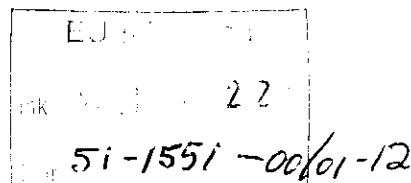




THE PRIME MINISTER

Brussels,

07 -03- 2001



8681/01930

Mr Sören LEKBERG  
President of COSAC  
Riksdagen  
SE-100 12 STOCKHOLM

Sir,

The European Union is making great strides in improving its capacity to deal with challenges such as unemployment, organised crime, migration, environmental degradation, peace-keeping and crisis management. EMU is soon proceeding to the introduction of notes and coins. The global role of the European Union is becoming more distinct and visible. At the same time the Union is in the midst of an historic enlargement. With the Treaty of Nice, signed only two weeks ago, the Union has established a firm institutional basis for continuing that process.

In the Declaration on the Future of the Union, Heads of State and Government manifested their ambition to deepen and widen the debate about the future of the Union. The Union has committed itself to building up a debate which should reach out further than before to all sections of society. Building on many activity centres and on a multitude of contributions will encourage a debate broader in scope than before. The debate should highlight the basic challenges facing the European Union in the coming decades and stimulate suggestions for how to respond rationally to these challenges in terms of policy provisions, institutions and organisation of work.

The Nice declaration invites the Swedish and Belgian Presidencies in cooperation with the Commission and involving the European Parliament to encourage wide-ranging discussions with all interested parties. These include representatives of national parliaments and all those reflecting public opinion, namely political, economic and university circles as well as representatives of civil society. The candidate States will also be associated in this process.

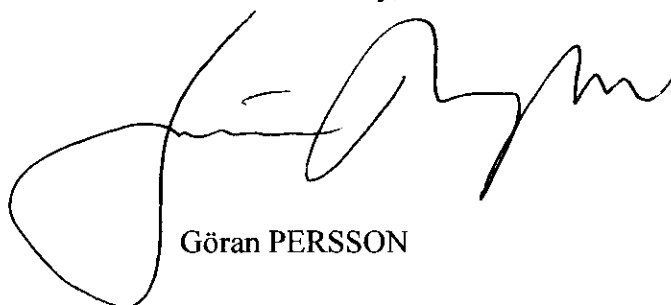
I would like to draw your attention to the Web-Page on the "Future of Europe" (<http://europa.eu.int/futurum>), set up as of part of today's joint statement initiating the debate by the Belgian Prime Minister, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Commission and myself. The joint statement can be found on that web-page, which hopefully will be a new focal point for the debate and for the collection of contributions as well as announcements of coming debating events/conferences.

Given the fact that the Nice Declaration particularly mentions national parliaments, I would encourage any contribution to the debate COSAC would like to make, noting in particular your coming meeting of 20-22 May in Stockholm and the meeting 13-15 September, also in Stockholm, of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments.

Following a report to Göteborg in June 2001, the European Council, at its meeting at Brussels/Laeken in December 2001, will agree on a declaration containing appropriate initiatives for the continuation of this process.

Let us all do our best to reach out widely and to listen to citizens' expectations of the future European Union and to their ideas on how the Union can be better equipped to meet the tasks ahead. In doing so, the next review of the treaties can be embarked upon on the basis of a rich foundation of opinion.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Göran PERSSON', with a large loop at the start and a series of smaller loops and strokes extending to the right.

Göran PERSSON