José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

The Prime Minister of Spain

European citizens are seen to be strong, which requires new steps to develop and to make the rights of European citizens a reality. So, these are the four main priorities of our Presidency:
The first and essential priority for the development of the others is the full and effective application of the Lisbon Treaty. The second is to guarantee the economic recovery of Europe through greater co-ordination of every member state and the approval of the European strategy for sustainable growth for 2020. The third is to reinforce the presence and influence of the European Union in the new world order. Finally, the fourth is to place European citizens at the centre of EU policy, with initiatives designed to develop their rights and freedoms. (…) We are also convinced of the need to continue the reforms that will enable us to successfully face the pending challenges still to come, in order to accelerate recovery and achieve vigourous growth which generates employment.
The first challenge is globalisation itself. The advanced economies, and particularly the European economy, are facing intense competition from the emerging economies, in the area of costs. Europe's response to this should be to improve its capacity to innovate. Therefore, Spain's Presidency will promote the adoption of an ambitious European Innovation Plan that will cover the different aspects of innovation - regulatory, financial, educational and, of course, the reinforcement of specific policies to support R&D. The second challenge is climate change: a phenomenon that we can not ignore. Europe is taking the lead in the international arena and has already assumed commitments for emission reductions and the use of renewable energies. We need to take advantage of this transition to a low carbon economy to generate new jobs and additional sources of economic growth. (…) We will encourage different industrial and technological initiatives to consolidate Europe's leadership as a 'green economy'. The third challenge is to reinforce our social model in the areas of population ageing and the impact of the crisis, which has been especially noticeable in the labour market (…).The Spanish Presidency will promote initiatives to adapt workers skills to the demands of the labour market and improve educational quality, university excellence and continuous training. The response to these three challenges – economic, environmental and social – will be drawn up within the framework of a common strategy for the transformation of the European Union by 2020. The New Growth and Employment Strategy, to be approved during the Spanish Presidency, will deal with a limited number of quantitative goals and will establish a shared vision of the European Union's situation from a perspective of productive, environmental and social sustainability. Finally, the New Strategy should establish a dynamic and operational governance with the participation of all social representatives. All the European institutions need to feel they are active partners in the new strategy and we need to be able to implement a system to survey the results obtained by the governments of the different Member States and the Commission.(…)

From the Appearance of the Spanish Prime Minister before the Plenary Session of the Congress of Deputies to explain the conclusions of the European Council and to outline the priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first six months of 2010; Congress of Deputies, 16th December 2009, Madrid, Spain

Mrs. Máire Geoghegan Quinn

European Commissioner Designate
Research Innovation and Science

Europe has entered the Age of Innovation. We can be followers or leaders. Europe is at its best, when working in the future tense. Working in partnership with the European Parliament and this committee we can move forward. Together we can make a difference. We need to make a difference. (…). We need a proper use of funds, proportionate controls and professional management. We must maximise simplicity without compromising on audit or evaluation quality. For our vital Public Private Partnerships this means more innovation-friendly operating rules and conditions. (…). A world of zero risk, is a world of zero innovation. (…) We need to look at how to leverage complementary structural funds resources. (…). We also need to address the increasing disconnect between science and society. Society must be familiar and at ease with the science underpinning its progress, functioning and survival. Science must belong in Society. (…). Within a new Research and Innovation policy we need to make the Fifth Freedom for the mobility of researchers, knowledge and technology throughout Europe a reality. Our researchers need to be able to travel and work in other Member States and enjoy fully protected social security and pension entitlements.(…).

From the Opening Remarks at the European Parliament on 13th January 2010.

It was said...

