



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by the President of the European Council  
Herman Van Rompuy  
following the Tripartite Social Summit**

Today more than ever social dialogue has an important role to play in our common efforts to restore growth and jobs. We should make full use of the tools offered by the European Unions' new economic governance.

At the EU level, regular meetings of the Tripartite Social Summit such as the one we just held remain useful and, fruitful platform for the exchange of views among the European institutions and social partners.

The economic situation is different in each member state. People in some countries in particular felt the impact of the crisis and austerity measures which followed. In others it is the lack of confidence of consumers and companies. Restoring confidence in the eurozone is a growth strategy in itself.

The measures taken both at the level of the Member States and the eurozone as a whole to stabilize the situation are bearing fruit. We are seeing clear signs of stabilisation in the financial markets. Interest rates decreased dramatically in a lot of countries. But we are not complacent and remain vigilant and ready to act.

We are doing the utmost about to stimulating growth and employment on the short and longer term. This remains our overriding objective. To achieve this we need fiscal sustainability and structural reforms to raise productivity and investment. This is a precondition for growth and jobs.

**P R E S S**

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Fiscal consolidation remains unavoidable to keep our social models sustainable and is not only due to the strengthening of the economic and monetary union.

Our targets under the Europe 2020 Strategy remain relevant in the midst of a policy of fiscal consolidation. These include on employment, innovation, research and development, climate change and energy objectives, education and social inclusion. Expenditures in those areas should be protected as much as possible because they contribute to future growth. While important measures have been taken by all Member States, reforms in certain areas are lagging behind and implementation is uneven.

In January the European Council called for urgent measures on youth employment, single market and small and medium sized enterprises. Member States are invited to elaborate National Jobs Plans in the framework of their National Reform Plans. In the Annual Growth Survey, which we will discuss at the European Council later today, priorities include among others action on promoting growth and competitiveness as well as tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis.

In our meeting today, social partners presented their work programme for the years ahead. It focuses on eight areas including youth employment, education and life-long learning and the economic and social governance of the EU. This shows a high degree of compliance with the priorities for the growth and jobs agenda identified by the Heads of State and Government in January and for the European Council today.

I am very much aware that this crisis and some remedies put social cohesion at stake. It can also damage the European idea itself. That is why we have to tackle inequalities and poverty, that is why we need results of our policies in terms of growth and jobs. The European social model is not dead. An early involvement of all relevant stakeholders, in particular the social partners, is necessary for the adjustment measures to be successful.

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