



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Berlin, 13 January 2010  
PCE 08/10**

**Remarks by  
Herman VAN ROMPUY, President of the European Council  
prior to the meeting with Ms Angela MERKEL,  
Chancellor of Germany**

Herman Van ROMPUY, President of the European Council, visited Berlin today to attend a meeting with Ms Angela MERKEL, Chancellor of Germany. The following is a summary of his remarks made to journalists prior to the meeting:

*"I am pleased to be in Berlin this evening, which is certainly an important stopover on my tour of the capitals. I come here in my capacity as President of the European Council to see Chancellor Merkel having been here just a year ago as Prime Minister of Belgium.*

*There are two big challenges facing us which will require the full engagement of the EU at the highest level and to which I will dedicate most of my energy and time over the coming months: tackling the economic crisis and responding to the climate change. A successful handling of these difficult issues is decisive for the near and remote future of our continent. For this reason, I took the initiative to convene an informal meeting of the Heads of State and Government on 11 February, to examine these two issues. The discussions with Chancellor Merkel will also serve the purpose to help prepare for this meeting and explore ideas and approaches to solutions.*

*The first objective of this meeting will be to examine how we can secure a full and lasting recovery in the Union after the crisis. The question is how we can put in place the structural changes which we had embarked on under the Lisbon Strategy and which are necessary to sustain future economic growth. One thing is already clear: we need economic growth which is sustainable and which is at*

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*least 2% instead of the projected structural growth of 1% in order to preserve our social model as well as to keep up with the other major economies in the world.*

*This is why we will take a close look at formulating a new economic strategy and governance which is necessary in order to help Member States come back to a growth path. Many ideas and suggestions will be put on the table. I am, however, confident that we will succeed in distilling the best of these ideas in order to shape the preconditions for a sustainable economic recovery. What I can already now say is that I consider it crucial that the heads of State or Government are closely associated, from the outset, with this process. This will ensure their commitment to implement what has been agreed.*

*At our meeting on 11 February, I plan to have an extensive discussion on this future strategy, without aiming at being conclusive. Then later on, at our regular Spring meeting, in the light of our February brainstorming and on the basis of a communication from the Commission, we will have a more structured discussion. And finally, the aim is to approve the new strategy at our June European Council.*

*The second important issue we will discuss in February is combating climate change. This is not a policy field like any other. It is an issue which is followed closely by the public and which is a test case for the efficiency and trustworthiness of political decision makers. Even if the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference certainly fell short of what was hoped, it provides a basis for further work. The EU gave its support to the text of the accord of the conference plenary session. We will know at the end of January the quantitative targets of the various countries in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> reductions. And in the light of these commitments we will be able to assess what is still needed to reach the objective of limiting the rise in temperature to a maximum of 2°C, a goal which now is generally acknowledged.*

*One thing became clear in Copenhagen: this process is probably more complicated and complex than we had thought. Therefore, I think we need to take sufficient time over the coming months to reflect carefully on the lessons to be drawn from Copenhagen and above all reflect on strategic questions. How can we reinforce our influence at the international level? How can we enhance our persuasive strength? How can we best take the process forward?*

*Germany will have an important role to play in the continuation of this process, in that it will be the host for the next important UN meeting to take place in Bonn at the end of May/beginning June*

*which is halfway to the next UN Climate Conference in Mexico in November 2010. I am confident that the German Government will fulfil this role very skilfully. On this occasion I would also express my appreciation for the commitment of the German Government to take forward the climate protection agenda and in particular for the personal commitment of Chancellor Merkel to this very important issue."*

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