Dr Jacques Rogge

IOC President

"(…) Here we are, back in Canada, for the third time in the history of the Olympic Games. After Montreal and Calgary, it is now the turn of the west coast of this wonderful sports loving nation to host the world's athletes. (…) For today, the Olympic Games mean more than just performance. The Olympic Games have brought together in the same quest for excellence, friendship and respect the people of over 82 National Olympic Committees, regardless of ethnic origin, gender, language, religion or political systems. Our world today is in need of peace, tolerance and brotherhood. May the Vancouver 2010 Games be held in peace, in the true spirit of the Olympic Truce. Dear athletes, These Games belong to you. They are your Games. So give them the magic that we all desire (…).
Remember that you are role models for the youth of the world. There is no glory without responsibility. Please compete in the spirit of Olympic values.(…)"

From 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony Speech, Vancouver, BC, Canada 12th February 2010

Dr George E. Smith

The Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics 2009

"It is heartening for us to see that the use of the CCD as solid state imaging devices initiated a revolution in which photographic film and electron beam imaging tubes were relegated to history. As part of the accelerating rise in information technology, it has helped transform the way we live our lives. Think of snapping a photo with your cell phone and instantly sending it to a friend thousands of miles away instead of finishing the roll of film, having it developed, putting it in an envelope and posting it to a far away country. Much easier to forget about it. The device is being used in many other applications including TV cameras, satellite surveillance and a variety of medical imaging applications. The one application which makes maximum use of the devices characteristics is in astronomy. CCD's have been used to gaze much deeper and more accurately into the universe than ever before. This has resulted from the increased efficiency, lower noise, and larger dynamic range using CCDs than that which can be attained with photographic film. Also, the fact that you are using the same detector with each exposure allows you to correct for systematic errors in the CCD. No device is ever perfect nor is photographic film. Photographic film is a different detector with every shot. I was once thanked by a young astronomer for originating the device that created an avalanche of new data and made creating an original thesis project much, much easier. I have also been thanked by mobile TV cameraman for the big reduction in weight of their load."

From the speech at the Nobel Banquet on 10th December 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden

Donald Tusk

Prime Minister of Poland

I stand today before you, Ladies and Gentlemen, because you have deemed that my biography serves "freedom and democracy". You have deemed that I am a "convinced and convincing European". And – which may be most important for myself – you have deemed that I embody "Solidarity and Poland open to the world, strongly set in the family of European nations". When I read these words and look at the roll of winners of the Charlemagne Prize, to which you have decided to add also my name, I feel pride. This pride – I do not mean here my personal satisfaction – results from the fact that from here, from Aachen, one of the symbolic capitals of the continent, you have again noticed that the experience that was our share brings Europe closer to the Europeans. (...) Our generation was lucky. We live in extraordinary times. We are supported by moral rights and great political dreams. It has been a success. We have achieved what previous generations were also waiting for. It can be said that it all happened so soon, and at the same time in a way so ordinarily... Today, we find ourselves in a Europe of a great social and political experiment. Daringly and with prudence, we are undertaking attempts to build a certain whole – whose shape we do not know yet – over the plenitude of states, nations, languages, and religions. Yet we remember that our idea of Europe grows from the eternal dreams about the community of free nations and brotherhood of free people.(...)

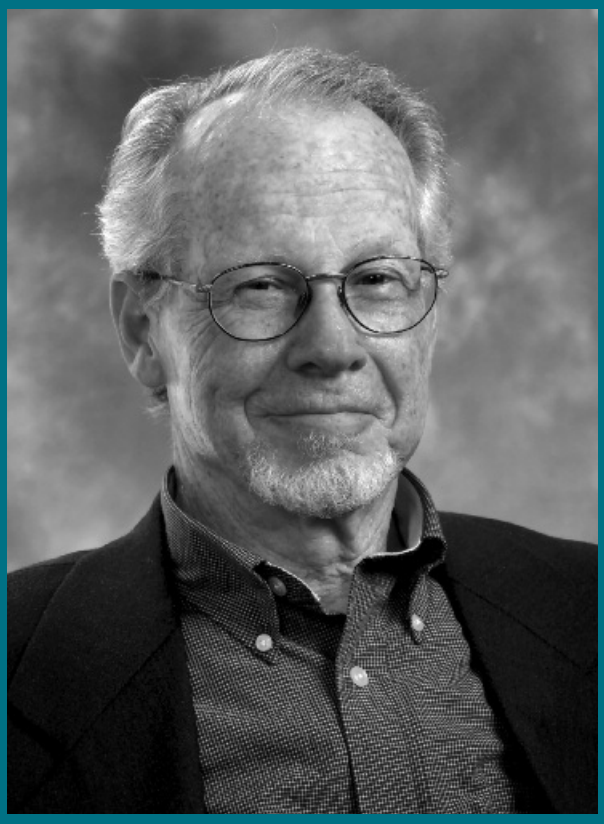
From the speech during the ceremony of awarding the 2010 Charlemagne prize in recognition of his work for furthering liberty and democracy in Europe on 13th May 2010 in Aachen, Germany

