

## Address by the State Secretary for the European Union, Diego López Garrido, to the European Parliament (Strasbourg, 15 December 2009)

**Caption:** Address given by Diego López Garrido, Spanish State Secretary for the European Union, to the European Parliament on 15 December 2009 with the aim of highlighting the challenges and opportunities of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union in 2010, in a European and global climate marked by the economic and financial crisis, climate change, and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the resulting institutional changes.

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**SPEECH OF SPANISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EU, DIEGO LÓPEZ GARRIDO  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Strasbourg, Decembre the 15th of 2009**

**SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE UE:  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**I. PRESENTATION**

- As you know, Spain will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the fourth time during the first semester of 2010, a crucial time not only for Spain and Europe, but also for international society as a whole. For six months, we will assume political leadership of the EU in a European and worldwide situation beset by many challenges, namely:
  - The economic and financial crisis that we have been suffering, which will undoubtedly play a role in the community agenda in upcoming months.
  - The need to manage the results of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen that will be held in December, which will most likely approve the post-Kyoto system with respect to the fight against climate change.
  - The updating of the transatlantic agenda to lay the foundations for closer and more effective cooperation with the US government, with the aim of jointly confronting the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



- The implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon
  - A new European Parliament
  - A new European Commission
- Please allow me to state that the Spanish Presidency of the EU –an event that will not be repeated for many years- offers an excellent opportunity for Spanish foreign initiatives in two respects:
    - Firstly, it will allow Spain to decisively influence the future of the most complex and globalized international society that humanity has ever experienced. This will put a Spanish imprint on the initiatives and actions undertaken by the Union to confront the challenges set by the present-day international panorama. In this sense, Spain will also play a decisive role in the development of European strategy to combat the economic and financial crisis. Thus, it is by no means an exaggeration to affirm that our Presidency could be the presidency that manages to guide the way to Europe's definitive recovery.
    - Spain will also play a key role in the application of the Stockholm Program, which replaces the current Hague Program as the basic framework of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice; in launching the Post Lisbon Strategy and the new European Renewed Social Agenda; and in strengthening the Union's ties with its strategic partners. This is by virtue of the startup of the Permanent Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, the implementation of work to move forward in the project for the European Union-Latin America/Caribbean Foundation, the renewal of the Transatlantic Agenda and the holding of summits with third-party countries or groups of countries of key interest for Europe.



- With the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Spanish Presidency of the Union will exercise a determining and privileged role in shaping and applying the institutional changes it plans, namely: a stable presidency of the European Council, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and, in particular, the European External Action Service.
- Due to all of the above, and as we draw closer to this important date for our foreign policy –undoubtedly the most important in upcoming years–, we must be fully aware of the great responsibility entailed in the challenges of the presidency and of the high expectations generated in this respect. The historic date of June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1985 is already long past, when Spain and Portugal signed their entry into the European Community. The Commission President at that time, Jacques Delors, celebrated this third enlargement with a singular welcome: “Spain and Portugal, I want to say it loud and clear: We needed you”.
- At present, Spain stands as a strong country within the Union, whose contributions to the European Constituent Process have been numerous in a broad sense: the creation of the concept of Community citizenship as a true bond of connection – complementary to the state bond- between the Union and its citizens; the vision of equipping the European Common Market with social content through the EU’s policies on economic, social and territorial cohesion; the intensification of our ties abroad with key allies in North Africa and the Middle East through the Barcelona Process; rapprochement between Europe and Latin America, with Spain acting as a bridge between them; and driving EU enlargement, one of the main Community milestones in recent years that must be accompanied by a correlative political expansion and integration.



- If we weigh up the success of these 24 years and the three prior Spanish presidencies, the result of our participation in the common European process is clearly positive but, above all, we must commit to continuing the construction of the Europe of the future. Our approaching Presidency of the Council unquestionably offers us a magnificent opportunity to continue down this path and to reinforce Spain's image as a country with a clear pro-European plan that is firmly committed to the construction of a political and efficient Europe with values that is for our citizens.
- Thus, for over one year the Spanish Government has been absorbed in preparatory tasks –both substantive and organizational- for our Council Presidency. The results of government efforts have been materially shaped in the Spanish Presidency Program. Although still in a developmental phase, I would like to give you a rough outline of the basic plan.



