Programme of the Spanish Presidency

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The Spanish delegation briefed the Council on the working programme in the field of competitiveness policies under its presidency in the first half of 2010. The programme is in line with the combined programme prepared by the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian presidencies covering a period of 18 months from January 2010 to June 2011 (doc. *16771/09*).

The revision of the Lisbon Strategy is a major priority. The ambition is to launch a new strategic policy framework in order to build a Europe capable of mastering the crisis, promoting sustainable growth and employment as well as innovation and competitiveness, strengthening social, economic and territorial cohesion, fighting climate change and enhancing energy security.

The strategic framework for the programme is set in a wider context, and specifically within the perspective of more long-term objectives running into the subsequent three Presidencies. The main priorities are as follows:

Better regulated and supervised financial markets:

- it is important to finalise rapidly work on the legislative proposals setting up the European Systemic Risk Board and the European Supervisory Authorities so that these are up and running by the end of 2010;

- work will need to be swiftly completed on important issues such as transparency, including improved methods for asset valuation and improved financial decision-making, strengthening the prudential framework (capital requirements and provisions), including countercyclical elements; and strengthening of the infrastructure of capital markets;

- appropriate coordinated and country-specific exit strategies from both monetary and fiscal stimulus will need to be carefully devised, implemented and monitored.

Social Agenda: the renewed social agenda dated July 2008 will be re-examined. Future social action should have a wide remit, including the commitments undertaken within the European Youth Pact and the Youth Strategy, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the European Pact for the Family. Particular attention should be given to the implementation of the EU Health Strategy for 2008-2013. 2010 will be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Gender equality is a key concern and will be mainstreamed throughout the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy. A new Plan for the equality of women and men will be launched.

Energy and climate package: the implementation and possible review of the energy and climate package is a top priority for the three Presidencies. The EU will have to maintain its leadership role in international negotiations on climate change, in the light of the outcome reached at the Copenhagen Conference. This outcome will be assessed early in 2010, paying special attention to its effects on the European industry and economy and on the citizens.

- A new 2010-2014 Energy Action Plan for Europe will be elaborated with a view to its adoption at the Spring 2010 European Council.

- The three Presidencies will promote and intensify actions to improve and promote renewable energy, the energy efficiency of buildings, energy infrastructures, eco-friendly means of transport and products.

- Energy security will remain a key issue. A new EU Energy Security and Infrastructure Instrument will be adopted. Given the importance of energy efficiency in strengthening energy security and tackling climate change, an ambitious renewed Energy Efficiency Action Plan will be adopted.

Transport: eco-friendly means of transport and the improvement of intermodality will be pursued. Moreover, priority will be given to the revision of the Trans-European Transport Networks. The halt of loss of biodiversity, including the protection of forests against natural hazards, remains a priority that will lead to the elaboration of a comprehensive European Biodiversity Strategy for the period beyond 2010. Another emerging important theme will be the development of a sustainable use of natural resources, in particular of sustainable water management.

Cohesion policy: future cohesion policy will continue to contribute to the basic objectives laid down in the Treaty. In this context, the launching and implementation of the EU strategy for the Danube region will be of exemplary importance. The three Presidencies are in favour of developing and applying a new strategy for the Outermost Regions.

Agriculture: the upcoming discussions on the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013 will be decisive. Reinforcing both pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy and promoting food security, safety, sustainability and innovation, as well as responding to global challenges will be core concerns of the future reform.

Fisheries: the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy will be key to the survival of this economic sector. Its main purpose will be the management of fishing activities in order to ensure its economic, social and environmental viability, keeping in mind that the most important negative factors are over-fishing and overcapacity of the fleet.

Freedom, Security and Justice: efforts will focus on the effective implementation of the new multi-annual programme for the development of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice (Stockholm Programme.) The challenge will be to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and privacy, while enjoying the highest possible level of protection and security in Europe.

- The achievement of a European area of Justice will be further consolidated. Priority will be given to mechanisms that facilitate people's access to the courts, ensuring fair and simple access by all to justice. Special attention will be paid to the application of the overarching principle of mutual recognition and to the harmonization and consolidation of legislation. Further deepening and, on the basis of the agreed criteria, enlargement of the Schengen area will be pursued.

- The development of a forward looking and comprehensive European Immigration and Asylum policy will remain a key objective of the European Union. The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum will be the basis for further developments in this field as well as the actions planned for the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration.

- The fight against terrorism, organized and cross-border crime, trafficking in human beings and drug trafficking, will be further pursued through more effective cooperation between Member States, the EU institutions and competent agencies. Lastly, the external dimension of these policies will be further enhanced.

The enlargement process: this will continue in the context of the renewed consensus on enlargement. The conclusion of the Accession negotiations with Croatia and the signature and ratification of the Accession Treaty will be high on the Agenda. The Presidencies will address the three applications for membership by Albania, Iceland and Montenegro according to the provisions of the Treaty. The EU will continue strengthening the European perspective of the Western Balkans. , through the Stabilization and Association Process and the Thessaloniki Agenda. Using all the instruments at its disposal, the EU will help the region's stability and prosperity. The security, stability and prosperity of Europe will also be promoted through the full implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy with a view to facilitating sustainable economic development and stability in the area. Both the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean will be enhanced in a coordinated and balanced manner.

External action of the EU: the EU will strive to improve the effectiveness, coherence, and visibility of the external action of the EU in order to enhance the development of an authentic, effective multilateral system. The creation of the new post of High Representative and the setting up of the European External Action Service will aim to strengthen the EU's role on the global scene. The EU's relations with its most important bilateral and regional partners will continue to be developed, in particular through the organisation of meetings at the highest political level. The protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and their full integration in all EU policies will continue to be a priority for the EU in external relations.

Common Commercial policy: this remains an important aspect of the EU's multilateral action. The EU will continue pursuing a double track approach, working towards a global, comprehensive and balanced agreement on the Doha Round, while at the same time continuing to pursue regional and bilateral trade agreements and pushing for further improvement of market access.

Development: the EU is the world's larger donor and trading partner and as such it will continue to encourage the achievement of international commitments on quantity and quality of aid as well as strategic partnership with developing countries, particularly with regard to the Millennium Development Goals.

CFSP: the development of civil and military capabilities will be further pursued. The European Union should be in a position further to contribute to crisis management and the stabilization and resolution of conflicts through the use of the above-mentioned capabilities. The EU will continue to cooperate closely with the United Nations, NATO, OSCE, AU and other regional organizations in the area of crisis management.