Ada E. Yonath

The Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry 2009

"Indeed, words originating from the verb "to die" were frequently used when I described my initial plans to determine the ribosome structure. Many distinguished scientists said: 'why work on ribosomes, they are dead ... we know all what can be known about them', or: 'this is a dead end road', or: 'you will be dead before you get there'. To my satisfaction, these predictions were proven wrong, the ribosomes are alive and kicking (so am I) and their high resolution structures stimulated more advanced studies as well as the imagination of many youngsters, including my granddaughter, Noa, who is showing continuous interest, and invited me at the ages of 5 and 13 to explain to her classes what the ribosome is. Also, there is a new saying in Israel: "Curly hair (like mine) means rosh male ribosomin, which translates to: head full of ribosomes"."

From the speech at the Nobel Banquet on 10th December 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden



Professor Oliver E. Williamson

The Laureate of the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2009

"(…) Only as we admit to and, of even greater importance, come to understand the problems that confront us – be they current or impending, obvious or obscure, real or imagined – by identifying and explicating the mechanisms that are responsible for these problems, can we expect to make informed decisions. Since, moreover, things that we do not understand at the outset sometimes have redeeming purposes, such efforts to get at the essence will often uncover real or latent benefits. Altogether, our capacity to work in the service of mankind increases as complex contract and economic and political organization become more susceptible to analysis. (…)"

From the speech at the Nobel Banquet in Stockholm, Sweden on 10th December 2009.

Rita Forst

Executive director, product engineer, GM Europe, Turin, Italy
Winner of the 2008 Automotive News Europe 25 Leading Women Award

"It is still uncommon to have a female engineer in a man's world. It will take years before we see an equal number, if at all. It might never be equal numbers. Interest needs to be created early. It starts at home when parents give their daughter a doll and then say to her their son, "Let's go in the car." Also, in some countries there is still an understanding that if a woman has children she will spend a few years with her children and family. This is very difficult for a female engineer because technology advances. If you are away for a few years it is tough to get back in again. Female engineers normally do not have a career plan, but in order to have a career you need to have a plan. Although it changed all the time, I had a plan. When I started I just wanted to have fun. Then I reached a point when I knew I was as good as my male colleagues so I thought, Why shouldn't I think about a career?"

In Automotive News Europe on 12th May 2008

Professor Jerzy Buzek

President of the European Parliament

"(...) Europe can continue to export stability, the European state model, and promote respect for rights and freedoms. But if we are not strong, we will quickly become a small European bridgehead flooded by powerful waves coming from less democratic value systems. We can promote the European social model, which puts the individual in first place, or build walls that cut us off from systems that put the good of the powers that be before the good of the individual. We must be strong internally because it is only through our internal strength and unity that we can make possible the effective external action that is important for our citizens and for the whole world. We have shown that we can lead the way when it comes to climate change and tackling the financial crisis. We have shown, too, that our model of diplomacy and cooperation works – and works excellently within our Europe – and that diplomacy and economic cooperation are better than military intervention, although that too is successfully undertaken by the EU where necessary. I strongly believe that our model of pooled sovereignty and political and economic solidarity can serve as a global model. But for that to succeed we need partners who, together with us, will defend our interests and our values. Only then will we achieve in the international arena the goals that unite all the free nations of the world. (...)"

From the Address at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany on 22nd March 2010.

