



GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

~BACKGROUND~

President of the European Council

November 2009

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the President of the European Council will be a stable and full-time function. At their informal meeting in Brussels on 19 November, ahead of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December, EU Heads of State or Government are expected to agree on the President they will elect.

What are his/her duties?

According to Article 15 (6) of the Treaty on the European Union, the President of the European Council:

- will chair it and drive forward its work;
- will ensure the preparation and continuity of the work of the European Council in cooperation with the President of the Commission, and on the basis of the work of the General Affairs Council;
- will endeavour to facilitate cohesion and consensus within the European Council;
- will present a report to the European Parliament after each of the meetings of the European Council.

He/she will also, at his/her level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

He/she may not hold a national office at the same time as being President.

P R E S S

How will he/she be elected and for what duration ?

According to the Treaty, the European Council will elect its President by a qualified majority for a term of two and a half years, renewable once. The formal decision will be taken once the Treaty is in force.

The European Council

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council becomes an institution. It provides the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and defines the general political directions and priorities thereof. It will not exercise legislative functions.

The European Council will consist of the Heads of State or government of the Member States, together with its President and the President of the Commission. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security will take part in its work.

The European Council will meet twice every six months, convened by its President. When the situation so requires, the President will convene a special meeting of the European Council.

Supporting arrangements

The European Council will be assisted by the General Secretariat of the Council (i.e. no new administration).

The staff of the General Secretariat will therefore be at the President's disposal, including the Directorate for general political questions, the Legal Service, policy DGs (Ecofin, environment, JHA, etc.), translation services, protocol, press office, etc. The President will have his/her own private office.

The President will have his/her office, as from appointment, at the Council's Justus Lipsius building. Once the new European Council building has been completed, estimated 2013, the President will then be situated there.
