

WORDS OF PEACE FOR EUROPE

29th June 2010



European Parliament - Brussels International Conference organized by the 1st Vice-President, Gianni Pittella

The event's topic was the role that peace can have in individual and social life as a fundamental value. It was an occasion to introduce to the European Parliament a prominent advocate of peace, Mr. Prem Rawat.

Mr. Pavel Borodin, State Secretary of the Union of Russia and Belarus was also invited to speak at the event.

350 guests came from Italy, France, Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Switzerland, Germany, United States and other countries.

The conference was joined by Members of the European Parliament, political authorities and representatives of humanitarian organizations.

The President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, sent a message to organizers and participants, underlining the importance of the conference's topic and expressing his personal appreciation and his best wishes for the success of the event. Lifetime Italian Senator Emilio Colombo, a former President of the European Parliament, also sent a personal message.

Gianni Pittella
1st Vice-President of
the European
Parliament

Hon. Pittella welcomed the guests of honour, the authorities and the large audience, thanking the President of the Italian Republic and Senator Colombo for their messages. Then he introduced the conference:

"For me and my fellow members of the European Parliament it is a great honour to host Mr. Rawat and Mr. Borodin in this Parliament House, the largest

multinational institution in the world, which includes the representatives of five hundred million citizens in 27 European countries, where twenty-three languages are spoken.

I am very glad to host you all, distinguished guests and political and cultural personalities coming from many countries. I think this is one of the most important events



held in the European Parliament, having such an international audience."

The Vice-President then spoke about how peace is at the core of the modern cultural and institutional vision of Europe, and he recalled the original drive towards European unity.

"The European Parliament has now become the highest political and institutional expression of a project that originated from a common cry: 'no more wars!'. A united Europe was indeed a project of peace, which culminated in the unity of a continent that fought so many ferocious wars.

I think there could be no better way to remember the essence of the universal message that our distinguished guests, Prem Rawat and Pavel Borodin, are here to communicate with their words.

The peace described by Prem Rawat, if I am allowed to offer an

interpretation of his message, concerns every single moment of the life of men and women. You could say that peace is considered to be an innate condition. How to not agree with this call, so strong and serene at the same time? How not to recognize how often all of us, each one of us, wanders far from the recognition of this simple truth? And to this we are all called upon,

each one with his own personal responsibility."

Of course, the scenario around us, Mr. Pittella added, is full of contradictions and difficulties. You can easily understand that by simply looking at what has happened in recent decades.

"Do you remember the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? All individuals have in themselves a value and a dignity. They are



members of the human family and they have inalienable rights. The right to life, to freedom, to personal security and to all the other rights mentioned there. These rights are now connected to the Lisbon Treaty and they acquired the strength of law. But this set of rights is often seen as quite uncomfortable by many governments."

We are still facing today, the Vice-President said, a very shortsighted and violent attitude towards these rights coming from governments, financial and business interests and very partisan opinions, that show us how on the subject of peace there is a big gap between statements of principle and their practical application, and how much road we still have in front of us.

"Unfortunately the European project in its early years was focused on economics and market dynamics. It was actually born as a larger marketplace.

But then it developed along an ethical line, and we came a long way with respect to integration and protection of rights. We are now a continent of peace, and we are bearers of peace, of tolerance, of concord all over the world. Europe as a whole is the largest donor in the world for international cooperation and development. And a united Europe is an essential factor of

"To pursue peace through the pursuit of a human condition that would see dignity, self-respect and respect for the others prevail."

Gianni Pittella

peace in international relations that are still unfortunately ridden by recurring conflicts.

I wanted to offer these comments on the European Union in the attempt to find a connection with the essence of the message that Pavel Borodin and Prem Rawat will give us. To pursue peace through the pursuit of a human condition that would see dignity, self-respect and respect for the others prevail.

Political and institutional representatives are required to offer more than a simple testimony and a moral commitment. We have the possibility of making tools available and creating as much as possible the conditions for promoting successfully a development that can be shared and human rights in general. We'll be able to do this even better, if we listen to the simple and truthful words of our guests here today."

