



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 21 January 2010  
PCE 14/10**

**Remarks by  
Herman VAN ROMPUY,  
President of the European Council  
following the meeting with Demetris CHRISTOFIAS,  
President of Cyprus**

Herman Van ROMPUY, President of the European Council, visited Nicosia today to meet Demetris CHRISTOFIAS, President of Cyprus. The following is a summary of his remarks made to journalists at the end of the meeting:

*"I am very pleased to be in Nicosia today for what has been a very productive discussion with President of Cyprus Demetris Christofias.*

*I feel deeply committed to making a constructive contribution, in order to make the new Treaty function smoothly and to help that this Treaty deploys all its possibilities to benefit the citizens (which, is, after all the primary purpose of the EU) and to strengthen the role and the influence of the EU in the world.*

*There are two big challenges facing us which will require the full engagement of the EU at the highest level and to which I will dedicate most of my energy and time over the coming months, i.e. tackling the economic crisis and responding to climate change. Successful handling of these difficult issues is decisive for the near and more longer-term future of our continent. For this reason, I took the initiative to convene an informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government to examine these two issues on 11 February.*

*In our discussions we also touched upon the state of play of the negotiations to reunify the island. I am grateful for the valuable information provided to me in a frank and open manner. The settlement of the Cyprus issue is important for the European Union as well. It is about ending divisions in Europe and about stability in the region. A comprehensive, just and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue, in line with UN Security Council resolutions, would not only allow unification of Cyprus but also send a strong positive signal to the whole region.*

**P R E S S**

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**FOR FURTHER DETAILS:**

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*I would like to commend the leaders of the two communities on the island for the framework they have established in the talks, and for their courageous efforts and strong and unabated commitment to work towards a solution. From my personal experience I know how challenging it is to overcome the divisions of the past and build a new common future. We are fully aware that difficult issues are being discussed, but the expectation is high. We are convinced that all involved will take up their responsibilities in order to achieve the goal of reunification. The time is now ripe for courageous and forward-looking decisions for the benefit of all Cypriots.*

*It is also important to stress that the negotiations take place under the auspices of the United Nations and are Cypriot led. The EU is following the process very attentively, and I would also like to recall our readiness to provide all the advice and support possible to find a solution. As you know the European Union is actively supporting unification measures throughout the island.*

*We have also discussed the illegal immigration, which is an issue of particular concern to Cyprus. The European Council has repeatedly discussed this issue and has given important political guidance in addressing the issues of asylum and illegal immigration. However, a lot remains to be done and we need to continue examining these issues in the European Council, in the spirit of solidarity. In the European Council of December last, it was agreed that at the European Council in June 2010 will have the first debate on the implementation of the Asylum and Immigration Pact and also of the relevant measures of the Stockholm Programme. This will be an opportunity to examine these issues in a more global and structured manner.*

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