



MINISTER  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

370/Ma

Budapest, 8 February 2000

Dear Colleague,

May I express our sincere gratitude to the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union for inviting Hungary, along with the other candidate countries, to express its views on the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference. I deem it a matter of honour and duty to put forward our ideas as the IGC, under the stewardship of Portugal and, subsequently, France, will undoubtedly become a major milestone on the road to the eventual re-unification of Europe.

Institutional reforms form a highly important building block of the new European architecture. The Union can successfully pursue its various objectives only if its functioning is efficient, transparent and adjusted to the challenges and realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, institutional reforms represent a basic element and pre-condition of another objective of the utmost importance: the enlargement of the European Union. Therefore we are of the opinion that when setting the agenda of the forthcoming IGC, the needs of enlargement should be firmly embedded as a priority consideration. In other words, we believe that the eventual scope of reforms to be carried out by the IGC should allow for a successful conclusion of the conference by the end of 2000, as decided last December in Helsinki. Any delay may have a negative impact on the enlargement process thus potentially jeopardizing the accession of the candidate countries willing and capable to participate in the political and economic reunification of Europe.

In our view some of the prospective agenda items are directly related to enlargement, while others touch upon the future development of the European integration process and the institutional system reflecting, as well as promoting its longer term objectives and aspirations. It is our firm conviction that at this stage the few enlargement related issues should be given a clear priority over those of a different character affecting the conceptual issues of European construction. The latter could be more appropriately addressed after the next enlargement with the full participation of new Member States.

**His Excellency  
Mr. Jaime Gama  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Portuguese Republic**

Ever since the systemic change took place in Hungary, this country and its governments have been consistent and dedicated supporters of a deeper and at the same time inclusive European architecture. It is our firm conviction that Europe should be more united both in political and economic terms in order to create better opportunities for progress and prosperity for all of its citizens as well as to realize its full global potential. Deepening and widening, therefore, are not opposing but complementary processes, a wider Europe shall simultaneously gain both in its inner strength and global influence. Hungary has been and, as a new EU member, will remain fully committed to furthering European integration as it is a crucial factor in consolidating and extending the zone of stability, prosperity and freedom on the continent.

Upon accession we are determined to add to the Union's resolve to further strengthen the integration process, and expect to be granted full rights and responsibilities to contribute to the attainment of the Union's objectives. Our assumption is that the first entries should not and will not threaten the cause of closer European cooperation. Thus we support the proposal of the outgoing Finnish Presidency that reinforced cooperation does not have to figure on the agenda at the moment. Should philosophical differences or practical difficulties arise among the Member States subsequently to enlargement, we will be happy to seek with our partners ways to forge ahead towards a stronger, deeper cooperation.

As for the composition of the future European Commission, we think that at the present stage of the development of the Union every Member State should be represented by a Commissioner. The principle of equal representation of the Member States should also apply for the Court of Auditors and the Court of Justice. Commissioners should enjoy equal rights in every respect, but we can of course agree to having a few Vice-Presidents in order to streamline the work and enhance efficiency in the Commission's activities. The number of Vice-Presidents, however, should be limited in order to exclude any formal or informal distinction in importance among the Members, which would raise the dangerous spectre of a two-tiered Commission.

Hungary supports weighting the votes in the Council in a way to better reflect population figures, while preserving a relative over-representation of small Member States in their voting power. We expect a similar number of votes to be granted to countries with similar population figures. That objective may be served both by re-weighting the present votes or introducing double majority voting. In our view the IGC should establish a consistent, coherent and transparent voting system, which would not require further amendments in the process of the gradual accession of new members.

Hungary feels deeply interested in ensuring the efficient and smooth functioning of the Union. With this basic objective in mind we are in favour of widening the scope of qualified majority voting. Extending the range of decisions taken by qualified majority voting is an incremental process reflecting the strengthening of the integration and the degree of resolve and determination of Member States to move forward. It would be erroneous to presume that such resolve would by nature decrease due to the accession of candidate countries to the Union.

We agree at the same time that in constitutional and sensitive issues the principle of unanimity should be preserved. We do not see the range of sensitive issues as remaining static, and we therefore suggest those categories of decision to be transferred to the domain of qualified majority vote where consensus can be achieved at this point of time, while categories to be considered too sensitive at this stage may be reconsidered later.

Hungary is fully aware of the importance and supportive of the evolution of the common European security and defence policy. The issue represents a major new direction for the Union, directly related to its basic objectives. If the political decisions taken in Helsinki require treaty amendments, it seems reasonable to deal with them in an already existing intergovernmental framework, however, without burdening the work of the Conference to an extent endangering its termination and entry into force as planned.

Dear Minister,

We formulated our approach to the IGC on the basis of information presently available to us. Hungary is ready to elaborate its views, based on the further developments, as the preparations for the IGC or the actual work in the conference progress. This is why I would like to stress the importance of regularly informing and consulting the candidate countries about the progress in IGC related discussions within the EU.

With the historic decisions of the Helsinki European Council the Union has reached another milestone in its development. Enlargement has been given a clear perspective and now the momentum should be maintained by the EU and the candidate countries alike. The successful outcome of the IGC is a crucial factor in this respect. Hungary is confident that the mandate given by the European Council can be fulfilled and the work accomplished within the timeframe stipulated in Helsinki. I wish to assure you that Hungary is ready to contribute in every possible way to the success of the Intergovernmental Conference.

Yours sincerely,

János Martonyi