Quoting one of Prem Rawat's addresses, where he said that peace is not simply absence of war, Mr. Pittella remembered a thought by the Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio:

"We need to create the ways of peace walking new roads, this is a duty of intelligence."

Concluding his presentation, Vice-President Pittella expressed his personal wish:

"We need to have a new collective awareness, so that we can influence in a positive way the actions of governments and their representatives. I am confident that in the words we are about to listen to from our guests, we will find the encouragement we need for doing just that and the help for disseminating inside and outside of us the signs and the seeds of peace. Thank you all again."

Pavel Borodin State Secretary of the Union of Russia and Belarus

State Secretary Borodin, after having greeted the other speakers illustrated his humanitarian activities.

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Rawat, Members of the European Parliament, honoured guests,

I would like to thank you for your kind invitation to speak today at this most important of institutions. I commend the European Parliament for holding a conference on such an important subject.

It is a great honour to be able to address you on the fundamental subject of peace and humanitarianism. This is a subject dear to my heart.



honourable efforts for the poorest of people across the World, especially for children.

In Russia at the moment there are about one million homeless children. The state cares for them, but yet it is not enough.

For 40 years now I have tried, to the best of my ability to help homeless children.

I started this activity back in the days when I worked in Yakutia. This is a republic with an extremely harsh climate located in Siberia, in the northeast of our country. Temperatures in the winter often fall to minus 68 centigrade and then rise to over 47 centigrade in the summer. It is a huge territory, covering 3 time zones and 3.2 million square kilometers. In fact one fifth of Russia.

"It is a great honour to be able to address you on the fundamental subject of peace and humanitarianism. This is a subject dear to my heart."

Pavel Borodin

To me humanitarianism is an essential element of peace, bringing dignity and hope to those in need.

Prem Rawat's humanitarian efforts are well known in many countries and news of them has reached Russia. I very much appreciate his

Over the years, with the help of businesses, private donors and social organisations, I help with the financing and maintenance of 5 orphanages in Yakutia. 84 of those children have now settled down to jobs and married life in Moscow. Others have become citizens of



Europe; in Switzerland and France and some have settled in the United States.

In addition to Yakutia, I help 10 other orphanages in the Ulyanovsk Region and the Republic of Belarus, as well as 3 other orphanages in my hometown of Shakhunya and in the Republic of Tuva, located in the eastern part of Russia.

During this time more than one thousand children were set up in life.

My wife and I have 5 children, 4 of whom we adopted. Because of this we feel very close to the orphans who are an integral part of our lives.

We are able to be more involved in 2 Moscow orphanages which we established through the charity we set up called "Otchi Dom". Translated from Russian this means "Parental Home". These are local to us which means we can visit regularly. My wife and I visit them once a year.

These are so called family-type children's homes. We believe this is the best form of orphanage for children without parents. Living in these children's homes brings them close to a family atmosphere of which most have been deprived from early childhood.

One house consists of six apartments, the other one of eight. A house mother looks after up to

eight children in each apartment, all of different ages. This creates a very close bond between them all as they grow up.

Each apartment is joined to common areas for play and study, so each apartment can mix socially. In addition a tutor, doctor and psychologist are there to care for them and each house has its own swimming pool and a sports ground.

Our children attend kindergartens, day schools, colleges and after graduation continue studying in institutes and universities. We have obtained agreements with municipalities that pupils will receive housing, usually provided to them when they turn 18.

I am very proud of the achievements of the orphanages, and humbled to have played a small part in giving these children a real chance in life.

I truly hope that all these children find peace, dignity and prosperity in their lives, qualities highlighted by Prem Rawat and his foundation, and ones I wholeheartedly endorse.

As the State Secretary of the Union State of Russia and Belarus, it is my privilege and honour to have addressed you today; to participate in this most worthy of causes, and I hold out the hand of friendship to you all."

