

2232. Council - GENERAL AFFAIRS

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European Conference

The Council approved its report on the European Conference which will be forwarded to the Helsinki European Council.

This report was drawn up further to a request by the Vienna European Council to consider the future role and membership of the European Conference. It is recalled that the European Conference was set up in December 1997 in order to bring together the Member States of the EU and the European States aspiring to accede to it and sharing its values and internal and external objectives.

In addition to the representatives from the EU Member States, delegations from the following countries participated in the work of the Conference: the applicant States of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Malta and Switzerland as "member elect".

The report sets out the activities carried out by the European Conference which met at the level of Heads of State or Government on 12 March 1998 in London, and at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 6 October 1998 in Luxembourg and on 19 July 1999 in Brussels.

The report itself does not deal with the future role of the European Conference, but during the preparatory work some options have emerged, non of which, however, enjoyed unanimous support.

EU common positions for the Accession Conferences

The Council adopted the EU common positions in view of the Accession Conferences at ministerial level with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, scheduled for 7 December 1999.

The common positions relate to the following chapters: chapter 1 (free movement of goods); chapter 3 (freedom to provide services); chapter 9 (transport policy); chapter 10 (taxation); chapter 11 (Economic and Monetary Union); chapter 14 (energy); chapter 20 (culture and audio-visual policy); chapter 22 (environment); chapter 25 (customs union); and chapter 26 (external relations).

Decisions on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the accession partnerships

The Council approved the decisions on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the accession partnerships with Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech republic and Slovenia.

These decisions are based on Council regulation (EC) 622/98 "on assistance to the applicant countries in the framework of the pre-accession strategy".