

1. EUROPEAN COUNCIL

AND

COUNCIL OF THE UNION

A) EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Vienna European Council
11-12 June 1998

An extract of the presidency conclusions: Vienna European Council, 11 and 12 December 1998

PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS

(...)

IV. AGENDA 2000

- 1 The twin objectives of Agenda 2000 are to equip the Union with more effective policies and to set an appropriate financial framework within which to develop them. Achieving these objectives involves confronting a number of important political choices about the future direction of such policies and the necessary reforms as the Union prepares to make a success of its future enlargement. This must be done in a spirit of solidarity, while ensuring similar budgetary rigour at the level of the Union as applied at national level.
- 2 Work on the basis of the Commission's proposals, the own resources report and contributions made by Member States, has resulted in substantial progress being made since the Cardiff European Council. This work is reflected in the Council report and the debate in the European Council. The Commission's proposals and the report from the Council constitute a good basis for further work. The key elements for a final settlement have now been identified. In a number of areas, a measure of common ground has emerged. Work has also pinpointed those policy areas where a common understanding will have to be found as part of the process of narrowing down the parameters of the negotiation in moving towards a final overall agreement.
- 3 The negotiations have now moved into the final phase. The European Council:
 - reiterates its firm commitment to reach overall agreement on Agenda 2000 at the European Council in Brussels on 24-25 March 1999;
 - regards Agenda 2000 as a package on which agreement can only be reached as a whole;
 - calls for a careful examination of all the elements and positions which have emerged from the discussion in view of reaching an overall agreement; and
 - invites all Member States to make their full contribution to achieving a fair, balanced and acceptable outcome based on solidarity and budgetary rigour.
- 4 The European Council welcomes the readiness of the European Parliament and the Council to ensure a thorough consideration of the legislative texts in time to achieve their final adoption before the next European Parliamentary elections in June.

V. ENLARGEMENT

- 5 The European Council had a thorough discussion on all aspects of the enlargement process. It welcomes the fact that the overall enlargement process launched in Luxembourg is now well under way. The European Council welcomes the Commission's first Regular Progress Reports on the basis of its conclusions in Luxembourg and Cardiff and endorses the annexed Council conclusions of 7 December 1998 on European Union enlargement. The European Council stresses that each country will continue to be judged on its own merits. The European Council invites the Commission to present its further progress reports with a view to the Helsinki European Council.
- 6 The European Council notes with satisfaction that the six Accession Conferences with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia have entered into substantive negotiations and reached the first concrete results. It urges the Council, the Commission and the candidate countries to maintain the momentum in order to permit intensive negotiations in the first half of 1999.
- 7 The European Council also welcomes progress in preparation for accession negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria as described in the Commission's reports. It notes that the transition from the multilateral to the bilateral phase of the analytical examination of the acquis as from the beginning of the next year will confer new dynamism to the process and thus foster preparation for negotiations.
- 8 The European Council welcomes Malta's decision to reactivate its application for European Union membership and takes note of the intention of the Commission to present at the beginning of next year an updating of its favourable opinion of 1993.
- 9 The European Council reiterates the Union's willingness to continue to provide pre-accession aid throughout the process. It welcomes the broad political agreement, in the terms of the Council's report on Agenda 2000, on the pre-accession instruments which remains however subject to overall agreement on Agenda 2000.
- 10 The European Council underlines the great importance it attaches to the further development of relations between the EU and Turkey taking forward the European Strategy to prepare Turkey for membership. In this context it recognises the central role of the further implementation of the European strategy in line with its conclusions in Luxembourg and Cardiff.
- 11 The European Council took note of the work of the European Conference as a forum for political consultation on questions of general concern to the participants. One meeting at Foreign Ministers level will take place in 1999.
- 12 The European Council will consider the future role and membership of the European Conference at Helsinki in the light of a report by the Council on the work in the Conference and other fora engaged on similar work. Meanwhile it confirmed the invitation of Switzerland as a "member elect".