



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 8 February 2011
PCE 031/11**

**Statement by
Herman Van Rompuy,
President of the European Council,
following his meeting with Micheline Calmy-Rey
President of Switzerland**

"It was a pleasure to meet President Calmy-Rey today. Switzerland is one of our closest partners, not least because of its geographical position. We share the same values and our economies are interlinked.

Today we had an opportunity to discuss our bilateral relations and our cooperation in foreign policy matters.

I listened to the ideas of President Calmy-Rey for a "comprehensive and coordinated approach" between the EU and Switzerland with interest. Bearing in mind the Council Conclusions of December 2010 on the relations with EFTA countries we shall study it carefully.

We note that Switzerland is ready to address institutional aspects of our bilateral relations in order to build a sound basis for future cooperation. Our work must be compatible with the objectives of the internal market. Our authorities, economic operators and citizens need legal certainty.

With a close partner such as Switzerland, we should not confine ourselves to any less ambitious degree of relations.

The EU and Switzerland share similar interests and positions on a number of international issues. In this context, we had an exchange of views on the world's economic and financial situation and on recent developments in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Iran.

The EU is concerned about the situation in Egypt and in the region. The EU will give full support to a democratic transition that has to start now, with free and fair elections and respect for human rights.

The European Council adopted a Declaration last Friday inviting High Representative Ashton to take the EU's message personally to Tunisia and to Egypt.

We have asked the High Representative to develop a package of measures aimed at supporting the transition and transformation processes. We have also invited the Commission and the High Representative to make humanitarian aid available and to propose measures and projects to promote economic and social development."

P R E S S

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