Brussels, 7 December 2011

BACKGROUND

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Friday 9 December in Brussels

*EU Heads of State or government will discuss **economic issues**, with a focus on measures aimed at enhancing growth, strengthening economic convergence and fiscal discipline within the euro area, including exploring the possibility of limited Treaty changes. They will do so at an informal dinner on Thursday night, 8 December, notably on the basis of a report prepared by the President of the European Council in close collaboration with the President of the Commission and the President of the Eurogroup.*

*The European Council will take stock of progress made in the **energy** sector, in particular as regards energy efficiency, the internal energy market, energy infrastructure development and external energy policy. It will also assess the initial findings of the nuclear stress tests it called for in March.*

*In the margins of the European Council, the Accession Treaty with **Croatia** will be signed.*

Indicative programme:

Thursday:
19:30 informal dinner
+/- 23.00 (poss.) press conference
Friday:
09:30 ceremony for the signature of the accession treaty with Croatia
10.00 family photo
10.40 meeting with the President of the European Parliament
11:00 working session
13.30 working lunch
(at the end of the meeting) press conference

Full media programme
Invitation letter by President Van Rompuy to the European Council

- *Press conferences and public events by video streaming:* http://video.consilium.europa.eu/
- *Video coverage for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4):* http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu
- *Photos covering the event for download in high resolution from the Council photo library* http://www.consilium.europa.eu/photo
- *Accreditation for access to the press centre:* european-council.europa.eu

Economic policy

The European Council will discuss economic issues, emphasising structural reforms and fiscal consolidation as the basis for a return to sustainable growth. It will discuss, on the basis of a report by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy in collaboration with the President of the Commission and the President of the Eurogroup, proposals for possible steps aimed at deepening economic integration in the EU. The report addresses economic coordination and convergence in the euro area; budgetary discipline, including possible treaty changes; economic union; and strengthening the existing crisis mechanisms (EFSF, ESM, IMF).

The European Council is also expected to review progress made by member states taking part in the Euro Plus Pact towards implementing the pact's objectives.

Energy

The European Council will assess progress made in pursuing the objectives it set in February on completing the energy internal market by 2014, enhancing energy efficiency, developing infrastructure and ensuring consistency and coherence in the EU's external relations. It is expected to call for action in the area of nuclear safety.

Enlargement

The European Council will discuss EU enlargement and is expected to endorse the conclusions adopted by the General Affairs Council on the issue on 5 December.

Other issues

The European Council is expected to discuss the situation in Iran.

It will discuss the issue of Bulgaria and Romania's accession to Schengen.

It is also expected to take note of a presidency report on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework, inviting the incoming presidency to press ahead with the work aimed at developing a basis for the final stage of negotiations, to be discussed at the European Council in June.