



**MESSAGE OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
TO THE RECTORS OF ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES  
OF THE MASTER IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS  
PROMOTED BY UNESCO AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ROME LA SAPIENZA**

"SALA DELLE BANDIERE"  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INFORMATION OFFICE IN ITALY  
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One of the major challenges of the XXI century is ensuring international peace and security in the light of the new world balance of power. In this context the existence of a dialogue between the representatives and civil society of the two shores of the Mediterranean is now more necessary than ever. We need to find ways of replacing the prevailing atmosphere of potential confrontation with dialogue. We need to establish an 'Alliance of Civilisations' not a 'Clash of Civilisations'.

Europe must put itself forward as the **protagonist** of a new strategy to intervene in crisis situations, a strategy based on a realistic foreign and common security policy. As well as being based on diplomatic, economic and military action, it should be based on a strong humanitarian culture capable of understanding the most urgent needs of populations.

In this context, universities have a very important role to play in promoting peaceful co-existence. **Universities are not just a place where men and women come to gain knowledge. It is a place where people of different nationalities and culture learn to respect each other, communicate together and compare their experiences.**

This innovative co-operation programme, promoted for a long time by the University of Rome La Sapienza , under the auspices of the European Parliament , helps to rethink the role of the university by preparing new generations to face the international challenges ahead. It aims to give them **a greater sense of social responsibility, to encourage the skills required for the elaboration of common and viable solutions to urgent crises.**

The ambitious project of Prof. Renato Guarini, Rector of the University of Rome La Sapienza and Prof. Luigi Frati, Vice Rector of the University of Rome La Sapienza is a step in the right direction. This project is a **Masters course in "Social Sciences and Humanitarian Affairs"**, directed by Prof. Manuel Castello and Prof. Massimo Caneva. It is promoted by UNESCO and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with Al Quds University and Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Haifa University, Tel Aviv University, Ben Gurion University and the Weizmann Institute of Sciences, the Italian Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Italian Consulate in Jerusalem.

Today, here in Rome, we have the pleasure of bringing together the Rectors, professors and students from Israeli and Palestinian Universities with those of La Sapienza University

At a time when many in both Israel and the Palestinian territories are pleading for unilateral solutions to their conflict, it is especially important that the universities maintain their contact and dialogue with each other. It is only by keeping this flame alive that we will be able to create the conditions for a lasting peace in that troubled region.

I offer the full support of the European Parliament to this programme, which I hope will contribute to promoting a new culture of dialogue and solidarity.

**Josep Borrell Fontelles**