



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 8 February 2010
PCE 25/10**

**Invitation letter by
Herman Van Rompuy,
President of the European Council,
for the Informal meeting of Heads of State or Government**

Herman VAN ROMPUY, President of the European Council, sent today the letter enclosed to the EU Heads of State or Government. The letter sets out the agenda and the objectives of the Informal meeting that will be held in Brussels on 11 February.

Le Président du Conseil européen Herman VAN ROMPUY a envoyé aujourd'hui la lettre d'invitation ci-jointe aux Chefs d'Etat ou de Gouvernement de l'Union . La lettre précise l'ordre du jour et les objectifs de la réunion informelle qui aura lieu à Bruxelles le 11 février prochain.

Other linguistic versions of the letter will be available

P R E S S

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I look forward to our informal meeting on 11 February. The purpose of this meeting is primarily to discuss the direction of our economic policies for the years to come, in the form of a renewed strategy for jobs and growth. This is even more important in the light of recent developments inside and outside the eurozone. We will also devote some time to the lessons to be drawn from the Copenhagen Conference on climate change. We have to take into account the most recent international developments and reflect on how to adjust to them. Finally, we will look at the way ahead on Haiti.

I see our meeting as the beginning of a process of close and ongoing concertation among Heads of State or government on all major issues facing the EU. It is my intention for the European Council to regularly come back to those themes and provide clear guidance.

In order to facilitate an open and informal discussion, I have arranged for the meeting to take place outside the Justus Lipsius building, in the renowned Bibliothèque Solvay.

We will start our meeting at 10h15 with an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek.

After the family photo, we will devote our first working session, as well as our lunch, to discussing our economic strategy. The economic crisis has increased the sense of urgency to refocus our efforts and to better coordinate among ourselves. All European economies are facing major challenges. Our structural growth rate is not high enough to create jobs and sustain our social model. We need to act together to address these challenges to help preserve our European way of life and keep up with the other major economies in the world. Without losing sight of the immediate challenges, we need to look at our medium term priorities and see how we can better coordinate our efforts.

In the past years, the Lisbon Strategy has been a useful framework for policies in the EU. But it requires ownership and commitment at the highest level - the new strategy needs to become our joint responsibility. As a contribution to our discussion, I have set out a few ideas on how to achieve those objectives, taking into account the discussions I have had over the last weeks with each of you. I will give the floor to Jose Manuel Barroso who will talk to us about the priorities of the new economic strategy, in advance of the Commission's formal proposals expected by early March. I expect a substantial discussion, focusing on the political aspects.

The discussion will continue over lunch. We will also use the lunch for an exchange of views on some aspects of the present economic situation.

After lunch, we will start our second working session at 14h30 by asking José Manuel Barroso to share with us his evaluation of the Copenhagen Conference on climate change. I propose to centre the debate on the following points. First, we need to assess the situation after the notifications of the UNFCCC parties and discuss future tactics. Second, we should explore concrete ways of changing the dynamics of the negotiating process. Third, we should talk about the lessons to be drawn from Copenhagen for our relations with strategic partners. This concerns working with willing partners on issues like green technologies and norms while insisting that major players face up to their responsibilities in a globalized world so as to ensure a level playing field. I have asked the High Representative to share with us her first thoughts on the latter issue.

Finally, we will address the dramatic situation in Haiti. Beyond immediate rescue operations, we must not lose sight of the need for longer-term reconstruction efforts. The forthcoming international conference on Haiti will accordingly need a coordinated preparation by the EU. We should also start looking at the lessons to be drawn as regards the EU's emergency response capacity, taking account of the possibilities opened by the new treaty. On all of these issues, we need to ensure that work is rapidly advanced.

I am looking forward to a strategic discussion, allowing the members of the European Council fully to play their role in setting orientations for the work of the Union.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'H' followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end.

H. VAN ROMPUY