



EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT

Brussels, 25 January 2012

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It is my pleasure to invite you to an informal meeting of the members of the European Council on 30 January 2012 in Brussels.

We will first have an exchange of views with the new President of the European Parliament to go over the main points we will later on discuss in the meeting of the members of the EC.

In the present economic situation, we must continue our efforts to ensure financial stability and fiscal consolidation: this is necessary in itself, but it is also a condition needed for returning to structural economic growth. At the same time, we need to take active measures to enhance growth and competitiveness and above all create jobs. Whilst our March meeting will provide wider guidance to Member States' economic and employment policies, I want us this time to focus on immediate action to be taken in the specific areas of youth unemployment, the Single Market and SMEs. To that end I have circulated a draft statement which should help structure our discussion and communicate its outcome.

My idea is to hold an interactive debate allowing us to share experiences of the different paths to promote jobs and growth. Thus, after general introductions by José Manuel Barroso on how the EU can support Member States' action, in particular as regards youth unemployment and support to SMEs, and by Helle Thorning-Schmidt, on the measures the Council needs to agree on rapidly, I will ask a number of lead speakers to introduce the three strands of our discussion (youth employment; the Single Market; and the financing of SMEs).

We will also use this opportunity to endorse the ESM treaty and to register agreement on the new treaty on stability and convergence within the euro area. With the two treaties we will further strengthen the instruments at our disposal to ensure the consolidation and development of the euro area as a whole.

&salutations

H. VAN ROMPUY