## II. SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- Within the general framework of the triple-shared presidency composed of Spain, Belgium and Hungary, the Spanish semester will follow a specific program that will guide government actions. Said program will be based upon four broad priorities, considering current needs, and two governing principles, which will inform all government initiatives aimed at attaining these priority objectives.
- As put forward in the Resolution on the Spanish Presidency of the Union, which was approved by wide consensus by Parliament after the last debate on the state of the nation, and as agreed in the most recent Council of Ministers meeting on August 13<sup>th</sup>, the priorities of the Spanish Presidency will be:
  1. The fight for economic recovery and the promotion of a model for sustainable growth and the creation of quality employment, designed in the definition of the aforementioned 2010 Post Lisbon Strategy.
  2. European citizenship of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and equality between men and women.
  3. Driving Europe forward as a global actor, the defense of human rights and the eradication of poverty in the world.
  4. The effective implementation and its corresponding political and institutional renewal.
- In turn, these objectives will be informed by the two main governing principles of the Presidency:



- a. The development of innovation, in all its facets
- b. The defense and promotion of equality

## 1. Fighting the crisis and promoting sustainable development

- With respect to the first objective –combating the economic and financial crisis and the promotion of sustainable growth- we must distinguish between measures referring specifically to the financial crisis and those related to the “real economy”.
- In connection with the strictly financial crisis, the Spanish Presidency will follow the legislative execution of the measures adopted by the EU throughout 2009 with respect to:
  - The increased transparency of regulations
  - The regulation of rating agencies
  - Strengthening the framework of “prudential regulation”
  - Introduction of anti-cyclical measures in regulations
  - Strengthening of the infrastructure of capital markets
  - The establishment of a scheme for European financial supervision
  - The definition of a crisis management system, in particular a harmonized mechanism of early intervention and the resolution of banking crises
  - Stepping up of financial services in the Single European Market



- International collaboration to develop a new international financial order under the principles of transparency, sound banking, responsibility and integrity
- With regard to the “real economy”, the program by the Spanish Presidency will revolve around the following axes:
  - Review of the Lisbon Strategy, putting particular emphasis on issues of education and R&D+i advances.
  - Strengthening of competitiveness and the creation of quality jobs, connecting our work to fight the crisis and social Europe. To do so, social protection and inclusions will be tackled and the strategy will be given a gender perspective. In this regard, the contributions made by the Reflection Group, chaired by Felipe González, will be taken into consideration.
  - The integration of European energy policy and the development and application of common measures against climate change. Spain aims to guarantee not only competitiveness and supply assurance –a mainstay of the European economy- but also their sustainability. With respect to energy, a new 2010-2012 Action Plan will be approved during our Presidency. And after the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, we will work to help the Union continue to be the driving force to combat this phenomenon at a global level. In this sense, Spain will make regulatory specification and the application of the Copenhagen agreements a priority its in semester-long program.





- Please permit me to make a brief comment about the social dimension of the growth strategy. The 2008-2010 Social Agenda expires in the year of our presidency and the second forum on the Social Agenda will be held during this same period. Results will be fundamental for drawing up the new European Social Agenda. In this process, the Presidency will also consider the outlooks of the Commission, the vision of other member states and recommendations by social partners.

## **2. European citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and equality between men and women**

- The concept of European citizenship has gradually been taking shape, starting with its inclusion in the treaties, at Spain's initiative. It is based on the concepts of equality, security and solidarity:
  - Today, equality refers especially to equality between men and women, which will represent, as mentioned, a priority for the Spanish Presidency.
  - Security must be managed via an Internal Security Strategy and be included in the Action Plan that will apply the Stockholm Program in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.
  - Solidarity must be both internal and external: along this line, our Presidency will execute and evaluate the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum.
- One of the most significant priorities of the Spanish Presidency will be the consolidation of a strong and advanced statute for European citizens. Specifically, the fight against gender violence will be promoted (driving forward a European observatory and a European protection order, as well as a new 2011-2015 Plan).



We will fight against child abuse and will work to obtain agreement on the latest proposal for a non-discrimination directive.