Before concluding, Mr. Borodin presented his work as the person responsible for the daunting task of restoring in just three years the Kremlin Palace after 100 years of neglect, and he dedicated a few words to the state of the economy in Belarus, suggesting that we should create a united area of Russia, Belarus and Europe.

Then he mentioned one of his most visionary projects for international development and cooperation:

"I call upon everyone here to collaborate in an ambitious task. A new road connecting London to Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Warsaw, Minsk, all through Russia and going even to Tokyo. A road for all means of transport, cars, trains, everything.



It will be a common space crossing all these countries. For Europe this would present the opportunity of 10 to 12 million jobs. And it would be a major opportunity for Russia, Belarus and Siberia. Many thanks."

Prem Rawat
International ambassador of peace and keynote speaker

In his address, Prem Rawat put the topic of peace at the centre, as an individual and fundamental need:

"Mr. Vice President, Mr. State Secretary, honorable members of the European Parliament, distinguished guests. You've already heard a lot from both of our speakers, and I have a few things to say. They are very simple in nature. I am a person who believes that it's

good to talk about peace; it's better to feel it. It's good to talk about human progress; it's better to actually have it.

A long, long time ago, human beings showed a particular trait. And this trait was to better themselves.

And in this spirit of bettering ourselves, not only externally, there is a fundamental need to better ourselves from within. From our heart. Not only from our mind, but from our heart. Not only in ideas, but in reality. This is who we are. These are the genes, the ideas, that have shaped us to the point that we are today.

We have always been concerned about our future. We have always wondered: What will happen to us? And today, after all the changes that we see today, we still question our future. "What will happen to us?" There are people who say that earth will be destroyed. And when we hear that, we feel concerned. It's natural. Right now, in the economic situation of the world, there are people who are wondering what's going to happen to them. United States is still fighting the longest war that it has ever fought. Wars continue. Reasons are declared. Justifications are thrown out. Innocent women and children are killed. For what? For reasons. For explanations. For ideas. For ideals that people have created.

In my opinion, the ideal should be to have peace on this earth, where people feel and celebrate having peace."

Mr. Rawat then addressed the topic of prosperity, putting it in close relation to peace:

We talk about prosperity. In my formula—and this is only because I have observed it—prosperity without peace is chaos. Just a few years ago, everything was wonderful. Everybody was proud. "Yes, the economy; yes, the economy..." And then all of a sudden, we see that prosperity without peace leads to



"In my opinion, the ideal should be to have peace on this earth, where people feel and celebrate having peace."

Prem Rawat

chaos. If we want to avoid this chaos, then we have to work on what peace really is.

And see that peace is not a monastery. That peace is not absence of noise, as it is not absence of war. Peace is not a declaration. Peace is a fundamental human need that needs to be felt from within. And I'm paraphrasing the UNESCO Charter: That it is in the minds of men, of human beings, that the wars are created. That's where it comes from. And I just want to add this much: it is in the hearts of human beings that peace will be created. When there is a simple recognition of one another—that we may look different, we may speak differently, but we have the same fundamental needs, we share this place called planet Earth.

One example that I like to use is that scientists have searched for many of miles of outer space for another form of life, and...guess what? It's just us. Only us. We need to understand the importance of getting to live along with each other. With each other's differences. To accept and welcome the differences.

I speak two languages, and I know that what you say in English, you can say in Hindi. It's not any different.

You just say it differently. It's different words, but the meaning is exactly the same.

Not too long ago, my wife and I were blessed with a grandson. And just five months old. And, he likes to talk. Of course, he can't speak a word, but he likes to talk. And he makes noises. And there is a way he communicates. It is the most powerful form of communication. When he's happy, he smiles. Do you know who taught him that? It wasn't me. It wasn't his mother. It wasn't his daddy. It wasn't any instructions that he read, "When you are happy, smile."

We are part of a much greater world than we realize. Much more fundamental things are afoot here. And amongst those fundamental things is the need and desire for peace. So, like I said, it is good to talk about peace, it's better to feel peace. It's good to talk about food, but it is better to actually eat it. It is okay to talk about water, but it is better to drink it.

