



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Letter from President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
to the members of the European Council**

During our last meeting we discussed the need for the European Council to follow more closely the implementation of the orientations it sets. Based on input from the respective rotating Presidencies, I will regularly share my thoughts with you on the progress being made in that respect and highlight areas where your guidance will be needed. The March European Council, in particular, asked to track progress on the proposals presented under the Single Market Act (SMA). In this letter, I will more particularly focus on this latter aspect.

I would like to commend the Danish Presidency for the results achieved and the progress made so far on some key proposals. It has reached agreement with the European Parliament on a number of important files, including roaming. We are also on track within the Council on issues such as standardisation, the venture capital and social entrepreneurship funds as well as guidelines for trans-European networks. Efforts will of course then have to be pursued to reach an agreement with the European Parliament as soon as possible.

There are, however, also some pending proposals where delegations in the Council will have to show more spirit of compromise if we are to meet the deadlines set by the European Council. On energy efficiency, where the deadline is June, there are still divided positions on the overall level of ambition. More movement is also needed on the public procurement package if we are to meet the deadline for agreement by the end of the year. Other key single market legislation files requiring particular attention are dispute resolution for consumers, the accounting directive and the posting of workers.

P R E S S

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I really appeal to each of you to instruct your Ministers responsible for these files to show the necessary sense of compromise to help the Presidency achieve results on what are key elements for growth in Europe. I would like to say a particular word on the Unitary Patent. This important file has been discussed for many years and we are now very close to a final deal, albeit only at 25. This deal is needed now, because this is an issue of crucial importance for innovation and growth. I very much hope that the last outstanding issue will be sorted out at the May Competitiveness Council. If not, I will take it up at the June European Council.

In my invitation letter to the June European Council, I will provide you with an updated political assessment on the state of play of these key files.

Whilst the SMA proposals are certainly important in terms of their expected impact on growth, they do not constitute the whole picture. We must generally strengthen the governance of the Single Market and open new areas of growth - the Commission is working on these issues and we will be able to discuss them at one of our coming meetings. Beyond the Single Market, over the past year the European Council has prioritised a number of other legislative proposals because of their potential to boost growth and jobs.

This is why I intend to report to the June European Council more widely on the state of play of all dossiers relevant to the Union's growth agenda. It is also why, after June, I intend to work with future presidencies to allow the European Council to regularly take stock of progress and, where appropriate, discuss those issues where new momentum may be required.

I would like to address another important issue here. Over the past two and a half years the Union has had to react to the economic and financial crisis. This has not been easy and led to some frustration at times and strains. I believe that our efforts will pay off and that we have to stay on track. There are no quick-fix solutions. We have had to deal with the urgent pressures of the sovereign debt crisis. The emphasis should now shift increasingly to prioritising measures that can boost growth and jobs and a return to a sustainable growth. Fiscal consolidation is the bedrock on which we must develop a comprehensive strategy geared towards the latter objective.

We will certainly talk in more detail about that in June, where we will bring the European Semester to a close and endorse country-specific recommendations to guide Member States in their structural reforms and employment policies. We will also examine the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework; here, too, we should in particular look at how the EU's budget can help support a robust growth agenda. I do not exclude convening an informal dinner between us at an earlier date for an open exchange of views on how best to prepare matters for June.