

Brev fra formandet for Rådet, José María Aznar, til medlemsstaterne

Letter from the President of the European Council, José María Aznar, to the Member States (Seville European Council)

19/06/2002

The Spanish Presidency plans to hold a European Council meeting on 21 and 22 June 2002 and I am very pleased to invite you to Seville to attend.

The European Council will discuss a large number of matters covering a wide range of subjects.

Our meeting will begin at 11.15 on Friday 21 June with the traditional family photograph. At around 11.30, we will have an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, Mr Pat Cox.

Our first working session will begin at approximately 12.00 with an examination of questions relating to immigration and asylum in the European Union. I would like to hear your views on the need for the European Union to adopt new initiatives to improve our fight against illegal immigration and achieve coordinated and integrated management of our external borders. We will also discuss new ways of integrating immigration policy in the Union's relations with third countries and how to accelerate the legislative work required to define a common asylum and immigration policy.

At 14.00 there will be a working lunch for Heads of State or Government and the President of the European Commission at which we will examine the Presidency's report on the reform of the Council, as required by the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council. During lunch we will also discuss progress in the area of the European Security and Defence Policy, the main foreign policy issues and the ratification of the Treaty of Nice by Ireland.

At the same time, the Foreign Affairs Ministers will discuss the main international political issues including the situation in the Middle East and relations between India and Pakistan.

At approximately 16.15 we will resume proceedings, together with our Ministers for Economic Affairs and Finance, to study matters relating to the growth and competitiveness of the European economy. I hope to be able to approve the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and confirm the common position which the European Union will defend at the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development.

We will then turn our attention to the progress of the enlargement negotiations. The Presidency presented a situation report to the General Affairs Council meeting on 17 June to focus the debate. We need to agree on how to proceed in this final stage of accession negotiations to ensure that negotiations can be concluded by the end of this year and that the candidate States are ready to join the European Union.

We also need to discuss the next stages in the negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania, as well as the prospects for Turkey.

After this heavy work programme, their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain are holding a dinner for the Heads of State or Government, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers for Economic Affairs of the Member States of the European Union.

Proceedings will resume on Saturday 22 June at 9.15, when the Chairman of the Convention will report to the European Council on the progress of the Convention's work, as envisaged in the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council. Following a brief exchange of views on this subject, we will proceed to review and adopt the conclusions of the Seville European Council, drawing the meeting to a close at approximately 13.00.

At the end of the European Council meeting, there will be the usual lunch with the candidate countries at 14.00.

I hope to be able to welcome you to Seville and I have every confidence that our meeting will prove very fruitful for all of us.