People ask me: If you think peace is so simple, how come we don't have peace on this earth? It's a very important question, because everybody has their own

interpretation of what peace is. We don't recognize peace as being as universal as the sun. We don't recognize peace as fundamental as water. We don't recognize peace as essential as air. What we are busy doing—and this is another thing that as human beings we are very good at—whenever we can't find what we are searching for, we immediately start defining it. And our definitions are our expectations of what we are looking for.



Instead of coming together, we argue, "What is peace? How will peace be?" We fight with each other. Do you know there has been a war going on amongst the people who love God for a longer period of time than you can imagine? And they all love one God. But they fight about their version of who God is. Are we doing the same thing with peace? Are we fracturing the necessity that we have in our lives for peace, by giving it definitions? Or, are we accepting the simple principle that peace is a real need, and it will only be felt in the heart of every human being?

Every human being. That has to be the target. There are people who can give five reasons, six reasons, seven reasons or even ten reasons, of why there cannot be peace on this earth. I have 6.5 billion reasons why there should be peace on this earth.

This is the time when the nations need to come together, because

remember, it was those kings and those rulers in whose rule peace reigned who were considered the most successful rulers. And prosperity followed.

It seems to me that prosperity loves peace. Create peace, and prosperity seems to come right along and create its stage, and dance for everyone

Then, regarding the difference between a far ideal and a real possibility, Mr. Rawat added:

These are not impossible dreams. These are realities that can be had. If we can make such a mess out of this earth, if we have that much power, then certainly, we have enough power to bring peace on this earth, too. The question remains whether it is something that we want to do or not.

Because peace begins with every one of you. When you look at a city at night, you see a whole area that is lit up—but don't forget it

is individual bulbs that are actually making that scene look the way it looks—individual bulbs. It is individual human beings who need peace, it is individual human beings in whom the desire resides, and it is on the individual human being's stage that peace needs to dance.

Is it possible? It doesn't require a prayer. It requires an understanding. It does not require a wish. It requires determination. Nor does it require definitions. It requires clarity. If we can go to the moon, it should certainly be possible to reach the shortest distance there is from one to one's heart, and feel that joy that exists inside of us.

Determination, understanding, and clarity have to be the fundamental foundations on which this palace will be built. Not exclusion, but inclusion. When our measurements are going to be the similarities and not the

differences. That is the day we begin to lay the foundation for peace in this world.

Who will benefit? We will all benefit. Our future generations will benefit. Their children and grandchildren. A place proudly call their own. As citizens of this planet earth, which unquestionably—is the rarest thing around for millions of miles.

Mr. Rawat concluded his address extending his thanks and expressing a wish for everyone present:

"I always find it a great honor to be in the company of those people who are interested in peace, because they forge the way ahead to the possibility of peace for everyone on this earth.

It has been my great honor to be invited to the European Parliament, to have the pleasure of saying a few words about peace. Believe me, I have a very strong feeling that if we really want to, this can be done. It will not be one person. It is too easy to say one person will do it. No. It will be all of us. It is the responsibility of all of us, because it is all of us who need peace. Not just our neighbor—all of us.

Thank you very much. And may peace come one day to all of us. Thank you."

Immediately following Mr. Rawat's address, Mr. Borodin wanted to offer a spontaneous and warm vision of hope and confidence regarding the economic crisis and the cooperation between nations:

"I wanted to say that I fully support Mr. Rawat, and I would like to add that regarding the economic crisis we have available a vast territory and many resources. We already provide Europe with all the gas it needs, we provide European industries with precious metals. I would like to create new joint industries with Europe, Russia, Belarus. All of us together. I can

assure you all that Russia, with its economic potential and its resources can guarantee all needed resources for many, many years to come. Many thanks.”

