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## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LITHUANIA ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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### **1. Introductory elements**

- 1) Discussion about the EU objectives, policies and organisational structure is a continuous process. Various phases of the discussion are marked by the European Councils in Nice (December 2000) and Laeken (December 2001). The framework of current debate is Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in 2004 – and the Convention, which is a new way of preparation for the IGC. The Intergovernmental Conference will make decisions on the EU constitutional development, but the documents prepared by the European Convention and the debates themselves will politically influence the results of the IGC.
- 2) Objectives of the European Union - stability and security of its Member States and welfare of its citizens – are being successfully fulfilled. Membership in the European Union is the most effective way to ensure promotion of Lithuanian national interests. For Lithuania it is important that the EU reforms would ensure efficient and effective Union, where all Member States share equal standing. Discussions on the future of the EU occur in parallel to the enlargement negotiations (legal and policy harmonisation) and further evolvement of current EU policy.
- 3) The EU enlargement is a strategic project for the unification of Europe. Without the successful enlargement, there is no successful future of the Union. Convention and its results is not a condition for the enlargement. Accession negotiations must be completed in 2002 and the enlargement should occur according to the previously agreed conditions. It is important that Lithuania as well as other candidate countries would participate in the IGC of 2004 as full members of the Union.
- 4) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has thoroughly analysed the two latter intergovernmental conferences - in 1996-97 and in 2000 - during which the Amsterdam and Nice treaties have been agreed upon. Worth noting that the Treaty of Nice allows for proper prospects of representation of Lithuania in the EU institutional framework.
- 5) The initial Lithuanian position on the future of the EU has been presented in the statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (i.e. December 19, 2001 in the Seimas plenary session on the EU accession negotiations; February 23, 2002 in Lithuanian Forum on the Future of the EU).

- 6) The Convention, which started on February 28, 2002, could be considered as the first forum of the enlarging EU. It reflects diversity of the EU interests and their co-ordination allows Lithuania to look for acceptable “coalitions.” We value the experience and co-operation of the future EU members, the region, smaller EU states and the so-called cohesion countries. Therefore below presented guiding principles of the Government of Lithuania will have to be applied flexibly and if needed - revised and further elaborated.
- 7) In this context, it is important to work closely with the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, particularly the European Affairs Committee, and to take into account the positions of the political parties and their international relations. Representatives of the Government will continue to actively participate in the Forum of Lithuania’s non-governmental organisations in order to facilitate further discussions and the involvement of Lithuania’s civil society.

## **2. Lithuania in the prosperous and solidarity-based Union**

- 8) Introduction of the single currency as well as creation of the European internal market is a great success of the EU’s economic development. The need to further develop it and to co-ordinate the EU Member States’ economies is recognised. The European model of economic and social development brings about favourable conditions for gradual economic growth and convergence.
- 9) In parallel, the Union should also give further priority to policies that promote the social and economic cohesion. Cohesion policies are investment policies, which increase the competitiveness of the EU as a whole. More active research and innovation should encourage the competitiveness of business and economy, thus creating knowledge-based European economy.
- 10) The EU’s agricultural policy (CAP) should remain “common” for balancing the economic and social changes in the countryside.

## **3. Lithuania in the secure and influential Union**

- 11) Issues of the European area of freedom, security and justice as well as development of the public order system have become the most visible elements of the European political agenda. This emphasis comes from the increasing security concerns raised by the Member States and their citizens.
- 12) New security challenges are beyond the capacities of individual Member States. More coherent and more intensive co-operation in the fields of justice and home affairs as well as in foreign policy is necessary. The stronger the EU will be, the better the national interests of Lithuania will be served.
- 13) Discussions about the external EU borders are of special interest to Lithuania because after enlargement the country will become one of the EU border states. We are aware of the responsibilities of building transparent, efficient and - still - friendly border to our neighbours. There could be more common action at the EU level in this particular area. For example, the issue of common border

management should be discussed more precisely. It is important to properly balance financial capacities of the Union and each Member State.

- 14) In addition, increasing attention should be given to the development of the EU's good neighbourhood and proximity policy. Good neighbourly relations is one of the strategic goals of Lithuanian foreign policy and its importance will be further increasing. Lithuania has a special interest in the Union's relations with Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The Baltic Sea co-operation and the Northern Dimension initiative have proven their reputation and would further contribute to strengthening of the EU's common foreign policy through combining cross-border, trade, and technical assistance co-operation.

#### **4. Lithuania in the efficient and equality-based Union**

- 15) Joining the European Union, we respect the principles of institutional interplay. Lithuania wants to be a part of the democratic and efficient Union.
- 16) The EU's evolution indicates that for such states as Lithuania, strong European institutions – Council, Commission, European Parliament, European Court of Justice, etc. – ensure better participation in the Union than intergovernmental co-operation. We believe that the “community method” ensures coherence of the EU actions and balances diverse interests of the Member States. The application of this method can be reviewed and extended to more areas of action.
- 17) On the other hand, the community method should not be opposed to the intergovernmental method, they are not mutually exclusive. The way of decision-making should follow currently accepted procedures that depend on a particular issue, situation, and objective. For example, “open co-ordination” does not necessarily impose strict legal harmonisation, but allows for gradual implementation taking into account regional and national particularities.
- 18) The principles of subsidiarity (according to which the EU takes actions only if the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and by reason of its scale or effects can be better achieved by the Community) and proportionality (any EU action should not go beyond the pre-set objectives) should remain key principles in organising division of labour within the EU.
- 19) The EU is founded on the treaties that have been ratified by the EU Member States and these treaties define the competencies of the EU. Definition of competencies of the EU and its Member States could be further clarified, however, it remains uncertain whether it is feasible to come up with a clearly defined list of responsibilities. All EU powers are derived from the powers and agreements of its Members.
- 20) Simplification of the EU treaties is necessary, however, clearer structure, user friendliness, and clarity of the text should be achieved without altering the nature and meaning of the legal texts and the Union itself.

- 21) Adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights indicates the EU commitment to imbed the human rights' principles on the European level. Lithuania does not object to the content of the Charter and its inclusion in the European treaties.
- 22) The role of national parliaments in ensuring the EU legitimacy can be further strengthened by granting more powers to the already-existing inter-parliamentary co-operation institutions, but not forming new institutions. There are many ways and means how the Member States could facilitate the communication with national parliaments and further involve them into EU politics.

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