



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Press statement  
by the President of the European Council  
Herman Van Rompuy  
following the 6th EU-Brazil Summit**

It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here in Brazil for this 6th EU-Brazil Summit. I would like to thank you, Madame President, and the Brazilian people, for your wonderful hospitality.

The European Union and Brazil are close partners, that share a profound commitment to democratic values, effective multilateralism, and the rule of law. Our relationship, founded upon close cultural and historical ties, has become wider and deeper since our Strategic Partnership was established in July 2007.

Today, we have reviewed the state of our relationship and welcomed the progress made. Our partnership now features regular political consultations, growing ties between our civil societies, and some 30 areas of dialogue – from human rights, drugs and UN matters to economic, financial, environmental, scientific and social issues. Our economic and trade links continue to be extremely solid; the stock of European investments in Brazil is greater than in China and India combined, and Brazil has become the 5th major investor in the European Union. We have also hailed the ratification by Brazil of the EU-Brazil short-stay visa waiver agreement, and its entry into force on 8 October 2012.

These are important steps. However, we shouldn't rest on such successes. The more we develop our Strategic Partnership the more we realise that its huge potential is still largely untapped.

**P R E S S**

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We share the vision of a world based on international justice and greater social equity. Acting in concert, the European Union and Brazil can be a force for good in the international system.

Together, we can contribute more effectively to international peace and security. I am therefore particularly happy that we have agreed to launch a new EU-Brazil regular dialogue on peace and security matters that will enable us to further exchange views and develop our cooperation on this area.

Our shared commitment to human rights is also a source of opportunities for our partnership. I wish to congratulate Brazil on becoming a member of the Human Rights Council in November last year. This will enable us to continue and further extend our already solid cooperation.

Our cooperation on climate change has been crucial to the positive outcomes of the multilateral negotiations in Durban and in Doha. The European Union and Brazil have a major role to play in taking the process forward towards a comprehensive legally binding agreement by 2015, to enter into force by 2020.

Finally, a rapid conclusion of the Association Agreement between the EU and MERCOSUR would open new possibilities to consolidate the free flow of goods, strengthen investment and open new avenues of cooperation. This summit expresses the strong political will to reach an agreement. This is a very clear conclusion, of course taking into account each specific sensitivities and interests.

Indeed, the global economic and financial situation has been an important part of today's agenda. I have stressed to President Rousseff that the European Union has come a long way and has turned the corner. The eurozone is no longer in "existential threat" mode. 2012 has been a turning point. An enormous amount of work has been done over the last 12 months by countries all across the Union. We are now much better able to deal with the type of shocks that we have seen during the crisis. We are also reforming our economies and improving their competitiveness. In addition, we are addressing the gaps in our Economic and Monetary Union, with great determination to reinforce our financial framework and bring our economic and budgetary policies closer. The project of the banking union is already well advanced.

The stability we managed to re-establish is vital for economic recovery. But we have to be realistic: there will be a time lag before growth picks up from this return to stability, and there will also be some time before we see the positive effects on unemployment.

So the priority for Europe is to reduce these time lags, speed up recovery and speed up employment. We know well that in a globalised world, if we want to maintain our competitiveness, we cannot afford to slacken the reins.

We have also shared views on the situation in North Africa and the Middle East. I stressed the appalling situation in Syria where the toll of the conflict calls urgently for the international community to set aside differences in search for a solution. The EU is convinced that Assad has to leave in order for a transition to be successful. I have reiterated the European Union's full support to the efforts of Joint Special Representative Brahimi in finding a political solution to the crisis.

On Egypt, I have emphasised the European Union's support for the process of democratic transition and the need for a truly inclusive dialogue that will lead to a democratic Egypt for all Egyptians, independently of gender and creed.

I also stressed the need to give renewed impetus to the Middle East Peace Process and to promote the resumption of bilateral negotiations. The European Union is convinced that now is the time to look forward and to take bold steps towards peace in the Middle East. We are determined to work with those who are willing to join in such a quest. The European Union urges the re-launch of direct and substantial negotiations, without preconditions, among the parties in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The aim should be a lasting solution ending all claims.

The situation in the Sahel has also been a topic of our discussions. I underlined to President Rousseff the grave concern we have for the situation in Mali and the importance of mobilizing international support for a transition and peace process in the country. The European Union condemns the acts being carried out by terrorist groups which are jeopardising the country's territorial integrity and the safety of its population. The European Union's decision to establish an EU mission to train and advise the Malian army, and our support to the African-led mission to Mali (AFISMA), together with the swift response of France and other European countries, are a key part of these efforts.

Brazil plays a crucial role in advancing the bi-regional strategic partnership between the European Union and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). I look forward to continuing our dialogue in this wider context in Santiago of Chile in the coming days.

To conclude, this Summit has taken the EU-Brazil relations one step further. The eyes of the whole world will be increasingly focusing on Brazil in the coming years and months as the major events that the country is going to host start in June with the Football Confederations Cup, the dress rehearsal of next year's World Cup.

I wish you, Madam President, and the Brazilian people, the best of luck with these upcoming events. We are all looking forward to them.

This summit is a summit of ambition, especially on the economy and trade. This is a summit of trust, trust among us. Brazil is not only a strategic partner. It is a friend.

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