

Herman Van Rompuy: Jobs and growth are of utmost importance for the daily lives of all our citizens

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Address of the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, to the College of Europe, Bruges, 25 February 2010.

The speech "Europe's Role and Place in the World" was held on 25 February, in Bruges, Belgium, at the College of Europe. The President was welcomed by Mr Icigo Mendez de Vigo, President of the Administrative Board of the College of Europe, Mr Paul Breyne, Governor of the Province of West-Flanders and Mr Paul Demaret, Rector of the College of Europe.

Here is a summary of Herman Van Rompuy's address.

"Since my election, I have put economic growth at the top of the EU's agenda. Three European Council meetings are dedicated to the issue this semester. The Heads of State or Government will address how to enhance growth, how to create jobs, how to be more competitive. All the members of the European Council are willing to take more responsibility for these economic issues.

Jobs and growth are of utmost importance for the daily lives of all our citizens, for our standard of living. The result of our economic efforts also determines our place in the world. Therefore I keep saying that, in the end, economic growth is about the survival of our European way of life.

We should further develop global economic governance. The foundation of the G20 by the EU was a great step. It is massively important to get key players around the same table. The European Council should become something like the "gouvernement économique" of the Union. Or the place for economic governance.

For the Member States of the Union, this will require as well a stronger coordination of foreign economic policy as we will have to develop the external side of the "gouvernement économique" which we are now developing internally.

As regards the external relations of the EU, the European Council as a whole is entrusted to take the decisions on the Union's "strategic interests and objectives" in external affairs. According to the Treaty, these decisions relate to both "the foreign and security policy" and to "other areas of the external action of the Union". The decisions may concern a specific country. They may also be thematic in approach, for instance relating to energy. The job of the permanent President of the European Council is

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to find consensus on all such external matters. Essentially, his task is to establish a shared sense of direction.

We need to review and strengthen our relationship with key partners. I am above all thinking about the United States, Canada, Russia, China, Japan, India, Brazil."

Read [the full document](#) (pdf).

Source: the Council of the EU's newsroom.