

Report by Anders Fogh Rasmussen to the European Parliament on the Copenhagen European Council (18 December 2002)

Caption: On 18 December 2002, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Danish Prime Minister and President-in-Office of the Council of the European Union, outlines to the European Parliament the nature of the decisions adopted at the end of the Copenhagen European Council, with particular regard to the enlargement of the European Union.

Source: Fogh Rasmussen, Anders, The work of the Danish presidency. [ON-LINE]. [Strasbourg]: European Parliament, [20.06.2005]. Available on

http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?SAME_LEVEL=1&LEVEL=4&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y&MODE-CRE=SEARCH&DETAIL=3-010&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20021218+ITEM-003+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

Copyright: (c) European Parliament

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/report_by_anders_fogh_rasmussen_to_the_european_parliament_on_the_copenhagen_european_council_18_december_2002-en-527a8129-ad51-49b9-8ccc-2ccd6a92982b.html

Publication date: 05/09/2012

Report by Anders Fogh Rasmussen to the European Parliament on the Copenhagen European Council (18 December 2002)

Fogh Rasmussen, President-in-Office of the Council. – (DA) Mr President, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, the last time I spoke in this House was in the course of the debate on enlargement on 19 November. That was a great and positive experience. I left it with a strong and clear mandate to conclude the enlargement negotiations. I am delighted to be here today with an equally clear result. Following a long and difficult process, the Presidency concluded the negotiations with ten new Member States at the Copenhagen Summit.

It is our common dream that is coming true; it is our common aim that is being achieved. The European Parliament, the Commission and the Presidency have fought together for enlargement. I was especially pleased, therefore, that the President of the European Parliament took part in the final solemn occasion when, on Friday evening, we welcomed the new members into our Community.

The enlargement negotiations of the last sixth months have been like a long-distance race with a series of difficult hurdles that have had to be cleared along the way. Parliament, the Commission and the Presidency have stayed the course together, and in Copenhagen we passed the finishing line. Side by side, hand in hand. I should like to express my thanks for all the efforts made and for the unfailing support and the help along the way.

The decisions taken in Copenhagen closed one of the darkest and bloodiest chapters in the history of Europe. We put an end to a century characterised by wars and conflicts. We finally said goodbye to the Europe of the Yalta Conference and the Cold War. At the same time, we opened the door to a new era in the history of Europe: an era characterised by freedom, peace, growth and prosperity. The Copenhagen Summit marked a high point in the history of European cooperation: a triumph for freedom and democracy and a gateway to a better future for all our peoples.

The enlargement of the EU was the Danish Presidency's main priority - but we have a large number of other considerable achievements under our belt. We have been a presidency that has set priorities, but not at the expense of other issues. This can be seen from our achievements.

Before I move on to the Copenhagen Summit, I should like to outline a number of the other tasks that the EU has carried out in the last six months. We have successfully continued the fight against international terrorism and redoubled efforts against illegal immigration. In the field of asylum, we have reached agreement on what is known as the Dublin II regulation, which lays down common rules for which country should take responsibility for handling an asylum application.

We succeeded in reaching agreement on fully opening up the EU's electricity and gas markets. We achieved a breakthrough in EU transport policy. The rules on the Single European Sky have secured the basis for fewer cancellations and shorter flight times, benefiting passengers, the environment and airlines.

Together we have reacted swiftly and effectively to unexpected disasters. First there was the flooding in Central Europe. The EU showed solidarity by approving the establishment of a EUR 1 000 million Solidarity Fund for use in connection with natural disasters. Most recently, we reacted to the tragic loss of the oil tanker Prestige. At short notice, the EU showed its ability to act, adopting rules on matters such as the rapid phasing-out of single-hull oil tankers and stricter monitoring in the harbours used by the ships.

Agreement has been reached on the emissions trading scheme in CO₂. Progress has been made with regard to food safety, including on common rules for the labelling of food containing GMOs. We succeeded in finding a solution to the question of transit to and from Kaliningrad that is acceptable to all parties.

Lastly, I wish to emphasise the positive and effective cooperation we have had with Parliament: the work on the codecision and budgetary procedures, amongst other things. For the first time in many years, we actually succeeded in reaching agreement on large parts of the budget as early as first reading. I should like to take

this opportunity to express my thanks for the good and positive spirit that has characterised the cooperation between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Presidency. Together, we have shown in the last six months that the EU can deliver the goods; that – despite national, institutional and political variations – we can together produce results, create a better, safer daily life for our citizens, create better conditions of competition for our industries and increase Europe's influence in the world.

I shall now return to the Copenhagen Summit. We concluded enlargement negotiations with ten new Member States: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. These were intensive, difficult negotiations to the last. That is the nature of the beast: it ensured that we ended up achieving the right balance between the wishes of the candidate countries and the possibilities of the present Member States.

The tough negotiations on very specific issues such as milk quotas and credit transfers are, of course, ultimately an indication that the EU is not just a talking shop, adopting meaningless declarations, but an effective forum for discussion, in which we do business and make policy to the benefit of all parties.