- Furthermore, with the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Presidency will work on implementing the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, will promote the EU's signing of the European Convention on Human Rights and will develop the European Citizens' Initiative.

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

- The third broad priority on the agenda of the Spanish Presidency will be the development of the EU as a global actor in the heart of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century international society. The Union's capacity to speak with a single voice will be decisive not only for resolving the multiple conflicts that beset international current affairs –from the Near East to the Caucasus Mountains-, but also the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms –considered essential values of the Union- for the eradication of all expressions of poverty and for the consolidation of strategic associations with the regions and actors of key interest to Europe.
- In the area of the Union's foreign relations, please let me state to this forum that the Spanish Presidency will be a presidency that is primordially Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-American.



- With respect to the Euro-American aspect, this will include the EU's relations with the all of the Americas -from the Arctic to Tierra de Fuego- as we will hold summits with Canada, the United States, Mexico and the biregional European Union-Latin America/Caribbean Summit. At all of them, we will display our emphatic ambition of their particular importance for the EU's and Spain's foreign relations.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Summit that we will host in Spain is destined to represent a qualitative change in EU-American association. We will approve an action plan there on what will be the leitmotif of the summit – technology and innovation to foster sustainable growth and social inclusion- and we will move forward in the creation of a European Union-Latin America/Caribbean Foundation. If negotiations are concluded this year, it is possible that we will sign a European Union-Central America association agreement and the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and three of the members of the Andean Community of Nations.
- The summit with the United States –which will also be held in Spain– will surely be one of the most important meetings during our Presidency. The EU's common desire is to adopt a pragmatic yet ambitious modernization of the Transatlantic Agenda at the summit, in which we will identify new areas of cooperation with the US government.
- Summits with the other two North American countries are also of capital importance. In the case of Mexico, because it will be the first specific bilateral summit that the EU holds with this fundamental partner in the region after the approval of the European Union-Mexico Strategic Partnership last year. After Brazil, Mexico will become the second Latin American country with which the



Union maintains this type of strategic relations. Lastly, the summit with Canada must be held in a context of progress in the negotiation process of the trade agreement that we are now beginning.

- As I mentioned earlier, our Presidency will have an eminently Euro-Mediterranean character. At the end of our semester, we will hold the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Union for the Mediterranean, which must analyze the execution of the six large projects that were approved in Paris and approve new projects whose execution will be entrusted to the Permanent Secretariat.
- The necessary promotion of the Union for the Mediterranean will be one of the pillars of our upcoming Presidency with respect to foreign initiatives. Spain's objective will be to attend this summit with the Barcelona Permanent Secretariat already fully operational. The summit will approve the first biennial plan for the Union for the Mediterranean, which will carry on the work of the 2005-2010 five-year plan that was approved in the Barcelona Summit in November 2005. Likewise, the execution of the six large projects approved in Paris must also be analyzed and new ones approved, whose execution will be the responsibility of the Permanent Secretariat
- In the bilateral area, we are particularly satisfied that the first EU-Morocco Summit will be held under our Presidency, at which we will approve new advances in the area of the Advanced Statute for European Union-Moroccan relations that was adopted last October. Spain will also work to organize high-level meetings with important partners like Egypt and Tunisia.
- Inevitably, another priority in the EU's foreign affairs during the Spanish Presidency will be to foster global, fair and enduring peace in the Near East.



[There is consensus in the Union, and increasingly more in the whole of the international community, about the urgency of adopting and materializing, without delay, a solution for the two states, Israel and Palestine, so that they can live together side-by-side in peace and safety. This solution must be accompanied by peace between Israel and its other Arab neighbors, and by new relations between the Israelis and the Arabic and Muslim world. Spain and the European Union, in coordination with the other members of the Quartet and our Arab partners, will deploy our greatest efforts in propitiating definitive advances in this direction. Spain will place all of its experience and dialogue skills into service for this task. To this end, we will try to accelerate the re-establishment of the political process between the parties, contributing to building reciprocal trust and avoiding everything that could lead to setbacks, such as the expansion of the settlements or the outbreak of a new crisis in Gaza. Spain and the European Union will remain firm in their defense of a solution based on international legality and mutual agreement between the parties.]

