

European and External Affairs Committee

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Spanish Rotating Presidency Of The Eu (First Semester 2010)



Spain will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the fourth time. As the Lisbon Treaty is already in force, the rotating presidency will have a limited role and the main priority will be the implementation of the Treaty. Within this limited scope and in accordance with the general framework of the Trio Presidencies established by the Lisbon Treaty, the program has been coordinated with the two following presidencies, Belgium and Hungary, to ensure continuity and effectiveness.

The Presidency will focus on four broad priorities:

1. Achieving economic recovery while promoting a model of sustainable growth capable of creating more and better jobs.

The economic work plan of the Spanish Presidency aims to concentrate on two dimensions:

1. Overcoming the dependence of extraordinary public financial and fiscal measures.
2. The promotion of measures that favour sustainable, stable and balanced growth

With the following lines of action:

Exit strategies

Launching a new EU Strategy on Growth and Employment for the period 2010-2020 founded on the principles of employability, sustainability, and balanced growth.

Financial regulation

To develop the procedures to make operational the new European System of Financial Regulation (negotiation with the European Parliament), aimed at the creation of the European Systemic Risk Council and the European Supervisory Authorities (Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority, Banking Authority, and Securities and Markets authority).

Make progress on the Alternative Investment Funds Managers Directive (aiming to ensure that no significant AIFM escapes effective regulation and oversight in order to avoid sources of systemic risk in the economy).

Strengthening the quality of capital for credit institutions and investment services company and remuneration policies compatible with satisfactory and efficient risk management.

Promoting a Joint European response as far as the management of the crisis is concerned.

Public Finance

Efficient administration of the Stability Pact with the purpose of achieving the budgetary consolidation respecting the institutional aspects of each member state.

Strengthening the external dimension of the EU: G20 and Climate Change

Strengthen coordination of the EU with the rest of the world and in particular through the G20 process.

Implement and develop the Copenhagen Accord: discuss the European contribution to the Copenhagen Commitment to mobilize US\$100 billion a year by 2020.

Taxation

Expand the scope of the Savings Taxation Directive.

Directive on Administrative Cooperation (adoption by all member states of the OECD standards for the exchange of information and, therefore, the end of the Bank secrecy in the EU.

Directive on Mutual Assistance for Tax Recovery.

Energy

New action plan on Energy for the 2010-2014.

The reform of the Directive on the Taxation of Energy products will be addressed.

Social Policy

Start the preparation of the new European Social Agenda as the 2008-2010 expires in 2010.

2. Bringing European citizenship a step further in the 21st century, with particular consideration of gender equality.

The Spanish Presidency will start the implementation of the Stockholm Program in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and will drive its action plan.

The Spanish Presidency will execute and evaluate the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum. The first annual evaluation of the plan will take place during the June Justice and Home Affairs Council. Regarding illegal immigration, the Spanish Presidency will try to go further in the establishment of common criteria for the admission, residence and professional development of non EU immigrant workers and will pay special attention to the non accompanied immigrant minors.

The Spanish Presidency will also try to reach agreement about the creation of a passenger data register system and will promote exchange programs of judges or prosecutors.

Also, Spain will try to reinforce the external side of the EU regarding Home and Justice Affairs. The Spanish Presidency will promote international cooperation particularly in the fields of: immigration, fight against terrorism and organized crime, legal cooperation and protection of fundamental rights. These subjects will be in the agenda of the summits that will be held during our Presidency with the US, Northern Africa countries, Latin America or Russia.

The Spanish Presidency will put special emphasis on the fight against domestic violence. We will propose to establish a European observatory and a European protection warrant.

Furthermore, with the Lisbon Treaty in force, the Presidency will work on implementing the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and will promote the EU's signing of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Citizen initiative so one million citizens from a number of Member States have the possibility to call on the Commission to submit new policy proposals.

3. Promoting Europe as a global actor, the defense of human rights and the eradication of poverty in the world.

We will have a very dense external relations agenda, with nine summits and other high level gatherings with Africa/ACP, the Gulf region and Eastern Neighbourhood.

We will try to strengthen the EU-US relations. The bilateral summit to be held in May will focus on the fight against terrorism, innovation, economic cooperation, energy and crisis management.

We will also hold bilateral EU summits with Canada and Mexico.

We will hold a European Union-Latin America/Caribbean Summit. We hope that the EU Association Agreements with Colombia, Peru and Central America will be finalized during the summit.

- We will hold the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Union for the Mediterranean. Spain's hopes that by the time of the summit the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Permanent Secretariat will already be fully operational.

- The first EU-Morocco Summit will be held under our Presidency. We hope to achieve progress in the area of the Advanced Statute for European Union-Moroccan relations.

- Spain will also work to organize high-level meetings with important partners like Egypt and Tunisia, Israel, Algeria and Lebanon.

- The Spanish Presidency will continue promoting a global, fair and enduring peace in the Middle East. We will try to accelerate the re-establishment of the political process between the parties, contributing to building reciprocal trust.

- We will also organize summits with such important partners as Pakistan, Japan and Russia. In the latter case, we expect notable progress to take place in the negotiations that are underway for the new European Union-Russia Agreement.

- The first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the EU Eastern Partnership will take place during our semester of presidency.
- We must also adopt the amended Cotonou Agreement this semester and will participate in the preparation of the EU-Africa and Asia-Europe Summits.

The Spanish Presidency will pay particular attention to EU enlargement. We expect negotiations with Croatia to conclude, so that the signature and ratification of the Accession Treaty takes place under Spanish Presidency.

The Spanish Presidency will also have to follow developments concerning the candidature of Iceland.

The Spanish Presidency will promote sustained and visible progress in accession negotiations with Turkey.

The Spanish Presidency will also work to create favorable conditions for the future accession of other countries of the Western Balkans.

In the field of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the Spanish Presidency will continue working for the development of EU civil and military capacities, with special attention to fostering the work of the European Defense Agency. We will also ensure that the European Union is in a position to contribute through civil and military operations to conflict stabilization and resolution. Finally, the Spanish Presidency will strive to consolidate and intensify EU cooperation on the subject of crisis management with the United Nations, as well as with organizations like NATO, OSCE and the African Union.

The Spanish Presidency will pay special heed to the fight against poverty and social marginalization. It will prioritize development cooperation in the EU's foreign affairs agenda with particular emphasis on increasing coherence and effectiveness of aid and upholding the Union's commitment to allocating 0.56% of gross domestic product to development aid.

4. The implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

The effective start-up of the Lisbon Treaty will be a clear priority of the Spanish Presidency. We will put special emphasis on:

The new institutions: the permanent President of the European Council and the new High Representative, who also holds the post of Vice-President of the Commission.

The role of a strengthened Parliament.

The watchdog function of national parliaments according to the subsidiarity principle.

The new competences granted to the EU -education, research, energy, human health, catastrophe protection, intellectual property protection, climate change, administrative cooperation-

The development of the EU "solidarity" and "general interest" clauses

The binding nature of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;

The single legal personality of the Union and the disappearance of the three-pillar system.

The creation and implementation of the EU's European External Action Service.

The Spanish Presidency will try in all those fields to strengthen the Union and its institutions and to promote innovation and effectiveness. It will also strive to bring the Union closer to the European citizens.