

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?
Intervention by Mrs. Meglena Kuneva,
Representative of the Bulgarian Government to the European Convention
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Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to take the floor for the first time. Let me first of all express my satisfaction that we, the representatives of the current and future member states have gathered together in this forum. I feel especially moved by the opportunity to touch upon the pivotal issues of our common European future. Let me assure you that the Bulgarian Government attaches particular importance to the work of the Convention and is ready to face the challenge of reform.

Given the chance to reassume our rightful place in an extended family of European nations we have made our choice in favour of the democratic values and the concept of a civil society. In my country, the European political debate has become an **integral part** of our domestic political agenda. The European perspective has generated **political will** and **sense of community** among the political and civil society actors and has reinforced the awareness of our citizens for the integration of Bulgaria into the EU. Through the communication network with the EU institutions and Member States we have shaped our **"member identity"** even before accession.

What do we expect of the enlarged European Union?

1. We expect the EU to enhance the **democratic political process**, improve **citizens' participation** and reinforce **the Community method**. The Union should remain one of the main pillars of democracy and freedom in the world. The defense of liberty, the rule of law and respect of human rights will ensure the strength of Europe. We consider the Charter of Fundamental Rights a milestone in promoting these fundamental democratic and humanistic values. Its incorporation in the future constitutional treaty would embed the European identity and political culture at the heart of the Union.
2. We expect the EU to establish a **joint security network throughout the European continent** encompassing the political, economic, societal and regional dimensions. The enlarged EU should implement a **comprehensive security policy** towards the East and South of Europe taking into account the different nature of new political, economic and legal divisions.
3. We expect **greater coherence in the EU CFSP**, which will assure the Union's leading role in international affairs. As the Union enlarges and its borders move further to the East particular attention should be paid to the **external dimension of the Justice and Home Affairs policy**. Such an approach is absolutely needed in the face of the new challenges and security threats of the contemporary world.
4. What we expect of the EU is that **solidarity** becomes the **guiding principle** of the EU policy orientation. Solidarity should be the major characteristic of the integration project. By reinforcing the Community method the EU can ensure institutional mechanism that can generate solidarity-oriented policy outcomes and filter the unilateral pursuit of national interests. The socio-economic cohesion should remain one of the primary goals of the Union. Together with efforts guaranteeing the smooth functioning of the internal market, the Union should take action to enhance food safety, to counteract climatic change, to fight poverty and social exclusion and to create new jobs.

5. What we expect first and foremost is that the EU's major task remains the reinforcement of the **political dimension of enlargement. We want to see the launch of a** broader public debate on the **future of the enlarged European Union.** We want to have the debate focus on the correlation between **possible or desirable integration models** and the **self-perception** of each current and future Member State. We expect that enlargement will again prove the driving force for the development of new EU policy initiatives in response to the particular needs and demands of the citizens of Europe.

Certainly, it is in our interest to ensure the success of the forthcoming reforms of the institutional and policy making arrangements, which will make the Union more democratic and efficient, closer to its citizens and open to the outside world. We are determined to make the most of this opportunity. I am looking forward to the substantial phase of our discussions.

I hope that the European spirit will prevail in the Convention's work, thus contributing to greater citizen's interest and involvement in the process of shaping our future of shared values.

Thank you for your attention.