



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Prepared Statement
Introduction of Diego López Garrido, Minister for European Union Affairs at the Spanish
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
October 21, 2009

Good morning. And welcome to all of you.

As co-chairman of the Congressional Friends of Spain Caucus, I want to begin by thanking the audience for joining us this morning to hear from Diego López Garrido, Minister for European Union Affairs at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. Mr. Lopez Garrido: thank you for honoring us with your presence. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Congressman Kind, co-chairman of the Congressional EU Caucus, and to the German Marshall Fund, for facilitating this morning's important exchange of ideas.

I hope you will allow me a brief word of background about—and shameless recruiting pitch for—the Friends of Spain Caucus, which I am privileged to co-chair with Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart. The Caucus is in its infancy, having been established in the 110th Congress by Luis Fortuño—my predecessor as Resident Commissioner and the current governor of Puerto Rico—and by Congressman Xavier Becerra. The goal of the Caucus is to bring together members from both parties to further strengthen political, economic, and cultural ties between the United States

and Spain. Our two nations enjoy a close and enduring bond, one whose foundation is our shared commitment to freedom and democracy.

The subject of today's discussion is (1) Spain's January 2010 assumption of the presidency of the Council of the European Union, the EU's main decision-making body; and (2) the Lisbon Treaty, which has been ratified by 25 of the 27 EU member nations, most recently by Ireland in a nationwide referendum, and now awaits final approval by two member nations: Poland and the Czech Republic. The Lisbon Treaty seeks to reform the EU's governing institutions and decision-making in order to streamline both. Among other things, I look forward to hearing from Mr. López Garrido about the ways in which the Treaty, if and when it takes effect, will allow for improved cooperation among member countries on critical military and foreign policy issues.

Thank you again.