



EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT

Brussels, 18 March 2014

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It is my pleasure to invite you to the Spring European Council which will take place in Brussels on 20-21 March 2014.

The spring is our traditional moment to look carefully at the economic outlook in order to set policy orientations and that is why the first part of our agenda on Thursday has a strong economic dimension. We will start at 16.30 with the traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, the last such exchange before the European Parliament elections of May. Our first working session will be dedicated to the economy, focusing on three inextricably interlinked topics: the European Semester, the Europe 2020 strategy and industrial competitiveness. We will conclude the first phase of the 2014 European Semester in the presence of the President of the European Central Bank, Mr Mario Draghi, and we will take a look at the implementation of the Europe 2020 targets ahead of the review foreseen for 2015.

As regards industrial competitiveness, Europe needs a strong and competitive industrial base, in terms of both production and investment, as a key driver for economic growth and jobs. I would therefore like us to discuss ways of achieving this common objective. At the end of the session, we will adopt the relevant conclusions, including those related to the other economic parts, such as the Single Resolution Mechanism and Taxation.

Most prominent on our agenda is the situation in Ukraine, which we will address over dinner. We will discuss the developments since our last meeting on 6 March, including our response following the Crimea referendum, which is illegal and contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution and international law. We will take into account the measures taken by the Foreign Affairs ministers on Monday. The next day at 9.30, prior to the start of our meeting, we will sign the political provisions of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, in the presence of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, in line with our decision two weeks ago.

The Friday working session will focus on our climate and energy strategy, with José Manuel Barroso briefly presenting the European Commission's communication on the issue. Our main task is to prepare for the conclusion of a global climate agreement at the 21st session of the Conference of Parties in Paris in 2015, taking into account past discussions relating to commitments and deadlines. As a follow-up to our May 2013 meeting on energy, we will also identify what remains to be done for completing the Internal Energy Market by 2014, developing interconnections by 2015 and reducing our energy dependency.

The last part of our meeting will be dedicated to our relations with Africa. Ahead of the EU-Africa summit of 2-3 April, we will concentrate on a dimension of EU-Africa relations which requires a high-level political engagement from leaders: peace and security. We will end the meeting by adopting the conclusions relating to these issues.

&salutations

H. VAN ROMPUY