Liliane Lacourt

Executive vice president,
corporate communications;
PSA/Peugeot-Citroen, Paris, France
Winner of the 2008 Automotive News Europe 25 Leading Women Award

"I'm proud to have been able to have a balance between a job that's quite demanding and a family, which is demanding as well. (...) When my children were still at home, I had no time for myself. All the time outside work was for them. (...) I tell young women in the industry today, not to be afraid to have children. It's not a problem. It's life. We will manage when they're away for two or three months. Having children also helps you find the right balance and you see the relativity of things. (...) The only thing that matters is making your ideas happen. It is true that women have this quality to be more concerned about their work than men."

In Automotive News Europe on 12th May 2008.

Dr. Ali A. Treki

President of the Sixty-Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly

"The UN has a unique legitimacy to play an active role in international peace and security. There has been broad support for the United Nations role in peacekeeping, peace-building, conflict prevention, mediation, and protection of civilians. Disarmament remains a clear priority for Member States. There is also widely shared concern about the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, as a threat to international peace and security. We have heard passionate calls for a world free of nuclear arms. I am encouraged by the willingness of Member States to engage constructively with the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Let us all work together to ensure equal security for all. Member States were unanimous in their view that peace and security was intricately linked to sustainable development. There is broad agreement on the need for collective response to the unprecedented global financial crisis. People in developing countries have been hit particularly hard by the financial and economic crisis, which has exacerbated unemployment, poverty, hunger and insecurity."

On the Closing of the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in New York, USA, 29th September 2009.

Professor Mark Z. Jacobson

Director of the Atmosphere and Energy Programme and Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford University, USA

"Every dollar spent on nuclear is one less dollar spent on clean renewable energy and one more dollar spent on making the world a comparatively dirtier and a more dangerous place, because nuclear power and nuclear weapons go hand in hand.(…) (We) laid out a plan to power the world with nothing but wind, water and sun. After considering the best available technologies, we decided that a combination of wind, concentrated solar, geothermal, photovoltaics, tidal, wave and hydroelectric energy could more than meet all the planet's energy needs, particularly if all the world's vehicles could be run on electric batteries and hydrogen fuel cells. We rejected nuclear for several reasons. First, it's not carbon-free, no matter what the advocates tell you. Vast amounts of fossil fuels must be burned to mine, transport and enrich uranium and to build the nuclear plant. And all that dirty power will be released during the 10 to 19 years that it takes to plan and build a nuclear plant. (A wind farm typically takes two to five years.) (…) The on-the-ground footprint of nuclear power, through its plants and uranium mines, is about 1,000 times larger than it is for wind. Wind turbines are merely poles in the ground -- with lots of space between them that can be farmed, ranched or left open -- or poles in the ocean. Geothermal energy also has a much smaller footprint than nuclear; solar only slightly more. But while geothermal, solar and wind are safe, nuclear is not. For nuclear to meet all the world's energy needs today -- 12.5 terawatts -- more than 17,000 nuclear plants would be needed. Even if nuclear were only 5 percent of the solution, most countries would have nuclear plants. (…) Enough wind and solar exist in high-wind and sunny locations over land to power the world for all purposes multiple times over. There is no shortage. Nuclear proponents also argue that nuclear energy production is constant, unlike fickle winds and sunshine. But worldwide, nuclear plants are down 15 percent of the time, and when a plant goes down, so does a large fraction of the grid. Connecting wind farms over large areas through transmission lines smoothes power supply. Combining geothermal with wind (whose power potential often peaks at night) and solar (which peaks by day), and using hydroelectricity to fill in gaps, would almost always match demand. Converting to electric vehicles and using smart charging practices would also help to match supply with demand. So would storing energy (with concentrated solar) and giving people incentives to reduce demand. It is not rocket science to match power demand. It merely requires thinking out of the box. Finally, the costs of land-based wind, geothermal and hydroelectricity are competitive with conventional new sources of electricity; costs of solar and wind over the ocean are higher but declining. Costs of nuclear have historically been underestimated. In sum, if we invest in nuclear versus true renewables, you can bet that the glaciers and polar ice caps will keep melting while we wait, and wait, for the nuclear age to arrive. We will also guarantee a riskier future for us all. There is no need for nuclear. The world can be powered by wind, water and sun alone."

Special commentary to CNN on 22nd February 2010 (The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Mark Z. Jacobson).