

POSITION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ON THE EU SUMMIT IN LAEKEN/BRUSSELS, 14-15 DECEMBER 2001

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic welcomes the Presidency conclusions adopted at the European Council in Laeken in which the European Union confirmed the irreversibility of the accession process. The Union also expressed its determination to bring the accession negotiations with the candidate countries that are ready to a successful conclusion by the end of 2002, so that those countries can take part in the European Parliament elections in 2004 as members. In this connection we consider it a significant commitment and explicit encouragement that the Slovak Republic is listed among the ten mentioned candidates who are given this chance. We also believe that the EU member countries will manage to reach an agreement in their position on the transport chapter as it is foreseen in the Presidency conclusions. This would be another important impetus for meeting the road map of accession negotiations during the upcoming Spanish Presidency.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic also appreciates the adoption of the Laeken Declaration, which defines a broad mandate for the Convention. From March 2002 on the Convention will deal with the preparations of the next Intergovernmental Conference on the future of the Union. We welcome the fact that all candidate countries were invited to take part in this forum for discussion on equal terms with the present EU member countries - represented by their government and national parliament members. In order to promote transparency, a Forum will also be opened where representatives of all spheres of the civil society will be informed about and could express their views on specific topics discussed by the Convention.

The results of the European Council confirmed Slovakia's ambitions to become a full-fledged member of the European Union in 2004 as well as to participate in the preparations of the Intergovernmental Conference on equal footing with the current EU members.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic acknowledges the role of the Belgian Presidency that managed to advance the development in the EU despite the difficult circumstances caused by the terrorist attacks in the USA. Concrete results can be seen in the area of common European security and defence policy, in the field of co-operation in justice and home affairs and in the completed process of introduction of the common European currency Euro.

Bratislava, 17 December 2001

[Quelle: <http://www.foreign.gov.sk>]