



# New Leadership Team for Europe

The Lisbon Treaty officially came into force on December 1. The ratification of the Treaty by all 27 Member States will lead to significant changes in the EU's Institutions. On November 19, an informal meeting of the European Council was held and the leaders of the 27 EU Member States unanimously agreed on who should fill the top posts established as a result of the Treaty.

Until a few days ago the European Council, consisting of the heads of government or state of the Member States and the President of the European Commission, was chaired by the prime minister or president of the country that holds the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The new post of President of the European Council was entrusted to the former Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy.

Appointed for a two-and-a-half year term, the president is expected to:

- prepare and chair the meetings of the Council, which sets the broad policy priorities for the EU and

- represent the EU at international summits.

The President of the European Council is NOT the President of the European Union since the Union has various "presidents" ranging from the President of the European Council to the presidents of the Commission, Parliament, and the Council formations.

The other new post - High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - was entrusted to Catherine Ashton, who held the post of European Commissioner for Trade since October 2008. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the High Representative is also a vice-president of the European Commission and presides over meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This post ensures:

- the coherence between the foreign policy actions of the Council, and the traditional external policies where the Commission takes a leading role and
- the creation of a new external action service – which is responsible for implementation of EU foreign policy.



**Malta-EU Steering  
& Action Committee**