

Which President Are We Referring To?

Last December, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, new posts were created in the EU institutions and, consequently, some responsibilities have had to be shifted to these new posts. It is, therefore, worth noting the different portfolios managed by various presidencies within the workings of the EU.

The President of the European Council – Herman Van Rompuy

A Belgian national, Herman Van Rompuy is the first Permanent President of the European Council. The European Council consists of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, together with its President and the



President of the Commission. Van Rompuy was unanimously elected by the 27 leaders last November. The President's two-and-a-half year mandate ends in May 2012. Van Rompuy is also responsible to draw up the Council's agenda, as well as to deliver the official report of the Council meetings to the Members of the European Parliament.

The Presidency of the Council of the EU - Spain

The Presidency rotates every six months. Every Member State has the opportunity to chair the nine council configuration ministers' meetings, excluding external



relations. At the beginning of each mandate, the presiding country presents its programme and priorities to the Council of the EU. As from January till the end of June, this responsibility is in Spain's hands. The Treaty ensures that with each enlargement the official list will be amended to add the new Member States. In fact, the latest list includes the countries which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Malta will assume the presidency in 2017.

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs – Catherine Ashton

This post is currently occupied by Catherine Ashton. Her name is not new to the European Commission. Before she was appointed High Representative, Ashton was the EU Commissioner for External Trade. Ashton will also be the Vice-President of the European Commission .



The President of the European Commission – José Manuel Barroso

This year a new European Commission starts its mandate for the coming five years. José Manuel Barroso retains the presidency for a second mandate. Barroso was first appointed by the European Council in June 2004. The President of the Commission conducts the Commission's meetings, assigns the Commissioners'



responsibilities (apart from the High Representative) and the activities of the institutions. After the last enlargement in 2007, the EU Commissioners' college presided by Barroso increased to 27 – one member from each Member State.

The President of the European Parliament – Jerzy Buzek

In July 2009, Jerzy Buzek was elected President of the European Parliament for two and a half years following the EP elections in June. He is a member of the largest political



group in the EP, the European People's Party, and the first MEP from a Member State that joined the EU after 2004 to be elected to the post. His major duties include chairing of plenary sessions of the EP meetings as well as opening, suspending and concluding the sittings.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

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