



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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### **Remarks by President Van Rompuy following his meeting with Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk**

I am very glad to be here in Warsaw to celebrate that Poland will take over for the first time the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This is a symbolic event.

I will work closely with the Polish Presidency of the Council. This cooperation will consist not only in formal contacts and preparation of the European Council, but also in numerous informal contacts and consultations on issues on the agenda of the European Union. Cooperation is key. Our relationship of mutual trust and common European convictions is an excellent basis.

Of course economic issues will continue to dominate the European debate over the next six months. We will work on ideas to enhance growth, we will prepare the next G20 summit in Cannes, and we will discuss financial regulation.

One of the major tasks of the Polish Presidency will be to launch the debate on the new multi annual financial framework for the years 2014 - 2020. The upcoming negotiations on the European budget within the Council and with the European Parliament will be intensive and complex. The debate will focus not only on "how much money should be available for whom" or "who is paying" but also on "where" the money should be spent. In other words, which will be the political priorities of the European Union for the coming years. A debate hopefully without slogans and one-sided views.

# **P R E S S**

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Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ( +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19  
Jesús Carmona - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ( +32 (0)2 281 9548 / 5150 - +32 (0)475 65 32 15  
[press.president@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.president@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

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The Polish presidency will also have to finalise the legislative package on economic governance reform. We are very close to an agreement, but few issues still have to be settled to have a full fledged deal. This should be a top priority for the beginning of the Presidency and I know you are already investing on it.

Let me say a few words about the economic situation in the Eurozone. What we are facing is not a crisis of the euro. As a currency, it has strengthened in value on international monetary markets. Throughout its existence, it has maintained a low and stable inflation rate. The balance of trade of the Eurozone is in broad equilibrium. Overall public debt levels are lower (yes, lower!) than the USA or Japan. Economic growth has returned to the Eurozone as a whole more rapidly than expected and new jobs are being created.

But three Member States are facing a sovereign debt crisis and the situation in Greece is particularly vulnerable.

Over the medium term, we have to increase convergence within the Eurozone. We became so dependent from each other that the problem of one country is a problem of all the members of the club.

I welcome Poland's interest in the Eurozone. That's why it subscribed earlier than others to the Euro-plus Pact on economic co-ordination. It reflects the strong involvement of your country in economic developments in the euro area.

By the way, Poland is the only country in the EU that has not experienced recession in 2009.

The European project continues to attract countries in our neighbourhood. For many, the Union symbolises the peace and prosperity of our continent.

Last week, the European Council paved the way for Croatia's accession to the EU as the 28th Member State. Two days ago, Croatia's accession negotiations were formally concluded. This is a milestone. The signing of the Accession Treaty will take place under the Polish Presidency. This will give momentum to the European perspective of the whole Western Balkans. Some important decisions can be expected from the European Council in December, provided that these countries vigorously continue the reforms.

The importance of regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations will also be emphasised during the Polish Presidency of the Council. This is an area where Poland has done a lot, both before and since joining the Union, with different initiatives and projects.

One example is the Eastern Partnership Summit that will be held in Warsaw at the end of September. This will be an excellent opportunity to confirm the importance of the EU's relations with its eastern neighbours, and to inject momentum for our future cooperation.

We have built Europe over several decades, sometimes smoothly and sometimes with difficulties. Each time there has been a difficulty, we have surmounted it. What unites us is ultimately always stronger than what divides us.

We try to create bit by bit and step by step more Europe. And we succeeded also last year in extremely difficult circumstances.

I count on you and on your Government and the Polish people to move us forward in the construction of Europe. I wish you a very successful Presidency.

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