



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 4 March 2011
PCE 060/11**

**Invitation letter
by President Herman Van Rompuy
to the European Council**

In the light of the momentous developments in Libya and our Southern Neighbourhood, it is important that the European Union acts with determination and sends a clear and positive message to the whole region, expressing full support to the transition towards more democracy, pluralism and social inclusion. This is why I have convened an extraordinary meeting of the European Council on Friday 11 March 2011 to discuss latest events and set guidelines for the European Union's action in the region.

After the traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament at 11.30, we will gather for an early working lunch to discuss how the European Union can best support this transition, in the hands of the people in the region. I will ask the High Representative and the President of the Commission to brief us on the follow up given to our 4 February declaration, including on the meeting of Foreign Ministers convened by Cathy Ashton on 10 March. I will also ask Prime Minister Orban to report on the work that has been conducted in the Council over the past weeks.

I will then open the floor for discussion, first on the following short term issues:

- measures to help overcome the dramatic events unfolding in Libya,
- mobilisation of further resources to meet the humanitarian situation created by the influx of returnees from Libya
- challenges to the EU posed by irregular migration,
- the evacuation of EU citizens,
- support to the political transitions underway in Tunisia, Egypt and the broader region.

Second, we should look at what needs to be done over the coming weeks and months to support democratic transformation, encourage reforms and promote regional security and prosperity thus ensuring solid foundations for stability, throughout the whole Southern Neighbourhood. In this regard, a priority should be to complete the review of our Neighbourhood Policy, with the aim to set up a new partnership, involving earmarked support, tailored to the needs and performance of these countries. This will be the occasion also to renew the Union for the Mediterranean.

P R E S S

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Furthermore, we will launch work on possible measures to enhance trade and investment in the region and look at possibilities for the engagement from European financial institutions, particularly the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

We should keep track of the possible impact of disruptions of energy supplies and volatility of energy and food prices. We will also discuss how to co-operate with some of our partners in this endeavour.

Finally, we should agree on tasking the Council to rapidly follow-up on our decisions.
