

Statement made by Ioannis Kasoulides on the negotiations for the accession of Cyprus to the EU (Luxembourg, 21 June 1999)

Caption: On 21 June 1999, during the third Intergovernmental Conference between the European Union (EU) and Cyprus, Ioannis Kasoulides, Cypriot Foreign Minister, comments on the state of negotiations for the island's accession to the EU.

Source: Statement by the Cyprus Foreign Minister, Mr Ioannis Kasoulides, at the Third Intergovernmental Conference for Cyprus' Accession to the European Union at the Ministerial Level in Luxembourg on 21 June 1999. [ON-LINE]. [Cyprus]: Office of the Chief Cyprus - European Union Negotiator, [26.10.2000]. Available on http://www.cyprus-eu.org.cy/eng/07_documents/document009.htm.

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Statement by the Cyprus Foreign Minister, Mr Ioannis Kasoulides, at the Third Intergovernmental Conference for Cyprus' Accession to the European Union at the Ministerial Level in Luxembourg on 21 June 1999

I wish to express my sincere thanks for your warm welcome to our delegation. Let me also express my appreciation for today's third meeting of the Conference for the Accession of Cyprus to the European Union at Ministerial Level, following the successful conclusion of the second Ministerial Meeting held on 10 November 1998 in Brussels.

I would like to express our appreciation and congratulations to the German Presidency and to the governments of the member-states of the European Union for the historic decisions taken by the European Council both at Berlin last March and in Cologne at the beginning of June.

The agreement reached in the Berlin European Council on the Agenda 2000 has put the finances of the Union in order, thus serving the general objectives of the Union, including enlargement.

Cyprus wishes to express its full satisfaction for the productive work carried out by the German Presidency, which further advanced the accession negotiations. In particular, we highly appreciate the Union's declared intention to render Cyprus the appropriate financial assistance that would supplement our own efforts in our pre-accession strategy towards alignment with the *acquis*.

Moreover, the decisions taken both in Berlin and in Cologne have launched the procedure for institutional reforms in the Union and have cleared the way towards the next enlargement, enhancing the prospects for the appropriate acceleration of the accession negotiations process.

The message sent to the candidate countries is loud and clear. We realize that it is also up to us, the candidate countries, to play our part in full and redouble our efforts in order to be ready for accession, putting in place the necessary mechanisms and institutions enabling us to successfully meet our obligations as a member of the European Union.

As far as Cyprus is concerned I would like once again to reassert our wholehearted commitment to the timely and effective preparation for accession. I am glad to say that this commitment is shared by all sides concerned in Cyprus, both the public and private sectors.

We attach so much importance to the accession process of Cyprus to the EU, that the Government of Cyprus has entrusted to the person of the former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr George Vassiliou, here present, the huge task of the preparation and coordination of all the Government departments, the legislature and the civil society for the transposition and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and the necessary reforms, as well as the responsibility for the negotiations between Cyprus and the EU.

Let me also comment on another important, in our view, historic decision taken by the Cologne European Council. I refer of course to the adoption of the declaration of the European Union on "Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence". The resolve of the European Council that the "European Union shall play its full role on the international stage" and its readiness "to give the European Union the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European Policy on Security and Defence" is indeed a decisive major step in the construction of the European Union.

This step will be rendered more effective and meaningful with two further decisions already taken:

- The first one relates to measures to be introduced, in the near future, to incorporate functions of the Western European Union in the European Union's framework.
- The second decision pertains to the creation of a most important new post of Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as a post of a Deputy Secretary-General of the Council.

Cyprus would like to congratulate the personalities elected to the respective posts, Mr Javier Solana, and Ambassador Pierre de Boissieu, and wish them success in the new duties they are about to assume and challenges they will be encountering.

Mr President,

I fully agree with your observation that a positive momentum has been developed around the whole enlargement process. We pledge not only to continue but also to intensify our own efforts in order to keep the momentum and make as much progress as possible, as quickly as possible.

Cyprus is fully aware and recognises that the transposition of community legislation into our legal system constitutes only one aspect of the process of adjustment. An even more important aspect, both for the Union and for Cyprus, is the effective implementation and enforcement of the acquis through the setting up of the appropriate institutions and mechanisms.

