



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

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**Remarks by  
Herman VAN ROMPUY  
President of the European Council  
at the press conference following the  
meeting of Heads of State or Government**

We had a very good discussion this morning and at lunch time, mainly on the Union's external relations. During luncheon we had the discussion focused on the Task Force.

Today, we immediately showed that the European Union can deliver on issues of great strategic interest: South Korea and Pakistan.

The European Council is pleased that a consensus was found today amongst the Foreign Ministers on the Free Trade Agreement with South-Korea. It is good news for our export industries, and therefore for jobs and growth in Europe.

On Pakistan: we want to give maximum support to this country after it was so severely struck by devastating floods. More aid and more trade; we want Pakistan to recover now and to develop economically. We will grant significantly increased market access. Cathy Ashton helped us to reach agreement on this important declaration.

Now, let's take a step back on Foreign Affairs. When I took office eight months ago, visiting our capitals, I noticed frustration following the Copenhagen Summit. The perception was that the EU was side-lined. Our economic outlook was not good, whereas others in the world were growing rapidly. Moreover, we started to realise how the economic strength of emerging countries is transforming into real political power. The G20 on which we took as a Union the initiative is a sign of this. This affects us: new players do not always share our interests and worldviews.

The Lisbon Treaty requires the European Council to define the Union's strategic interests and give strategic direction to the work of other institutions. I am glad that the Heads of State and Government today all agreed to take this up and deepen their involvement in the EU's foreign policy. They want more ownership by the European Council also in Foreign Affairs.

Now what did we discuss? It seemed urgent to me to address our strategic partnerships first. The issue today was to link general objectives to concrete means, to progress on the ground.

## **P R E S S**

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We therefore briefly talked about how to make the best use of the Lisbon Treaty, with the new External Action Service.

- How to make sure that what is done from Brussels and from the capitals goes in the same direction.
- How to coordinate better between the different actors in Brussels.
- How to bring together the different aspects of our relationships with partners, for instance during summits, in areas such as economy, climate, values and security.

The proof of the pudding of course is in the eating. How do we deal with our partners, one to one? Today we set priorities on a number of pressing matters.

Our key messages have to be underpinned by specific negotiations and trade-offs.

I retain from the discussion the following other points.

1. This is the beginning of a process. This European Council is the first in a row dedicated to foreign policy
2. Our key messages should be mandated by the European Council, prepared and implemented by the Foreign Affairs Council, the Commission and the High Representative.
3. Reciprocity is a key word, it is not a dirty word ; one can also speak about "mutual interests".
4. We all insist on deliverables and leverage.
5. We have precise ideas on how to position ourselves vis-à-vis China (as reflected in the Conclusions of the European Council). So thanks to today's discussion, when the President of the European Commission and I meet the Chinese Prime Minister in Brussels, three weeks from now, we do not speak just for "Brussels", we can speak on behalf of the 27.
6. We touched upon other upcoming meetings as well: the G20 summit in Seoul and the EU - US summit, both to take place in November, both crucial for global economic perspectives. We will further prepare these meetings in October. French President Sarkozy, as incoming chair, outlined some of his ideas for the G20 in 2011. He received our full support to create a new dynamic to the G8 and the G20.
7. Middle-East. The success of the Middle East Peace negotiations is in the strategic interest of the European Union. That's why we adopted a Declaration on this issue.
8. Our neighbourhood policy, for instance Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership is of the highest importance.
9. Our reputation in the world starts with stability on our own continent. If you want to be global players, you have to be, and we are, regional players.

From now on, we will discuss foreign policy in this spirit. We can only be strong if we are united.

We discussed also at lunchtime my progress report on the Task Force on economic governance. And so, I briefed my colleagues on the progress in the Task Force on economic governance and all the Heads of State and Government want to continue the work and to keep the momentum.

We have a large consensus on some of the most important issues, like the macro-economic surveillance framework and this will monitor and correct imbalances, risks of bubbles, and divergences in competitiveness. There is also agreement on strengthening national fiscal frameworks, enshrining European budget rules in national legislation. We also made progress on sanctions, even if more work is needed.

In October, I will present to the European Council the full report of the Task Force.

This spring, we won the battle of the Euro. I am confident that next month, we will draw the final right lessons of this crisis.

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