

UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

EUROPAUDVALGET (2. samling)

Alm. del - bilag 969 (offentligt)

Medlemmerne af Folketingets Europaudvalg
og deres stedfortrædere

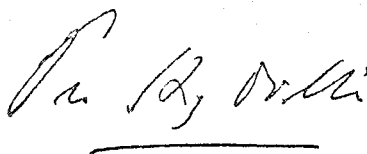
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Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges arbejdsprogram
for det danske formandskab for så vidt angår udvidelsen.


P. B. Olsen



Work programme of the Danish Presidency for Enlargement

Enlargement is the top priority of the Danish Presidency. The goal of the Presidency is to conclude accession negotiations with up to ten countries before the end of 2002 so they can participate in the 2004 elections for the European Parliament as members in accordance with the conclusions of several European Councils. Concluding the negotiations is a difficult task that will demand political determination and willingness to compromise from all sides.

The Danish Presidency intends to give full support to Bulgaria and Romania in their preparations for accession. A particular effort must also be made to ensure that those countries not concluding negotiations by the end of 2002 can maintain and intensify their progress towards membership. An updated road map and a revised and enhanced pre-accession strategy should be adopted at the European Council in Copenhagen for the candidate countries still engaged in negotiations.

Fulfilling the conditions for membership is a very demanding exercise that requires adjustments in all sections of society. The candidate countries have made impressive progress and are now so far advanced that the promises of EU membership must be honoured.

Excellent work done by previous presidencies has paved the way for concluding accession negotiations with the first candidate countries during the Danish Presidency. Since opening negotiations in 1998 the process has gathered pace and by the end of 2001 the EU was able to name the ten countries that could conclude negotiations before the end of 2002 if those countries are ready. The Spanish Presidency has made further significant progress in the negotiations consistent with the road map for the first half of 2002. At the European Council in Seville a clear timetable was drawn up making possible the conclusion of the negotiations at the end of 2002.

The 2002 regular reports and strategy paper will be of extraordinary importance as the Commission will draft appropriate recommendations in the light of the regular reports in order to enable the European Council in Brussels to name the candidate countries

that can conclude negotiations at the end of 2002. The Danish Presidency appreciates the strong commitment of the Commission to the enlargement process and look forward to continuing the close co-operation between the Commission and the Presidency in all aspects of the negotiation process.

The Danish Presidency plans to solve all out-standing non-budgetary issues before the Commission finalises its regular reports. In addition to naming the candidate countries that can conclude negotiations in 2002 the European Council in Brussels will also have to take the appropriate decisions that will allow the EU to communicate all the items lacking in the financial package to the candidate countries in early November. The remaining weeks between the European Council in Brussels and the European Council in Copenhagen will be used to finalise the negotiations with the best-prepared candidate countries.

The Danish Presidency envisages meetings in the Accession Conferences at Deputy level on 29 and 30 July and at Ministerial level in connection with the meetings in the General Affairs and External Relations Councils in September, November – and for the final negotiations – December. In the period between the European Councils in Brussels and Copenhagen negotiations on deputy level will take place on a continual basis with flexible timetables.

The Spanish Presidency has started work on drafting the Accession Treaty. This work will be intensified during the Danish Presidency in order to facilitate signing of the treaty in spring 2003. It should be recalled that the drafting exercise is essentially of a technical nature that leaves no room for renegotiating the terms of agreement reached at the accession conferences.

The Danish Presidency is fully behind the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General and his special representative to find a solution to the Cyprus issue. The conclusions from the European Council in Helsinki remain the key reference.

In line with the conclusions of the Seville European Council the Danish Presidency encourages and fully supports the efforts made by Turkey to fulfil the priorities

defined in its Accession Partnership. New decisions could be taken in Copenhagen on the next stage of Turkey's candidature in accordance with the Helsinki and Laeken conclusions. Like other candidate countries, Turkey must fulfil the political Copenhagen criteria if negotiations are to commence.

Underlining the paramount importance of public support for enlargement, the Danish Presidency will make a great effort to ensure that the final phase of the accession negotiations is conducted in such a way that public support is maintained, both in candidate and member countries.

Co-operation with the European Parliament will play an important role. As President of the European Council, the Danish Prime Minister will participate in the special debate with the European Parliament and representatives of the candidate countries on 19 November to inform on the final phase of the negotiations.