



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Valletta, 13 April 2011  
PCE 097/11**

**Remarks by  
Herman Van Rompuy,  
President of the European Council  
following his meeting with Prime Minister of Malta,  
Lawrence Gonzi**

I am happy to be here again in Valletta. For me as the European Council's President, it is crucial to have a permanent dialogue on current affairs with all leaders of the Union, and not only in Brussels. I congratulate the Prime Minister for the results of his economic policy.

Prime Minister Gonzi and I discussed the recent economic measures approved by the European Council. I will not repeat all the decisions we took in detail. But let me say that our political commitment is to make sure that our economies are competitive enough to create jobs and to sustain the welfare of our citizens.

The economic package approved on 25 March will help us recover from the crisis. We have now new rules, new instruments and more ambitious economic policies. Of course the problems of some countries are not over yet. But we have the instruments to deal with them. Those problems are the remains of the past, in which there were no instruments and no political will to tackle the imbalances.

In preparation for the next European Council on 24 June we also spoke about challenges in the area of migration, asylum and border management. Not only due to the external developments in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and the Middle East, but also for internal EU reasons. These topics will be on the agenda.

The Union is very much aware of Malta's concerns arising from recent developments in Libya and neighbouring countries. The challenges are especially significant in view of your size and population. Malta can be assured that the EU will continue to show solidarity as well as with other Member States directly affected by large scale migratory movements. We can and we should do more.

In the pilot project EUREMA, Member States voluntarily take over from Malta persons in need of international protection. This project is delivering results. There are already commitments from other Member States to take over refugees. It is a good basis. I welcome that EU Home Affairs Ministers on Monday agreed to extend this project.

**P R E S S**

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Furthermore, the European Border Agency Frontex will continue to monitor and report on the situation in the region. The Commission together with Frontex and the European Asylum Office are willing to take further assistance measures if circumstances should so require.

Regarding pressure from Libya, the Union is ready to contribute to the maximum extent possible towards efforts to repatriate third country nationals leaving Libya and to provide protection in the region.

Let me briefly remind you of some of the concrete actions that the European Union has taken to respond to this serious challenge:

1. To manage the recent humanitarian emergency, the EU has mobilised € 30 million. Together with the funds provided bilaterally by Member States and by international donors, we have made it possible to:

- provide temporary shelter for the migrants and refugees,
- meet their basic needs, and
- assist in their return to their respective countries of origin.

This has also been made possible thanks to the work carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugees Agency (UNHCR).

2. Frontex is continuing to monitor the situation closely and is available to assist Member States which require practical support.

3. A further € 25 million of European funds has been earmarked to help those Member States most exposed to the growing flows of refugees and irregular migrants, as it is the case of Malta. This amount could be mobilised under the External Borders Fund and European Refugee Fund.

4. Finally, teams from the European Asylum Office which is in the process of being established in Valletta could be deployed to help the authorities to screen the asylum seekers.

Prime Minister Gonzi and I agree that we will have to enhance our bilateral relations with our Southern Neighbourhood in a tailor-made manner. The countries of origin of irregular migrants will have to

- make a determined effort to effectively prevent irregular migration flows,
- cooperate in the readmission of irregular migrants,
- patrol their maritime borders,
- enhance their law enforcement capacity, and
- take steps aimed at facilitating the sustainable reintegration of irregular migrants who return home.

Cooperation in these areas will be a key condition for their future relations with the EU. Prime Minister Gonzi and I are convinced that these initiatives already set the course towards more modern and comprehensive EU policies in the areas of Migration, Asylum and Border Control.

I will cooperate closely with Prime Minister Gonzi in the preparation of our discussions at the next European Council in June on migration and asylum.

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