

**CONFERENCE
OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS
OF THE MEMBER STATES**

Brussels, 24 February 2000

CONFER/VAR 3957/00

LIMITE

TRANSMISSION NOTE

Subject: IGC 2000: Contribution from the government of Slovakia

Delegations will find attached for information a contribution from the government of Slovakia.

– UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION –

Bratislava, February 2000
Ref 200.269/2000-KAMI

Dear colleague,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional Reform of the European Union. I am very pleased that you approached me about expressing the opinion of the Slovak Republic on the Intergovernmental Conference agenda as we are one of the prospective members of the Union. This shows that the Portuguese Presidency is making true efforts to ensure that the Candidate Countries are informed and enables Slovakia to convey its views on the course of the Intergovernmental Conference what is fully in line with the Helsinki European Council conclusions.

The Slovak Republic is well aware of the fact that the main goal of the institutional reform is to ensure proper functioning of the Union also after the enlargement. According to our opinion, the reform should be of such a scope that the inclusion of all the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe will materialise without any additional changes to the Treaties. At the same time, the course and completion of the institutional reform should be scheduled in such manner that any delay in the accession of the Candidate Countries to the Union is avoided.

The Slovak Republic entirely aligns itself with the Helsinki European Council conclusions that foresee the three left-overs of the Amsterdam Treaty as the basis for the Intergovernmental Conference. However, the Slovak Republic is convinced that besides the aforementioned topics the Intergovernmental Conference should also deal with the Common Foreign and Security Policy, notably with the institutional impacts of building up the Common European Security and Defence Policy. Re-allocation of seats in the European Parliament is another area that should be addressed within the framework of the Intergovernmental Conference.

H.E. Jaime Gama
Minister of Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Portugal

L i s b o n

As far as the left-overs of the Amsterdam Treaty are concerned, the Slovak Republic advocates that each Member State should possess the right to nominate its commissioner to the European Commission. We think that after an increase in the number of Member States division of portfolios among commissioners should not cause any major problems. The Slovak Republic does not associate itself with models grounded on rotation or regional basis nor does it support the division of commissioners into two categories according to the importance of their portfolios.

It is the interest of the Slovak Republic to maintain solid balance between smaller and bigger countries also after the EU enlargement and modify the weight of individual Member States in the Council of Ministers. The Slovak Republic realises that it will be necessary to adjust the current model so that it reflects the size of population in the Member States to a greater extend. In principle we do not object to the introduction of the so-called double majority, however we deem it necessary to preserve certain conditions in favour of smaller EU Member States.

According to the view of the Slovak Republic the principle of qualified majority voting should be generalised and become a rule while relevant exemptions should be explicitly stated. Our opinion is that the unanimity principle should be further exercised in case of significant changes to the founding Treaties and issues related to cardinal decisions in the field of foreign policy, security and defence.

Dear colleague,

The Slovak Republic is closely following the development of EU institutional reforms since this issue concerns us, as a future member, substantially. Therefore we very much appreciate the opportunity to express our views on the content and workings of the Intergovernmental Conference already as an EU Candidate Country. In this connection I regard your letter as a stimulus to further dialogue between the present Member States and Candidate Countries of the European Union about its future institutional set-up. It is in the interest of the Slovak Republic that the upcoming Intergovernmental Conference comes to a successful end and its conclusions bring benefit to both present and future EU members.

With respect to these challenges allow me to wish you success and goodwill for the forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference on the Institutional Reform.

Sincerely,