



EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT

Brussels, 17 May 2013

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It is my pleasure to invite you to the meeting of the European Council on 22 May 2013 in Brussels. The aim of this European Council is to set the direction for future work on two issues of crucial importance for Europe's economy and social cohesion: energy and taxation. Indeed, I intend for the European Council to hold a number of such thematic discussions, to ensure that all of our policies contribute fully to improving competitiveness, employment and growth. These debates will also feed into a wide-ranging discussion on the Europe 2020 strategy in March next year.

After our traditional meeting with the President of the European Parliament, we will begin our working lunch with an exchange of views on energy, starting with an introduction by José Manuel. Thanks to the work of the Council, we have draft conclusions which strike the right balance and which provide useful guidelines for further work by the ministers. This gives us an opportunity to have a strategic discussion amongst ourselves on the key issue of energy policy and competitiveness, rather than going into detail on the wording of the conclusions. To frame our debate, I should like to invite you to intervene on one of the three following questions. To foster EU competitiveness, growth and jobs, what should be done at the level of the EU to further increase energy efficiency? To further develop indigenous resources? And to achieve a more predictable energy policy, as a prerequisite to attract the necessary investments into a modern energy infrastructure? I am confident that your intervention will contribute to giving the necessary orientation to our future work.

We will then focus on the issue of taxation. Last March we already stressed the need for renewed efforts to improve the efficiency of tax collection and tackle tax evasion. In times of tight budgetary constraints and expenditure cuts, combating tax fraud and tax evasion is more than an issue of tax fairness. It has become essential for the political and social acceptability of fiscal consolidation. Therefore, and following recent developments, both in Europe and globally, I felt it was important to seize the current political momentum and to provide further impetus to our European efforts to improve the efficiency of our tax policies. The discussions will also serve to prepare strong and coordinated EU positions in international fora such as the G8, the G20 and the OECD as well as in our relations with international partners.

We will finish our work at 5 pm.

I look forward to seeing you in Brussels.

&salutations

H. VAN ROMPUY