

UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

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Medlemmerne af Folketingets Europaudvalg
og deres stedfortrædere

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Journalnummer
400.C.2-0

Kontor
EUK

14. april 2004



Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges brev vedrørende regeringskonferencen fra formanden for Det Europæiske Råd til EU's stats- og regeringschefer.

Officielle dokumenter til regeringskonferencen offentliggøres på regeringskonferencens hjemmeside, hvor også danske oversættelser løbende bringes. Regeringskonferencens hjemmeside er <http://ue.eu.int/igc>.

P. B. D. M.

April 2004

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Dear <NAME>

Last month's meeting of the European Council was productive and valuable. We took significant decisions and made important progress in a range of areas. I am very grateful to all colleagues for the constructive and focussed way in which we approached our work.

Our decision that agreement on the Constitutional Treaty should be reached no later than the June European Council was particularly significant. We now have a joint responsibility to our citizens to ensure that we deliver on this commitment. This will require us to work together in a spirit of compromise and of flexibility.

Of course, final agreement will only be reached by us collectively, as Heads of State or Government, meeting in the Intergovernmental Conference. The principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed must be respected. However, it is essential that we make the maximum possible progress in advance of that point. In particular, as I said to you at our dinner in Brussels, I want as many issues as possible to be effectively resolved before the final session of the IGC, to ensure that only a small number of highly sensitive points remain open for discussion and decision at our level.

I have therefore asked Brian Cowen, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to arrange for the IGC at Ministerial level to carry forward the necessary work. At the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26 April, he will brief his colleagues on our planning and scheduling, including in relation to future discussions among Foreign Ministers.

It is our intention to continue to use the Focal Points network to help prepare Ministerial discussion, and information regarding a first meeting in that format is being circulated shortly.

I ask you to ensure that your IGC team takes a positive and focussed approach, concentrating on those questions which are of real significance to you and aiming to reach constructive compromises. I assume and expect that no concerns not already signalled will be raised.

As I indicated at Brussels, we are also very much open to continuing further bilateral discussion at both political and official levels. In particular, I intend to

make full use of my pre-European Council tour of capitals to discuss IGC issues directly with you.

I strongly believe that, so long as we continue to work together and in the right spirit, we can by June agree on a Constitution for Europe which we will all be able strongly to recommend to our parliaments and people.

Yours sincerely

Bertie Ahern TD
Taoiseach