The ten new countries can become members from 1 May 2004. By then, both the new and the existing Member States will have completed their national ratification procedures. The first stage in this process – which in many of the countries will entail referendums – is the completion of the accession treaty. This will then be presented to the Commission first of all, then Parliament and finally the Council for approval, with a view to the treaty being signed in Athens on 16 April 2003. I shall call on all three institutions to do their utmost to keep to this timetable.

The conclusions from the Copenhagen Summit also deal with the question of the participation of the new Member States in the institutions of the EU. We have laid down that the ten acceding states will be able to participate in the 2004 elections to the European Parliament as members. The accession treaty will lay down that the Commissioners from the new Member States will join the present Commission from the time of the countries' accession on 1 May 2004. Once the European Council has appointed a new President of the Commission, the newly elected European Parliament can approve a new Commission, which will have to take office on 1 November 2004. This provides a sensible framework for this fundamental issue. Here, too, I shall call for cooperation between the institutions to find flexible solutions that ensure the best terms for our new Member States.

With regard to Bulgaria and Romania, the conclusions are clear: the enlargement process is continuing; and we can confirm that the aim is to be able to welcome the two countries as members in 2007.

The issue of Turkey came to be one of the main topics in Copenhagen. We arrived at a balanced and realistic answer. We acknowledge the important steps that Turkey has taken towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria. We call upon Turkey to continue its reform process with vigour, and we pledge increased support from the EU to Turkey in these endeavours. If the European Council decides in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation by the Commission, that Turkey has met the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey as quickly as possible. This sent a strong and positive signal to Turkey, but I would emphasise that it is still an essential requirement that Turkey meet the political criteria before accession negotiations can be opened. This is the way it has to be. Turkey must be treated in the same way as all the other candidate countries.

Then there is Cyprus. Cyprus will join as a divided island; but, at the same time, there is a realistic possibility that the parties will be able to find a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue by 28 February 2003 on the basis of the UN Secretary-General's proposal. I would urge the parties to the conflict in the strongest terms to seize this unique opportunity to resolve this unfortunate conflict. We all stand to gain by finding a solution now, and none so much as the population of Cyprus.

In Copenhagen, we sent out a clear message to the new neighbours of the enlarged EU: to the countries of the western Balkans, to Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, and to the countries of the southern Mediterranean. Enlargement will not result in the EU shutting itself in; on the contrary, the EU will

strengthen links to its new neighbours. This will take place both within the framework of, and by means of the development of, the existing cooperation instruments.

In addition, at the Copenhagen Summit, there was agreement on the frameworks for the future agreement between NATO and the EU on European Security and Defence Policy.

I should like to mention by way of conclusion that the European Council also met with the Chairman of the European Convention, Mr Giscard d'Estaing. He reported on the work in the Convention, and there was consensus in the European Council that the Convention should present the results of its work before the summit in June 2003. It was stated that the new Member States will participate fully in the Intergovernmental Conference. Bulgaria and Romania will take part as observers.

Now that enlargement is home and dry, the work in the Convention has become the crucial task in European politics. We have enlarged the EU; we now have to ensure that the EU of the future, with more than 25 Member States, can also function effectively. We must simplify the decision-making procedures and stress the EU's values. We must describe the division of labour between the EU and the Member States more clearly, we must extend the use of qualified majority voting and the codecision procedure, and we must ensure that we have cooperation that is open and subject to democratic control.

The Danish Presidency is now drawing to a close. We are passing the baton of the Presidency on to Greece, wishing them good luck and thanking them for the good troika cooperation.

Finally, I wish to turn, once again, directly to the Members of this Parliament, and especially to the President, Mr Cox. The meeting of the President of Parliament with the European Council in Copenhagen was yet another constructive affirmation of the close relations between Parliament and the Council. The Danish Presidency has attached great importance to meeting the European Parliament with an outstretched hand and the will to enter into constructive cooperation. It is with satisfaction that I have been able to note that Parliament has met us in the same positive spirit. We have had our differences, but the cooperation between us has been characterised by progress, results and a willingness to compromise. I have experienced this in this House, at our interinstitutional summits and at my meetings with the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament. This picture is echoed by Danish government ministers. I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for this constructive cooperation. Above all, however, I wish to express my thanks for the unqualified support of Parliament for the implementation of the Danish Presidency's greatest task: concluding the negotiations with ten new Member States. The decision, in Copenhagen, on the enlargement of the EU marked the reunification of the peoples and states of Europe, the end of the unfortunate division of our continent and the beginning of a new era in the history of Europe.

The Copenhagen Summit also marked the beginning of a new era for the European Union. In Copenhagen, the EU carried out the greatest task in the history of the Community. Following the Copenhagen Summit, the European Union stands as the overall framework around the Europe of the future: cooperation based on the shared values of freedom and the market economy, community spirit and social responsibility, democracy and human rights; effective cooperation that respects the national characteristics of our peoples and states.

The seed sown by the founding fathers of the European Union in Europe's war-torn ground nearly 50 years ago has taken root. The enlargement of the EU has made their dream and their vision a reality.

A new Europe is born.

Thank you, Mr President.

(Applause)