We also recognise and realize the importance of monitoring the degree of preparedness of the candidate countries, including my own. Bearing this need in mind we have set ourselves the task of closely monitoring our own progress on a continuous basis. To this end, we have prepared detailed harmonisation programmes for all screening chapters and a computerized monitoring system which will enable us to follow closely the implementation of all measures included in the harmonisation programmes.

Turning to the negotiations, we welcome the progress achieved so far and the fact that both sides agree that at this stage the following additional five chapters require no further negotiations, bringing the total number of chapters provisionally closed to ten:

Consumers and health protection (chapter 23)

Customs Union (chapter 25)

External Relations (chapter 26)

Statistics (chapter 12)

Telecommunications and Information Technologies (chapter 19)

I would like to thank the member-states, the Council and the European Commission for the help and advice provided to Cyprus in the framework of the negotiating process. I also express appreciation for the understanding shown in dealing with some technical problems and difficulties we have encountered. I hope that this kind of cooperation will continue in the future and that we will work closely together for the solution of any other problems that might come up in this process.

It is in this same spirit of understanding and cooperation that we have withdrawn the demand for one year's transitional period in the telecommunications chapter.

With regard to the Free Movement of Goods (chapter 1) we fully appreciate the importance of this chapter and the enormous amount of work to be undertaken. The reason we have not submitted any special requests is that we are confident that we will be able to successfully adopt and implement the relevant acquis.

We have taken note of the request for providing additional technical information and clarifications as well as the necessity for closely monitoring the implementation of the acquis of this chapter. We will provide you with the requested information the soonest possible.

We hope that following the submission of the requested information it will be possible to close this chapter as well.

On the chapter of Company Law (chapter 5) we hope you understand the spirit within which we made our request. We take note of the Union's position which we will seriously consider and revert to this chapter later on. Concerning your questions on other aspects of this chapter, we are confident the answers to be supplied will meet your requests.

The same we believe is valid for chapter 6, on Competition, where we have already started collecting the information and data requested from us and we hope that a mutually acceptable solution will be found.

On Fisheries (chapter 8), I can assure you that we fully understand the Community's policies and we have started work in order to implement our plans in the fields of licensing, inspection and control, registration and structural actions. We hope that following the submission of the relevant information on our part, the Union will be able to close this chapter as well.

As repeatedly stated by the Cyprus Government, our wish is that our Turkish Cypriot compatriots work and share with us the task and responsibility of preparing Cyprus for accession and enjoy the benefits of membership with all other Cypriots.

The Cyprus Government has committed itself not only to undertake a sustained effort to inform the Turkish Cypriots of the benefits of accession, but also to involve both communities at the level of civil society. In this spirit we have created a web page on the Internet which provides the Turkish Cypriots with up-to-date information and documentation on Cyprus' accession course and negotiations.

Furthermore, the Cyprus Government has already informed the European Commission of its intention to undertake the translation of the main body of the *acquis* into the Turkish language for the benefit of the Turkish Cypriots, with funds from the Fourth Financial Protocol.

The Cyprus Government endorses and supports the request both of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot trade unions and organisations to set up a non-governmental forum in Brussels where they can meet, discuss issues pertaining to Cyprus' accession process and get first hand information. A recent forum successful organised in Cyprus between trade unions of both communities has demonstrated the real interest of the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus' accession to the Union since they clearly perceive the benefits from such an accession.

Finally, Mr President, unfortunately we have to agree with your observation that no progress in the efforts to achieve a political settlement and reconciliation in order to end the division of Cyprus has been found so far, despite our sincere and continuous efforts to that effect. In this respect, an encouraging new development has taken place through the Declaration adopted yesterday at the G-8 Summit in Cologne, on the Cyprus problem, the content of which offers a sustained support to the UN Secretary-General in his efforts for meaningful negotiations this coming autumn for a comprehensive solution.

The Government of Cyprus has always responded positively to invitations for a dialogue by the UN Secretary-General and has the political will to respond once more, and to work constructively in order to achieve a lasting and viable solution to the Cyprus problem based on UN resolutions.

In this spirit we will continue working to create the necessary conducive climate, and this has already been proven in practice by President Clerides' decision not to deploy the S-300 missiles in Cyprus, a gesture which has not been reciprocated by the Turkish side.

My Government will do whatever possible to give peace and reconciliation in Cyprus another chance for the benefit of all the people of Cyprus. We ask the European Union and its member-states to support these efforts.