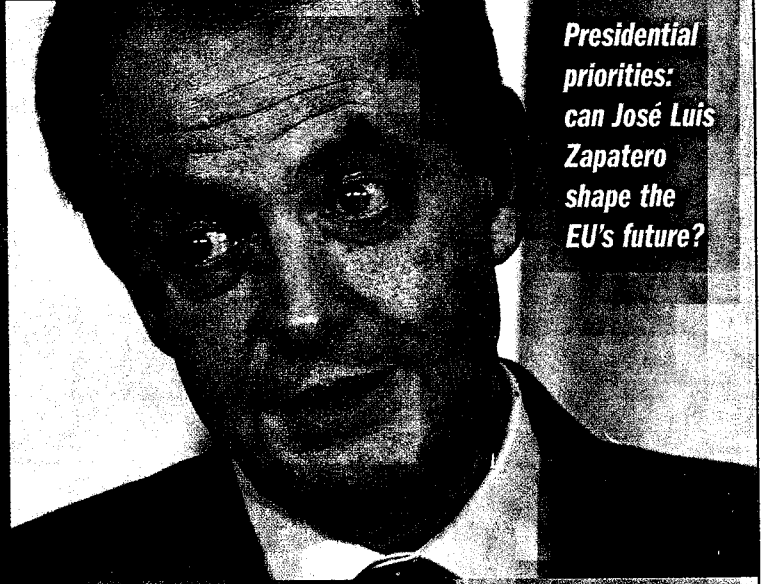


From Lisbon to Madrid: Spanish EU presidency preview

"I am sure the Spanish presidency will be truly transforming"
Jerzy Buzek



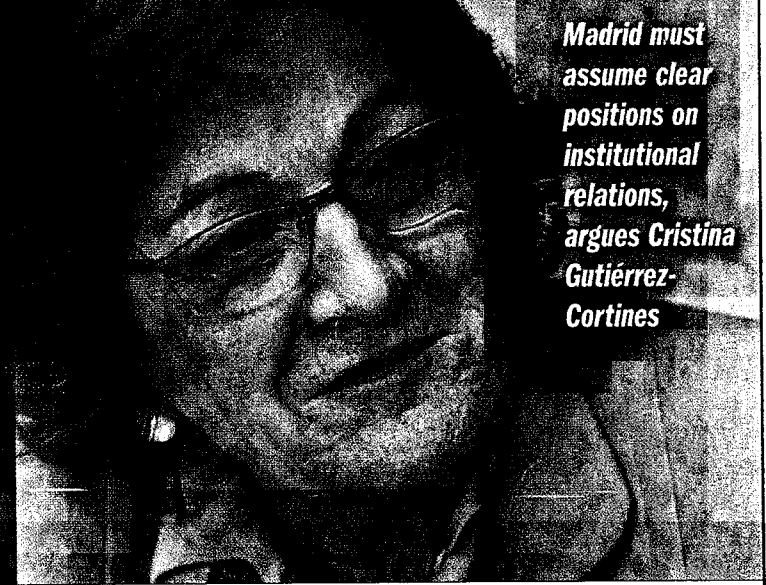
Presidential priorities: can José Luis Zapatero shape the EU's future?



"It's the beginning of the dream of the united states of Europe"
Gabriele Albertini



Madrid must assume clear positions on institutional relations, argues Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines



Spanish presidency preview

Priorities: Lisbon implementation, economic recovery, citizenship, external relations

Plus:

Spanish MEP comment, gender equality, environmental challenges, energy security



Lisbon treaty

Luc Van den Brande on the role of regions under the new treaty

Ghost MEPs

Andrew Duff and Nigel Farage on parliament's phantom members

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Combating asthma and allergies



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The Spanish presidency will have some important in-tray issues when it takes office in January, not least of which is the need to kick start Europe's sustained competitiveness, argues Ben Butters

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Pilar Santamaría González says all eyes will be on Spain, with Zapatero's government taking over the reins in testing times



Spanish EU Presidency and Disability

Spain has the opportunity to launch a European Pact on Disability marking the history of the European Union



Alberto Durán
First Executive
Vice-President
Fundación ONCE



Fundación ONCE
para la cooperación e integración social
de personas con discapacidad

From 1st January, all eyes will be on Spain as it takes over, for the fourth time, the EU's six-month presidency. 2010 will mean to the Spanish government a unique opportunity to steer the European integration process and, in particular, to add social value to the renewed bloc's roadmap.

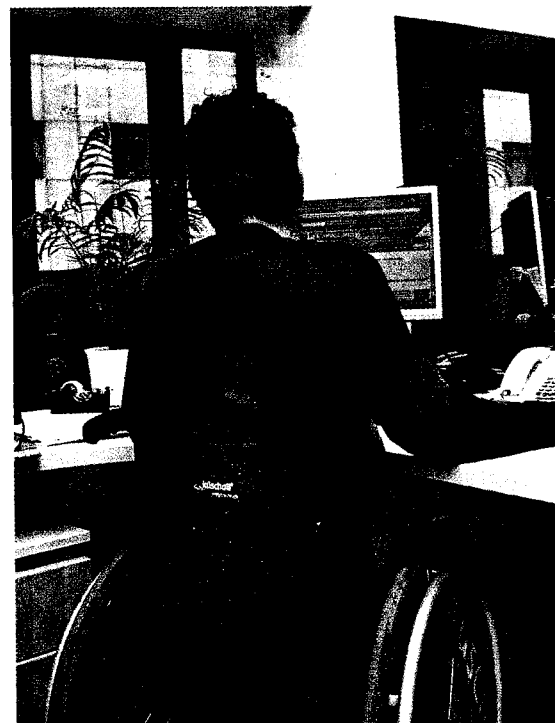
The new legal framework established by the Lisbon Treaty and the review process linked to a number of relevant EU strategies and policies will give momentum to the Spanish programme. High on the agenda will be the Lisbon Strategy, the European Social Agenda, the European Disability Action Plan, as well as the opening of the negotiations for the new EU budget.

This historical context explains why nearly 500 million EU citizens, among which 60 million people with disabilities, expect that Spain does not miss out on the opportunities arising from the changing political and economic cycle in the European Union.



The European and Spanish movement of persons with disabilities and their families therefore call on the Spanish Presidency to promote a European Pact on Disability to be signed by all the Member States, the European Commission and the European Disability Forum (EDF).

Special attention should be also given to the ratification process of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and



the negotiations around the Directive against discrimination beyond the workplace, which lack today of a reference framework providing the EU with global strategic objectives on disability issues.

The shaping of the European disability policy could moreover be complemented with more visual proposals such as the establishment of a Universal Accessibility European Capital, thereby connecting the EU with the accessibility dimension of urban environments.

People with disabilities and their families have seen how the European Union has made efforts to improve their day-to-day life. The moment has come for disability issues to be included in all relevant European policies. This shall be the best legacy for the European Union of the 21st century.