

Address given by Josep Borrell on the 50th anniversary of the European flag
(Strasbourg, 16 November 2005)

Caption: On 16 November 2005, at the celebrations held to mark the 50th anniversary of the European flag, the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell Fontelles, delivers an address in front of the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg.

Source: Speech by Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament. 50th anniversary of the European flag - Strasbourg Wednesday 16 November 2005. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: Council of Europe, [21.02.2005]. Available on http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Events/2005-12-drapeau/disc_borell.asp.

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Publication date: 03/12/2012

Address given by Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament, at the celebrations held to mark the 50th anniversary of the European flag (Strasbourg, 16 November 2005)

(To be checked against delivered speech)

Strasbourg Wednesday 16 November 2005

Today we are celebrating fifty years of the European flag. It is with pleasure and emotion that I take part in this ceremony alongside my colleagues from the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

In a reunified Europe that is permanently evolving, this blue flag with 12 golden stars is a symbol of European identity.

And may I remind everyone that it is thanks to an initiative of the European Parliament in 1983 that the European Community adopted the flag as an emblem.

For the past 20 years, the European flag has been all around us. It often flies alongside national, regional and even local flags. It can be seen in universities, schools and chambers of commerce and agriculture, and so many other places that I can't begin to enumerate them.

That's a long way to come since that date.

The flag has kept its unchangeable character – 12 stars whatever the number of member countries. It is a strong symbol that brings together the citizens of Europe.

Even more, it is especially attractive for the citizens of countries that are members of the Council of Europe and aspire to enter the European Union.

And the European flag has recently found its way into our pockets and purses! It is the symbol of the Euro, and so finds a place in the whole world.

In a few minutes, young people will unfurl the world's biggest European flag, an initiative of the Council of Europe. They will lay out its 12 golden stars.

It is doubly symbolic – of the identity of Europe, and of young people, a guarantee of the future of our Union.