



Brussels, 22 January 2010

BACKGROUND¹
GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
Monday, 25 January 2010, in Brussels

The General Affairs Council (GAC), chaired by the Spanish Presidency, will begin at 10.00 on Monday, 25 January 2010.

The Council will give a presentation of the priorities for the Spanish Presidency, namely: implementing the Treaty of Lisbon in full; promoting economic recovery and sustainable growth across Europe and launching Europe 2020; strengthening the Union's foreign policy to make it a truly global player; fostering a Europe of rights and freedoms for its citizens.

The Spanish Presidency will focus on fostering economic recovery across the Union through sustainable growth geared to generating employment. It aims to increase the coordination at EU level of the Member States' domestic economic policies, ahead of the new EU 2020 Growth and Employment Strategy.

With the Treaty of Lisbon now in force, it falls to the Spanish Presidency to ensure as its first priority that it is implemented rigorously and in full, setting up the new European Union institutions. This is the chief priority underpinning all the other Presidency activities.

In the field of external action, the Spanish Presidency will collaborate closely with the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to make the best use of the possibilities created by the new Treaty. The Union is now equipped to streamline and strengthen its Common Foreign and Security Policy and assume its role as a fully-fledged global player promoting its values and interests in the international arena.

For the Union to enhance its global role and influence it needs to foster close links with its citizens and build their support and involvement. To this end, the Spanish Presidency aims to strengthen the rights, civil liberties and security of Europe's citizens and promote real equality between men and women.

The Council will be followed by a press conference.

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Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:
<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office