

Brussels, 1 December 2009

## European Commission welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

*The Treaty of Lisbon enters into force today – 1 December 2009. The occasion will be marked by a ceremony in the City of Lisbon organised jointly by the Portuguese Government, the Swedish Presidency and the European Commission. The Commission believes that the new treaty provides significant new benefits for citizens and will settle the institutional debate for the foreseeable future. This will allow the European Union to fully concentrate on managing a smooth exit from the economic and financial crisis and pushing ahead with the 2020 strategy for greener growth.*

President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso said, "The Treaty of Lisbon puts citizens at the centre of the European project. I'm delighted that we now have the right institutions to act and a period of stability, so that we can focus all our energy on delivering what matters to our citizens".

The Treaty of Lisbon amends the current EU and EC treaties, without replacing them. It will provide the Union with the legal framework and tools necessary to meet future challenges and to respond to citizens' demands.

The Treaty of Lisbon will ensure European citizens have their say in European affairs and see their fundamental rights set out in a charter. The EU will be better equipped to meet expectations in the fields of energy, climate change, cross-border crime and immigration. It will also be able to speak with a stronger voice on the international scene.

Among key improvements are:

- **a more democratic and open and accountable Union** – The European Parliament and national parliaments will now have a much greater say in the EU's decision-making process, and citizens will have the right to know what their Ministers are deciding at the EU level. All European citizens will be given the opportunity to influence proposed EU laws.
- **a more effective Union** – through effective and streamlined institutions. Including swifter, more consistent decision-making on law and order issues, giving the EU greater ability to combat crime, terrorism and human trafficking.
- **more rights for Europeans** – the EU's values and goals will be set down more clearly than ever before. And the charter of fundamental rights will be given the same legal status as the EU treaties themselves.
- **a more prominent global actor** – new posts have been created as part of work to bring more coherence between the different strands of its external policy, such as diplomacy, security, trade and humanitarian aid.

These improvements give the Union the capacity to deliver change, to make Europeans more secure and prosperous and to open up their opportunities to shape globalisation.

#### 10 examples of benefits for European citizens

- A right for citizens to make a request to the Commission for it to propose a new initiative ("European citizens initiative")
- Better protection for citizens through the new status given to the Charter of fundamental rights
- Diplomatic and consular protection for all EU citizens when travelling and living abroad
- Mutual assistance against natural or man-made catastrophes inside the Union, such as flooding and forest fires
- New possibilities to deal with cross border effects of energy policy, civil protection and combating serious cross border threats to health
- Common action on dealing with criminal gangs who smuggle people across frontiers
- Common rules to avoid asylum shopping where multiple applications are made to different member countries
- Tackling terrorism through the freezing of assets
- More democratic approach to EU decision-making (strengthened role of European Parliament and national Parliaments)
- An ability to provide urgent financial aid to third countries

#### **Milestones concerning the Treaty of Lisbon:**

- June 2007: European Council mandate for an Intergovernmental Conference aiming at amending the existing Treaties
- July-October 2007: Intergovernmental Conference
- Approval of the Treaty approved at the informal European Council on 18-19 October 2007
- 12 December 2007: Proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights by the Presidents of the European Parliament (EP), the Council and the Commission.
- 13 December 2007: Signature of the new Treaty in Lisbon
- December 2007 - November 2009: ratification procedures in all 27 Member States
- 1 December 2009: - entry into force of the Treaty

A copy of the Treaty of Lisbon can be found at: [http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty)