



*Välisminister  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Estonia*

Tallinn, 8 February 2000  
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CARO COLEGA!

I thank you for your letter of 10 January 2000 concerning the start of a new Intergovernmental Conference for revision of the Treaty on European Union in which you also requested the Estonian Government to present its views on the points to be discussed during the IGC. As a future Member State we appreciate the Union's decision to keep the applicant countries informed about the progress of ongoing negotiations, as the outcome of the IGC will affect us just as much as it will affect the present members.

As the precise agenda of the IGC is yet to be fixed, permit me not to go into technical details, but to focus above all on the general principles which we believe to be important.

Estonia desires to become a member of an effective and dynamic Union where there is a balance between different institutions and between large and small Member States. It is important that the reforms to be enacted as a result of the IGC bring the EU closer to its citizens and make the decision-making mechanisms more transparent.

We deem it crucial that the EU should be ready to accept new members by the end of 2002. The IGC should not become a hindrance to enlargement and should therefore end by the date mentioned in your letter, that is December 2000. The scope of the IGC should be limited to those institutional issues that need to be tackled in the context of enlargement, the leftovers from Amsterdam and issues directly connected to them, which demand changes in the Treaties. In the event of a possible expansion of the agenda the aim of concluding the IGC by December 2000 should still be strictly adhered to.

H.E. Mr. Jaime Gama  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Portuguese Republic  
LISBON

As has been the case to date we believe it will also be important in the future for Member States to be represented in all EU institutions. Therefore we support the position that each Member State should also in the future be represented in the Commission by its national. The presence of a national from each Member State in the Commission would protect the legitimacy of the institution – the citizens of each Member State would possess a visible representation of their country's membership in the Union. At the same time this solution would ensure an equal knowledge of the situation and need of each Member State within the Commission and therefore the equality of the various Member States.

In the distribution of votes in the Council the aim should be to ensure a balance between institutions and between large and small Member States. The principle underlying the distribution of votes should be as simple and clear as possible.

We support the expansion of qualified majority voting to ensure the effective and dynamic functioning of an enlarged Union. At the same time the unanimity requirement should be reserved for decisions affecting the fundamental nature of the Union.

These are the basic principles underlying our thinking as concerning the future development of the European Union. As the IGC progresses we intend to further refine these positions to reflect developments during the course of the conference. We look forward to the consultations as outlined in your letter.

Sincerely yours,

Toomas Hendrik Ilves