Mr. **Pittella** closed the conference with words of profound appreciation for the message of peace offered by Prem Rawat and for the courtesy and the friendship of State Secretary Borodin, and he concluded saying:

"I'll take one more minute to thank again Prem Rawat for his address, which certainly hit the target, our heart. I am confident that each one of us will leave taking in the heart a feeling of peace and a feeling that will inspire each one of us to build peace. My thanks to Pavel Borodin, and I would like to assure you all: we, the European Union are interested in a strong, loyal and productive cooperation with Russia. And we consider you privileged friends.

A sincere thank you to you all, because with your wonderful participation you have been testifying how it is possible to gather around a noble idea such a community of men and women, united by the same goal. I would like to conclude saying: each one of us, let's do our part in favour of peace.

But it's also necessary that the institutions will play their part in favour of the same objective. In this regard, let me assure you that the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Institutions are fully committed to defending peace within Europe and to being actors of peace all over the world. Many thanks to you all. “





Short Biographies

Gianni Pittella

Born in 1958 in Lauria, Italy, married and father of two sons. M.D. and surgeon, specialized in legal and insurance medicine.

At very young age he joins the Young Socialist Federation, and he soon becomes Regional Coordinator and a member of the Central Committee.

In 1980 he is the youngest Regional Councilor in Italy. He takes on different roles in his region (Basilicata), both in his party and in the Regional Government. He is Regional Minister for Culture and then for Industrial Policies.

In 1999 he is elected Member of the European Parliament. He is re-elected in 2004.

In 2009 he is elected First Vice-President of the European Parliament, in Strasbourg.

The President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, delegated him to represent the Euro-parliament in the following areas: Parliament Budget, Legislative Reconciliation, Euro-Mediterranean Assembly (APEM), Latin America, Parliament's Real Estate Committee and others.

Gianni Pittella is a member of the "Internal Market and Consumer Protection" and "Economic and monetary affairs" commissions.

He is also part of delegations keeping relations with many East European and Euro-Mediterranean countries.

Pavel Borodin

Born in 1946, Mr. Borodin is a Russian official and politician.

He was born in the town of Shakhunya, near the city of Nizhny (formerly known as Gorky during Soviet times) in the Nizhny Novgorod Region.

Shortly after his birth the family moved to the city of Kyzyl in the Tuva Region, which is situated in the far south of Siberia.

After a long political career at several levels, between 1993 – 2000 he was made Head of the Presidential Property Management Department of the Russian Federation.

In this position he coordinated the restoration of the Kremlin Palace, which was completed in three years.

Since 2000 he has been the State Secretary of the Union of Russia and Belarus.

For several decades now he has been a keen promoter of philanthropic initiatives for orphan children. He established and supports several orphanages in Moscow, Vilyuisk, Yakutsk, in the Tula region, and Belarus.

Pavel Borodin and his wife have a grown daughter. The Borodin family have raised four foster children as well.

In the last few years he has been a strong advocate of economic cooperation between Russia and Europe, with particular regard to the fields of industry and emphasis on infrastructure and transportation.

Prem Rawat

Born in India, he lives with his family in the United States. His ongoing commitment to encourage people to consider the topic of peace sees him travelling around the globe for most of the year in response to the numerous invitations he receives. His ceaseless activity as promoter of peace has taken him to over 50 countries.

In his addresses Prem Rawat presents a profound yet original point of view regarding the topics of peace and the importance of the individual. His perspective has been welcomed by people of the most diverse cultures and backgrounds.

With the understanding that peace is strictly connected to human dignity, Prem Rawat has founded TPRF (The Prem Rawat Foundation).

This Foundation is engaged in numerous humanitarian initiatives, often in collaboration with other important international organizations.

For his commitment, both as an ambassador of peace and a promoter of humanitarian initiatives, Prem Rawat has received awards in honour of his work by many Governmental Organizations in countries all around the world.

Alongside his work as an international keynote speaker, Prem Rawat has many other interests. He is a highly qualified civil aviation pilot, author and composer.

*Produced by The Prem Rawat Foundation
Photos and excerpts by courtesy of the European Parliament*