



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Brussels, 27 May 2014
EUCO 117/14

PRESSE 316
PR PCE 107

**Opening remarks by President Herman Van Rompuy
at the informal dinner of Heads of State or Government**

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to this informal dinner, our first meeting immediately after the European elections.

I asked you to come to Brussels tonight, so that we can assess Sunday's results together. Of course the situation in each of our countries is different. Overall, voters sent a strong message. The wider picture is a mix of continuity and change.

With this backdrop in mind, I would like to have an initial discussion on the Union's priorities for the years ahead. As our countries continue on the path of recovery, we need a positive agenda for the European Union as a whole, and I would like your views on this.

The European Council is also responsible for putting forward to the Parliament a candidate for President of the next Commission, and we must do this taking into account the election results and after consultations with the Parliament. Tonight we will discuss how to proceed with this responsibility, in the coming weeks and days.

I would also like us to spend some time on the outcome of this week's other elections in Europe – the presidential elections in Ukraine.

We all hope they can be the start of a new beginning for the country.

But for now let us first turn to our own elections.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

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