

**Intervention by Minister Danuta Hübner
Secretary of State for European Integration, MFA
Secretary of the Committee for European Integration
At the session of the Convention
Brussels, 24 June 2002**

Presidency,

Dear Colleagues,

My comments will certainly be biased by the fact that I come from Poland and from the academic Community.

We had strived to work hand in hand with the academic community for this process of shaping the future of Europe long before the Convention has been launched.

Indeed, the academic community has been active in shaping the integration of candidate countries with European structures from the very first day of our transition process. Our transition, association and accession processes as well as the Convention process are a living example of the shared role of academic and political communities in making European reality.

The academic community's involvement means fresh and visionary ideas, not biased by political correctness, it gives us the chance to think of the unthinkable and make it happen. The academic community has been indirectly contributing to our debate here in the Convention through its expert role in national debates.

What I would like to emphasise strongly is that the academic community is not only an expert, a think-tank, but it is also an essential educator. Its role, therefore, is also to present the European project to young European citizens in such a way that they do not see it as cast in stone by us, but as a living one, that they see the reformed Union as a project they will take over from us with full responsibility for its continuation.

Thank you.