- Our foreign relations agenda does not stop there. We will also organize two summits with such important partners as 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.
- Logically, we will not neglect other key geographic regions like our Eastern, Asian and African neighbors. 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, as well as participating in the preparation of the EU-Africa and Asia-Europe Summits, which will take place under the Belgian presidency in the framework of our triple-shared presidencies.



- In turn, the Spanish Presidency will pay particular attention to EU enlargement, based on the consensus reached at the European Council meeting in December 2006 (principles of consolidation, conditionality and communication). If the Commission's forecasts are confirmed (something that can not be assumed in the present-day situation), Croatia would conclude negotiations at the end of 2009 and the signing and ratification of the Accession Treaty could possibly correspond to the Spanish Presidency. The Spanish Presidency will also have to follow developments in the Icelandic candidature.
- The Spanish Presidency will also encourage conditions that will lead to sustained and visible progress in accession negotiations with Turkey and the Western Balkans as an essential element of future reconciliation for the region. For this reason, the execution of the EU Stabilization and Association Process defined in Salonika will also be fostered in anticipation of their future incorporation into the European Union.
- The fight against poverty and social marginalization will be another common objective, particularly symbolic due to coinciding with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. This will be taken into account in foreign relations, in order to attain the application of the Decent Work Agenda (promoted by the International Labor Organization) in the greatest number of countries possible.
- The Spanish Presidency will pay special heed to the neediest countries, prioritizing development cooperation in the EU's foreign affairs agenda with greater intensity than it has been given in the past, with particular efforts on increasing coherence



and effectiveness of aid and upholding the Union's commitment to allocating 0.56% of gross domestic product to development aid. The application of the commitments made in the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will be equally important in developing countries and the efficacy of the mechanisms that we are adopting to mitigate the effects of the current financial and economic crisis in these countries.

- To conclude this topic devoted to the EU as a global actor, a reference to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) is unavoidable, which in recent years has become one of the most distinctive elements of EU foreign initiative and comprises an essential instrument in making its ambition of contributing to peace, security and stability a reality in the world in general and its immediate environment in particular. 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 crisis management and civil and military operations for 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.

#### **4. The implementation of the Lisbon Treaty**

- The effective implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon will be a clear priority and mainstay of the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council. The changes that it outlines are well known:



- New institutions like the permanent President of the European Council and the new High Representative, who also holds the post of Vice-President of the Commission;
- A strengthened Parliament;
- The watchdog function of national parliaments according to the subsidiarity principle;
- 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.

### **Equality and innovation**

- An analysis of the Spanish Presidency Program would be incomplete without a reference to the principles of equality and innovation, transverse priorities that will inspire government initiatives in order to obtain the aforementioned objectives.
- Innovation is not defined only as technological innovation, but also economic, institutional and political innovation. Not only is it an essential springboard for the European Union to overcome this time of crisis, but also to prevent future





recessions and consolidate a viable and sustainable social model. In the words of the Spanish president, it is about “innovating to be able to renew and lead”.

- With respect to equality, Europe has traditionally been a leader in the search for equal opportunities and solidarity between social groups, regions and states, both among the member states (Cohesion Funds and Regional Funds) and externally (Generalized System of Preferences and cooperation agreements). The European Union integrates the fight for gender equality in this area.
- Therefore, the Europe that Spain seeks and will claim during its presidency is an innovative and advanced Europe that is prepared to confront the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is based on the principles of peace, well-being and equal opportunity.

### III. CONCLUSION

- In summary, the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council in 2010 will undoubtedly be one of the most complex and decisive presidencies that Spain has exercised until the present. Europe and the entire world are in crisis and considerable challenges lie ahead of us. However, I believe it is essential to follow our deep pro-European vision to be able to lead Europe towards its definitive recovery.
- Remember that the presidency is not only a government task; it is an authentic state-wide issue that will require all Spaniards and Europeans to join forces, outside of their individual leanings or political persuasions



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SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO  
PARA LA UNIÓN EUROPEA

- I am firmly convinced that Spain will measure up to the circumstances and that together, working courageously and decisively, we will once again achieve a successful Presidency of the Council of the European Union that fully meets everybody's expectations.
- Thank you very much.