

**Majestades
Altezas
Presidente Zapatero
President Busek
President Van Rompuy
President Barroso
Señores Ministros
Señoras y Señores**

Today, ceremonially, Sweden is handing over the batons of Presidency of the European Union to President Van Rompuy, to High Representative Ashton and – certainly – to Spain.

The batons of Presidency are not only passing from my country in the north to your country here in the south of our Europe.

They are passing from one era of European integration to another.

The Lisbon Treaty is now in full force.

It follows the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice Treaties in the remarkable institutional and political development of our Union since the fall of the wall in Berlin two decades ago.

Our Union then was far more limited in both scope and ambition – my country was not even a member.

But it seized the historical moment, and its contribution to the peace and prosperity of all of our Europe since then has been nothing less than historic.

Today, with close to 500 million people from 27 nations we represent not only the largest integrated economy in the world, but also the leading region by far in terms of democratic integration and the sharing of sovereignty.

We know that faced with the challenges of tomorrow all of our nations – no matter how great they have been in the past – are small – too small.

We know that it is only by coming together that we can continue to build a better Europe and make our contribution to a better world.

Spain was one of the early, active, determined supporters of the process that has now produced the Lisbon Treaty.

Now it will be your task to assist in having it live up to all of our expectations.

The tasks ahead are momentous.

We have not made the progress we promised each other a decade ago in terms of our economic development. Many are lagging too far behind in terms of commitments made.

We have huge tasks ahead in finally overcoming the deep economic crisis. We must not pass the burdens to the future. EU 2020 is our new horizon.

We know that we face the enormous challenge of building a low-carbon future and of giving the world true leadership in tackling (the challenge of) climate change. We must be ready to show the world the path to sustainable globalisation.

We remain committed to peace and prosperity in all of our own part of the world. The divisions of the past must be overcome. There are walls yet to be torn down.

Our door must remain open to new members –negotiations with Croatia and Turkey will proceed, and others must be helped to prepare themselves.

We are a Union that stands by its commitments and that truly knows its strategic interests.

Only two decades ago, our Europe was perhaps the world's greatest security problem. Half of our continent was still in chains. Wars were just waiting to break out.

Since then we have developed into perhaps the world's most significant potential partner in dealing with the challenges of the future.

I deliberately use the word “potential”.

The Lisbon Treaty has created the expectation that we will now truly live up to the global role we can and must play in the years and decades ahead.

Helping to bring peace. Assisting in fighting poverty. Standing up for freedom and human rights. Bringing rays of light for those still in darkness.

We –Sweden - did our best in our six short months.

We know that you – Spain – will do your best. And we are deeply confident that your best will bring success for us all.

We hand over to President Van Rompuy, High Representative Ashton and to you.

It is not that the rotating presidency – yours and those that will follow– will do less than was the case in the past.

No es que la Presidencia rotativa – la suya y las que vengan después– vaya a conseguir menos que en el pasado.

Rather there is so enormously much more to do for each and everyone.

Es que hay muchísimo más que hacer para todas y cada una de ellas.

A new era for Europe starts.

Una nueva era empieza para Europa.

Our best time is still ahead of us. You will help in making it come true.

Lo mejor está aún por hacer. Ustedes nos ayudarán a hacerlo realidad.