

Statement by Jacques Santer on the objectives of the 1996 IGC (December 1995)

Source: Dossier CIG: des institutions pour une Europe élargie- Bruxelles: Parlement européen - Division de l'Audiovisuel [Prod.], 1995. Parlement européen, Bruxelles. - VIDEO (00:01:42, Couleur, Son original).
Parlement européen, Rue Wiertz, 1047 Bruxelles - Belgique.

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Last updated: 05/07/2016

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[Jacques Santer] We note that the Treaty on European Union, the Maastricht Treaty, has had some undeniable successes, such as Economic and Monetary Union, the justification for which has been further strengthened by the recent currency upheavals. We also feel that at the Intergovernmental Conference there is no need to reopen the debate on the provisions of the Treaty on Economic and Monetary Union. However, there are of course some shortcomings in the Treaty: the running-in period on the one hand — the Treaty has been in force for only 18 months, and it should be remembered that the Treaty of Rome, in 1957 or 1958, was not assessed just 18 months after its implementation. The shortcomings, which we have noted, stand in the way of enlargement, and being out of touch with ordinary people may also alienate the general public. In our view, the two absolute priorities for the Intergovernmental Conference must therefore be to bridge this gap. It is essential — and this is what we have said in our political message — that Europe must be made a matter for ordinary people, and with that end the Intergovernmental Conference must make the Union more democratic, comprehensible and transparent; in addition, the forthcoming enlargement must be successful — this enlargement must result from our combined strength and not from our accumulated weaknesses.