



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 11 December 2002

15530/02

POLGEN 78

REPORT

from : General Affairs and External Relations Council
to : European Council

Subject : Reports and communications for the Copenhagen European Council

1. The European Council in Copenhagen will receive the following reports and communications, drawn up pursuant to decisions taken by previous European Councils:
 - **Annual progress report to the European Council on the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan**

The 2002 progress report gives an overview of the most important initiatives carried out by the Commission (including those currently underway) since the middle of last year to implement the Northern Dimension Action Plan endorsed by the Feira European Council. The next progress report should be submitted at the end of 2003. A new Action Plan should be adopted in 2003 and come into force in 2004 on the expiry of the present one.

– **Presidency Report on languages**

The Presidency's initial report on the use of languages in the Council in the context of an enlarged Union highlights the formidable challenges resulting from the forthcoming addition of ten new Member States. The Council is invited, after examining all the approaches set out in the Presidency's report, including the request and pay approach, to put in place as soon as possible, and if possible by the end of June 2003, an agreed solution on interpreting in the Council for meetings of officials which respects basic principles.

– **Presidency report on European Security and Defence Policy**

In line with the remit given by the Seville European Council, this report sets out progress achieved in developing ESDP over the last six months. It gives the incoming Presidency, assisted by the Secretary-General/High Representative and as appropriate in association with the Commission, a detailed mandate for continuing work within the GAERC and invites them to submit a report to the European Council in Thessaloniki (June 2003).

– **Note from the Council (JHA) to the European Council in connection with the mid-term evaluation of the European Action Plan on Drugs**

The Council Note draws on the Commission's mid-term evaluation of the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) endorsed at the Feira European Council in order to identify a number of policy and action priorities on which implementation of the Action Plan should focus for the remaining period. It proposes a mechanism for reviewing progress in implementing the Action Plan and calls on the Commission, together with other involved actors, to carry out a final evaluation in 2004.

- **Commission report on the state of play in the work on guidelines for state aid and services of general economic interest (SGEIs) (this report will be complemented by a communication to the Council on the status of work on the examination of a proposal for a Framework Directive on services of general interest)**

In response to the request made at Seville, the Commission will report to the European Council on the progress of work on the guidelines for state aids, with a particular focus on the relationship between SGEIs and Community competition rules. This work will be carried forward.

As regards work on the examination of a proposal for a Framework Directive on services of general interest, the Commission communication indicates that the Commission intends as a first step to publish a Green Paper in the first quarter of 2003; conclusions, together with concrete initiatives and legislative proposals if appropriate, will be presented before the end of next year.

- **Council report to the European Council on the implementation of the Common Strategy of the EU on Ukraine**

The report reviews implementation of the EU Common Strategy on Ukraine as carried out in the framework of the work plans submitted by the Spanish and Danish Presidencies in 2002. The next implementation report will be submitted in 2003.

- **Information Society**

The Commission will report to the European Council on progress towards drawing up the reports requested by the Seville European Council on

- = barriers to widespread access to new services and application of information society through open platforms in the digital television and third generation mobile telecommunications;

- = the development of *e-Commerce* and *e-Government* and the role that electronic identification and authentication systems play in this context.

– **Commission report on Better Lawmaking 2002**

The Commission's annual report to the European Council and the European Parliament surveys the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality during the last year.

2. The Council agreed to invite the European Council to take note of this report.

o
o o

The Council furthermore draws the European Council's attention to the imminent submission by the future Greek and Italian Presidencies of the **annual operational programme of Council activities for 2003** provided for by the Seville European Council conclusions. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Council's Rules of Procedure, the General Affairs and External Relations Council discussed the draft programme at its meeting on 9/10 December 2002. The programme will now be finalised by the two Presidencies concerned on the basis of that discussion.
