

**Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the official inauguration
Of the EC delegation in Mexico, 23 November 2009.**

Speaking points for the cocktail

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, dear colleagues,

- I am pleased and honoured to have all of you as our distinguished guests and to celebrate with you the 20th anniversary of the official inauguration of the European Commission's Delegation in Mexico.

- One could think that 20 years are not a remarkable period of time in the scale of history. But from a *European* point of view, especially the last 20 years have marked fundamental changes:
 - o The lifting of the iron curtain at the end of the eighties,
 - o The deepening of the European Union by the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam und Nice, and now a major step with the Lisbon Treaty.
 - o And an enlargement of the European Union with 12 additional Member States.

- From a *Mexican* perspective the implementation of the NAFTA-Treaty in 1994 with The United States and Canada was the most important milestone in the last 20 years.

- From a *global* point of view those two decades were dominated by
 - o the end of the cold war,
 - o the substitution of one threat, the risk of nuclear disaster by a couple of threats, the risk of terrorism all over the world,
 - o the catastrophe of 9/11 in the United States,

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- climate change and

 - The global financial crisis.
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- In the course of the last 20 years the European Union has become a very important world economic power and is gaining more and more political influence on the international stage. This leads to even more international responsibility. As you all know, the member states of the EU have decided to join forces and to speak with one voice on the global scene. This is the main goal of the Lisbon Treaty which will enter into force next week, on Tuesday 1st of December. From that date on, the “European Commission Delegation” will change its name and become the “European Union Delegation”. It will intensify its relations with the EU member states and in particular during the coming Spanish Presidency.

 - One of the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty is to ensure consistency of the Union's external action. The setting up of unified European External Action Service will open the way for an even stronger cooperation between the European Commission, the national diplomatic services and their Embassies abroad.

 - This is a quite remarkable change and I am sure that it will give us the chance to improve the visibility of the EU all over the world and also in Mexico.

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- Even though I have arrived very recently in Mexico, I already feel amongst good friends. I am very grateful to the Mexican authorities for their extremely friendly welcome. I am convinced that we will develop a strong and fruitful cooperation over the years to come.

- Let me please recall that Mexico is the only country in Latin America the EU has signed a Global Agreement with, including a free trade area and which is at the same time a Strategic Partner. We have developed a very special and privileged relationship with Mexico and we appreciate very much that Mexico is a strong ally we can rely on, especially at multilateral level.

- Since the entry into force of our Global Agreement, our trade flows have dramatically increased. We also established regular and in-depth dialogues on a number of vital issues such as climate change, social cohesion, science/technology and culture/education. We have a vast cooperation programme with numerous projects, for a total amount of €10 M since 2002.

- Performing a good relationship between the European Union and Mexico is not only a matter of implementing good and substantial agreements. Friendship and trust rely on persons.

- This is the reason why I am very proud to be able to honour two colleagues who have been working in our delegation for the past 20 years with a remarkable passion for our relationship with our host country. They have dedicated their career to the European ideal and I am sure that they

Deserve all our gratitude.

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On behalf of President Barroso, I am pleased to invite Mrs Leticia Curiel Riva Palacio and Mr Jaime Enrique Torres Cadena to receive the medal of 20 Years of Loyal Service

- Let me conclude by saying that next year, 2010 will be a challenging year for all of us:
 - o Climate change will be high on the agenda as well as
 - o the promotion of human rights,
 - o social justice and
 - o Security for all.
 - o But 2010 is also an opportunity to celebrate:
 - not only Mexico's independence and revolution, but also, it will mark
 - the first Summit between the EU and Mexico as a Strategic Partner,
 - the 10th anniversary of the EU-Mexico Global Agreement, and
 - The 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the EU and Mexico.

I personally very much look forward to those events and would like to ask all of you for your kind help, your ideas and assistance to design 2010 as an opportunity to strengthen and even deepen our friendship.

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Thanks for your attention.