of a Union based on the rule of law.

Today we have made a solemn commitment, confirming the obligation imposed on us by the Treaty.

This solemn commitment recognises the paramount duty of independence of each member of the Commission.

But what is the nature of this independence?

On taking up our duties at the Commission, we are not bound to cast off our respective nationalities — far from it. Each of us brings to the Commission table the wealth and diversity of our own experiences and traditions.

This very mixture, indeed, is a source of enrichment and strength to the Commission.

It enables us to play our role as defenders of the general European interest. It helps us to construct Europe for its citizens, a Europe strengthened by its diversity and united by its common values.

The independence that we have sworn to preserve today is therefore unrelated to the language that we speak or the passport that we hold; it is a formal commitment to act, think and decide in complete autonomy.

Under the terms of the Treaty, the members of the Commission ‘shall neither seek nor take instructions from any government or from any other body’.

We pledge ourselves before you today to keep this promise.

It is entirely apt that we should be making such a commitment in this building at the very heart of Europe and that we should be doing so during the Luxembourg Presidency.

The Court of Justice represents the apex of our European judicial system, and its role is confirmed by the European Constitution.

It is the projection of our values and the guarantor of our democratic traditions.

The Court is the expression of European creativity, the emblem of a Europe determined to succeed and bold enough to have established a new judicial system for that purpose.

Your efforts have been the engine of integration.

Ever since the creation of the Common Market, you have been moving the Union forward.

And you have done so with dedication, professionalism and common sense.

Day after day, your judgments have shown how the Union can influence and change the lives of people and businesses for the better.

During the months and years to come, we shall no doubt have to redouble our efforts. We are victims of our own success!

A new constitution, new areas of activity and ten new Member States will undoubtedly make for a heavy caseload.

Hard work and long hours will be required of us.

But we shall also have the satisfaction of watching the Union grow and flourish.

Each of our institutions — the Commission, the Council, Parliament and the Court — has its part to play in the structure while retaining its independence and unique character.

Together, we must continue to shape a better future for our continent.

Thank you.