

**1. EUROPEAN COUNCIL**  
**AND**  
**COUNCIL OF THE UNION**

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**2120th Council meeting GENERAL AFFAIRS; Luxembourg, 5 October 1998. (C/98/322)**

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### **AGENDA 2000**

In view of a first substantial discussion since the Cardiff European Council on Agenda 2000, the Presidency presented to the Council a progress report on the work concerning the various aspects of Agenda 2000 carried out by COREPER. The purpose of this report was to highlight the main substantive issues which have been considered in the course of the work since Cardiff, and to draw to the attention of the Council some general orientations which have already emerged from that work, on which the Council focused its deliberations.

Following a constructive discussion, the President noted that there was a large measure of agreement by the Council on the following general orientations:

·\_an adequate range of economic growth assumptions have been considered, but that these will have to be kept under continuous review on the basis of the most recent economic data; ·\_an alternative presentation of the Financial Perspective has been examined which appears to be a more effective means of ringfencing pre-accession and enlargement-related expenditure, as called for by the Cardiff European Council; ·\_a detailed examination of the Commission's report on the operation of the own resources system should be made as soon as possible so that a substantive discussion can begin at the next session of the Council; ·\_COREPER should continue work as a matter of priority with a view to reaching a common approach on the IIA, so that the Presidency is in a position to begin a technical examination of the Commission's proposals with the European Parliament as soon as possible; ·\_there is agreement in principle on achieving greater concentration of structural assistance with as its necessary counterpart the gradual phasing out of assistance in regions which no longer qualify. Work will have to continue in order to find the most acceptable and effective ways and means of meeting this twin objective; ·\_there is a large measure of agreement on the structure and substance of the pre-accession instruments, and that the legal texts should be rapidly aligned with the orientations in the report in order to reach a political agreement on the texts by the November General Affairs Council; ·\_once it has received the European Parliament's opinion, expected in November, the Council should be in a position to reach a common position on the TENs financing regulation by the end of the year, as requested by the Cardiff European Council; ·\_in order to meet the request made at Cardiff for the Vienna European Council to make substantial progress on the key elements of the Agenda 2000 package, the Council needs to have at its disposal as soon as possible, and at the latest in November, a concise political paper detailing the main issues of substance on the CAP reform proposals to be resolved as part of an overall agreement on Agenda 2000.

### **ENLARGEMENT - CONCLUSIONS**

1. The Council had a general debate on the state of the ongoing enlargement process and in particular the accession negotiations. The Council reiterated the Union's strong willingness to carry forward the accession process along the lines mapped out by the European Council and in accordance with the Union's general position presented at the launching of each Accession Conference. The Council

stressed the importance of a coherent enlargement process to which it will give, when necessary, additional political orientations in the light of the ongoing negotiations.

2. The Council noted that the analytical examination of the "acquis" (screening) was proceeding according to plan, 13 chapters having been screened so far.

3. The Council took note of the position papers presented by the six candidate States concerned. It also noted the input provided by the Commission to assist the Union in defining a common position respectively in each bilateral Conference on Accession.

4. The Council requested the convening of meetings of the Conferences on Accession at Ministerial level on 10 November 1998 and at the level of Deputies prior to that meeting in order to have substantive negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. It invited the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the draft common positions provided by the Commission with a view to arriving at common positions of the European Union. The Committee is also requested to report to the Council at its meeting on 26 October 1998 on the state of play of the preparation of each Conference on Accession.

5. The Council recalled that the pace of progress in the negotiations will depend upon the individual situation of each applicant country. It also recalled the principle that agreements - even partial agreements - reached during the course of the negotiations may not be considered as final until an overall agreement has been established.

6. With regard to Cyprus, the Council noted that because of the political situation the Commission's analytical examination of the "acquis" (screening) could not cover Cyprus as a whole and that the invitation of the Cyprus government to include representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community in the negotiations had so far not been taken up. It regretted that it had not been possible to achieve a political solution to the continuing division of Cyprus in time for the accession negotiations. The Union believes that Cyprus's accession to the EU should benefit all communities, including the Turkish Cypriot community, and help to bring about civil peace and reconciliation on the island. In that context its objective remains a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation on the basis of a comprehensive political settlement in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions. A political settlement would allow the provisions of the Accession Treaty to be implemented throughout the island. Progress towards accession and towards a just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem will naturally reinforce each other. The Union reaffirms its full support for the search for a solution under the aegis of the UN.

7. The Council furthermore recalled the comprehensive, inclusive and ongoing character of the enlargement process in which each of the applicant States will proceed at its own rate, depending on its degree of preparedness. In this context, the Council expressed appreciation of progress achieved and looks forward to the reports by the Commission later this year reviewing the progress of all Central and East European candidate States towards accession based on the same objective criteria.

8. The Council finally recalled the importance it attaches to the implementation of the European strategy for Turkey and invited the Commission to submit - in accordance with the Cardiff conclusions - as soon as possible its proposals including the financial aspects.

MALTA

Further to the letter from the Maltese Government aimed at reactivating Malta's application for membership of the European Union, the Council agreed to invite the Commission to present an update of its opinion of June 1993 on Malta's application.

The Council also agreed on the terms of the response to be addressed by the President of the Council to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Guido de Marco acknowledging the receipt of his letter and informing the Maltese Government of the Council decision mentioned above.

## LATVIA - DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

"The Latvian electorate has, by popular vote on 3 October, spoken out in favour of implementation of the amendments to the citizenship law adopted by the Saeima on 22 June 1998.

The European Union welcomes this farsighted decision which constitutes an important step towards further integration of all inhabitants of Latvia. The implementation of these amendments, which are in full accordance with the respective OSCE recommendations, will increase the possibilities for non-citizens, including stateless children, to acquire citizenship and become fully integrated members of Latvian society.

The result of the referendum is a vote in favour of a future-oriented approach promoting stability and is consistent with the principles and aims of the European Union. The European Union welcomes the fact that the decision of the Latvian electorate takes into account the political priorities enumerated in the Accession partnership. It is therefore of marked relevance to Latvia's relationship with the European Union.

The European Union will continue to cooperate closely with Latvia and to support the integration of non-Latvians into Latvian society."

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Slovakia - participation in SAVE II programme

The Council approved on behalf of the Community the draft decision of the EC-Slovakia Association Council concerning the terms and conditions of Slovakia's participation in the EC multiannual programme for energy efficiency, SAVE II.

## TRADE POLICY

WTO - accession of Kyrgyzstan and Latvia

In preparation of the meeting of the WTO General Council on 14 October 1998, which will be required to adopt a position on the accession of Kyrgyzstan and Latvia to the WTO, the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council gave their agreement to the accession of these two countries to the WTO. This joint position will be submitted by the Commission to the WTO on behalf of the EC and its Member States.

Romania and Slovakia - adaptation of the Europe Agreements

The Council decided to conclude the Protocols modifying the commercial aspects of the Europe Agreements with Romania and Slovakia in order to take account of the EU's enlargement to Austria, Finland and Sweden.