



EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT

Brussels, 1 February 2011

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It is my pleasure to invite you to the meeting of the European Council in Brussels on 4 February 2011.

After our traditional encounter with the President of the European Parliament, we will discuss the future direction of our energy policy. A lot of preparatory work has been done and we should be able to quickly endorse the draft conclusions, which provide for concrete orientations on key elements of our energy strategy. I would like our discussion to focus on one of the most crucial aspects, that of energy security. On the one hand, energy security requires the rapid completion of an interconnected internal market. We should discuss the implications of this objective both in terms of regulation and physical infrastructure. On the other hand, energy security is also determined by our relations with key partners and by the diversification of our routes of supply and sources of energy. How can we therefore maximise the added value of the EU in terms of relations with key partners, with this time a particular emphasis on Russia?

Over lunch, we will move on to a more general discussion on the economy and ongoing efforts to counter the effects of the crisis. The President of the ECB will join us for these discussions. We have taken, since the beginning of last year, important measures to address the crisis and defined, at the December European Council, the key elements of a comprehensive strategy for the euro area that should be developed further. We will take stock of progress made since December, including on the legislative proposals on economic governance, and set out a clear path towards a comprehensive package by the March European Council. This entails agreement on strengthening the EFSF, the decision on the treaty change and agreement on the operational features of the future European Stability Mechanism, a determined pursuit of national reforms and fiscal consolidation, and ways of better ensuring macroeconomic coherence within the euro area.

At the end of our lunch we will exchange views on the latest events in Egypt and Tunisia and their implications for the region itself and the European Union.

In the afternoon, we will discuss which concrete initiatives can boost innovation in a way which benefits citizens, companies and researchers. In particular, we should exchange views on national experiences and reflect on how synergies can be promoted and how we can best articulate efforts at EU and national level. We will also approve the conclusions on innovation, which I believe are uncontroversial.

&salutations

H. VAN ROMPUY