

**Intervention by
Mr. Rytis Martikonis,
Representative of the Lithuanian Government,
at the plenary session of the European Convention**

July 11, 2002, Brussels

Mr. President,
Dear colleagues,

In less than two years the strategic situation of Lithuania will be changed profoundly: in several months Lithuania will become a member of the EU and NATO thus arriving at a qualitatively new stage of its international life. We have clear views about complementarity of the EU and NATO memberships in the Baltics. And my country already sees itself as a good and responsible member of the European and transatlantic community – and acts accordingly.

The task of bringing further the Union's external action comes at a high time of domestic introspection about the best ways and means to build in Lithuania's foreign policy roles into the European construction. Presidium has put to us right questions – the answers will not be quick or easy. But let me make a couple of brief remarks.

While putting our common interests on a map I agree with those who argue that the Union's global role starts from neighbourhood or proximity policies be it in the East, North or South directions. Talking about what we know best – looking East - it is in relations with our neighbours in the East – Russia, Ukraine and Belarus that the political will, coherence and flexibility - and effects - of our actions is and will be tested. Concept of 'wider Europe' should be further elaborated allowing for individual strategies with individual partners to be employed. Or let us think for a second about the situation of Russian region of Kaliningrad: it is about cross border co-operation, it is about energy and environment, it is about movement of people and goods. Lithuania's efforts and expertise in this is already an important piece of "regional *acquis*". We have every chance to work with Russia for the success of this "pilot project" and for that we do need well-concerted EU action.

On "mechanics": who is best equipped to act in the interest of Europe? How shall we get into the situation of "all for one and one for all"? Contraposition of the Council and the Commission is wrong. Contraposition of High Representative and Commissioner for External Relations does not do any good either. We need both of them acting together. This is achieved by interaction of the EU institutions. To my mind, Union's external trade policy is a result of that. It works well.

If "community method" in EU external action sounds unusual to some of us let us spare no effort in re-inventing it. For my Government important thing is a pragmatic end result. The end result which must be the Union respected globally and its citizens and countries being proud to be its members.