

## Spanish Presidency

7-11 December 2009

Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero said Spain will seek to strengthen the economic powers of the European Union when it takes over the rolling presidency of the EU next January.

The current Spanish government believes a strong Europe is all the more indispensable in the context of the international crisis, and that the EU's Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, launched in 2000, remained "one of the fundamental pillars" of EU economic policy.

One of the Presidency's key objectives, will be to adopt decisions on the future Lisbon Strategy after 2010 during the spring EU summit of heads of state. What should the new strategy look like? What is the member states' position about it? Should it place more emphasis on environment policies or prioritise other objectives such as safeguarding industry from foreign competition? What should be the EU's long term agenda for jobs and economic growth?

EurActiv will be drawing on its network of national affiliates to bring news, interviews, insights and analysis on all these issues.

When it takes over from Sweden in January, Spain is also likely to face uncertainties over the EU's institutional future. Ireland is holding a second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in October and the outcome will be crucial to determine the EU's institutional setting for the next five years. Will the new Commission and Parliament be able to forge ahead with the new policies and institutional innovations foreseen in the new treaty or will they have to stick with the Nice Treaty?

The answer to this question will have implications across the whole range of EU policies, including external relations and energy, which are set to benefit the most from the revamped institutional setting.

Other known priorities of the Spanish Presidency include:

- Progressing with the EU response to the economic and financial crisis
- Giving new impetus to the Mediterranean Union launched under French Presidency
- Re-launching efforts in favour of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)
- Forging a common energy policy

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