

## **Reducing high youth unemployment priority of EU countries: Van Rompuy**

LISBON, May 2 (Xinhua) -- Visiting European Council President Herman Van Rompuy said here Thursday that reducing the high youth unemployment rate is the current priority of the EU countries. At a joint press conference with Portuguese Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho after their talk, Van Rompuy said that the high unemployment especially for the youth has become one of the most pressing issues for the economic recovery in the EU countries. Therefore, the EU countries should further intensify the economic reform and make measures to bring down the unemployment, he said. "We will propose additional measures for immediate action on growth and jobs, especially aiming young people," Van Rompuy said. He added that resolving the issue of high youth unemployment rate will be a major topic at the upcoming EU summit meeting scheduled for June. Van Rompuy appreciated the efforts made by Portugal in fulfilling the international commitment for reducing the budget deficit. He said he believes Portugal will finally overcome the current economic crisis. Coelho said that Portugal will make concerted efforts to meet the budget deficit reduction goals and intensify the reform of economic structure to create more job opportunities and stimulate economic growth. Portugal has to meet the budget reduction targets set by the troika comprising the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank in return for a 78-billion-euro (102-billion-U.S. dollar) bailout for the heavily indebted country under an agreement reached in May 2011. The Portuguese prime minister said his government will unveil by the end of this week the new packages for public expense reduction. During his one-day working visit to Portugal, Van Rompuy also met with Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva and attended the Estoril Conference in Cascais in the vicinity of Portuguese capital Lisbon, at which he made a keynote speech titled "The Future of Globalization."