

PRESS RELEASE

President Barroso calls for an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages in Colombia

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, met today in Brussels with President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia.

President Barroso expressed the European Union's solidarity with the hundreds of hostages still held in captivity by the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas) guerrilla, as well as with their families, the government and the Colombian people as a whole.

He also praised the efforts and the initiatives that the Colombian government is taking to secure their release. And he assured President Uribe of the European Union's support with regard to these initiatives, which are undertaken with the support of the Catholic Church, and using the good offices of several European countries.

President Barroso reiterated the EU's consistent appeals for "an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages". He said that "the release of Clara Rojas and Consuelo González was good news and gave us new hope, but we cannot forget the other 700, including Ingrid Betancourt, who are being held in inhuman conditions, many of them since several years".