



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Madrid, 18 May 2010  
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**Speech by Herman Van Rompuy,  
President of the European Council,  
at the closing ceremony of the EU-LAC Summit  
Madrid, 18 May 2010**

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to our host country, Spain, and Prime Minister Zapatero for the excellent hospitality provided for the EU-LAC summit. Gracias!

We have to restore the true meaning of a summit. It is not just a gathering at high level. A summit can become a true symbol, as it refers to more than a single meeting, but to a longer, deeper and richer relationship. Summits of this kind go beyond trying to solve the problem of the day, and transcend the concrete results. They create a sense of ownership, give greater visibility to a conscious strategic choice. They provide direction, political momentum, even a vision for the future of the relationship. I am firmly convinced the summit we had today was a summit in the true sense.

Europe, Latin-America and the Caribbean are knit together by a lot more than just a powerful trade relationship. We are tied by culture, history, language, democratic values. Less than one month before the beginning of the World Cup in South Africa I must firmly point out our shared devotion to football as well.

Together the leaders who gathered here today represent more than one billion people, one third of the membership of the United Nations, and a significant share of the global economy. However, in itself this is nothing more than potential. Our relationship is not automatic, it will remain under its potential without conscious political investment from both sides. We should actively seize opportunities to become truly strategic partners in a globalised world.

Also, our relationship is not without a context. The relationship between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean is not independent from economic and political globalisation, the consequences of the global financial crisis and economic recession, the myriad of new challenges.

The world is changing, each of us is changing, and our relationship must adapt. It is in this context that we need to reaffirm our strategic partnership and decide to strengthen our cooperation. It is in this context that we decide to work together to promote our interests and values, to contribute to peace and security, to protect and promote human rights, and to strengthen democracy. We must bring up our relationship to its potential in the framework of the G20, in combating climate change, in fighting against terrorism and narco-trafficking, and in addressing the new security challenges that threaten the networks our societies are built on.

**P R E S S**

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As the world changes so does the European Union. The project of European integration is more than half a century old now, but it keeps renewing and reinventing itself.

We are just a few months after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. But development does not stop here. In light of the financial crisis the leaders of Europe decided to harmonise more closely their economic policies as well. That work is just about to start within a few days in the so called Task Force on economic governance. We will overcome this crisis and become stronger than before. European unification belongs to our genes now.

In light of our historic experience with integration we Europeans certainly support and promote the idea of further regional integration elsewhere. Our bi-regional partnership and strategic dialogue could be a powerful tool in that endeavour. We also aim at enhancing our bi-regional partnership through a network of Association Agreements.

The vision for our partnership is, therefore, clear. However, our summits cannot be only about the vision, they must also focus on deliverables. Our summit today was a successful one on that account as well.

This very closing ceremony represents the opportunity to mark the official launch of the Latin America Investment Facility, and the creation of the EU-LAC Foundation.

I congratulate President Barroso for years of strenuous work he and his colleagues have invested in these projects. We have also approved the Madrid Action Plan providing a definite roadmap for the future development of our partnership. It is going to be our best tool to ensure appropriate follow-up. It will also help intensifying our strategic dialogue in key policy areas such as economy and finance, environment, energy, climate change, science and technology, innovation, education and employment.

Finally, I would like to thank all Heads of Delegations for their extremely constructive contributions to our work. I would like to express my special thanks to President Kirchner of Argentina. And I would like to wish all the best to the President of Chile, the host of the next EU-LAC summit in 2012.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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