

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF
NEGOTIATING TEAMS: CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, ESTONIA,
HUNGARY, POLAND AND SLOVENIA
(BLED, 16-18 DECEMBER 1999)**

The Ninth Meeting of the Heads of Negotiating Teams exchanged views on the outcome of the Helsinki European Council and in particular on the issue of enlargement of the European Union which became an important part of the summit conclusions. The Heads of Negotiating Teams are pleased with the commitment that the Union should be in a position to welcome new member states from the end of 2002.

Having in mind that the position papers on all the negotiating chapters will have been submitted by the end of this year at the latest, the Heads of Negotiating Teams expect that negotiations on all the remaining chapters will be opened during the Portuguese Presidency as stated in Cologne.

In order to keep the momentum of negotiations, the Heads of Negotiating Teams propose to the Portuguese Presidency to convene an additional (third) meeting of the Accession Conference at deputies level, earlier than the originally proposed date of April. In this context, they welcome the conclusion of the European Council that any cumbersome procedures, which could affect the pace and the effectiveness of the negotiations, should be avoided.

The Heads of Negotiating Teams agreed that all the efforts should be made to finalise the negotiations at the latest in 2001 in order to make accession to the European Union possible by January 2003.

[Quelle: <http://www.msz.gov.pl/english/indexang.html>]