

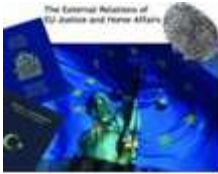


Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
08.01.10

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Spanish Presidency 2010

On the 1st of January 2010 Spain took over the presidency of the European Union. It will hold this presidency until the end of June following which Belgium will take over.

In brief, the four main priorities of the Spanish Presidency are the following:

- The full and effective application of the Lisbon Treaty.
- The economic recovery of Europe through greater co-ordination of every member state and the approval of the European strategy for sustainable growth for 2020.
- The reinforcement of the presence and influence of the European Union in the new world order.
- Placing European citizens at the centre of EU policy, with initiatives designed to develop their rights and freedoms.

In the field of justice and home affairs the Spanish Presidency aspires to have a European Union in which the values of freedom, justice, solidarity and equality become positive rights for EU citizens and in which these rights are exercised more extensively. The Presidency will thus promote initiatives that strengthen and guarantee the exercising of the rights contained in the Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights.

It will also initiate the process for the European Union's accession to the Convention on Human Rights, and will approve the Stockholm Programme Action Plan for the European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, with measures that will have a considerable positive effect on the security of EU citizens.

Another objective is that of making Europeans feel closer to the European Union through their active participation. To this end, the Presidency will encourage the adoption of a proposal to regulate the Citizens' Initiative, envisaged by the Treaty, and will open a new channel for citizens to participate in the Union's legislative process.

The Spanish Presidency aims to achieve effective equality between men and women. Consequently, it will support the preparation of a Plan for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women for the period 2011-2015, with special emphasis on labour issues. Another key objective will be to continue the fight in favour of eradicating all forms of gender-based violence. The Presidency will thus propose two initiatives: the creation of a European Gender-Based Violence Monitoring Centre and the promulgation of a European Protection Order, which will extend the security measures adopted by the judicial entities in any Member State to the entire European territory.

Regarding immigration, the Spanish Presidency emphasises that dealing with immigration is one of Europe's greatest challenges. The aim is to deal with it in its different aspects, from



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integration and cooperation with the countries of origin and transit, to the tireless fight against the mafias that exploit the desperation of the less fortunate.

(To see the full programme of the Presidency see document in attachment.)

During this Presidency meetings of the Council of Ministers on Justice & Home Affairs are scheduled as follows:

20-22 January *(informal meeting)*

25-26 February

22-23 April

3-4 June