

Speech by Mr Józef Oleksy, Representative of the Sejm of the Republic of
Poland at the plenary session of the Convention
Brussels, 20 December 2002

It seems that the focal point of the deliberations on Common Foreign and Security policy is the degree to which we are ready to involve the supranational factor in the policy and decision-making.

The reconsideration of the current roles of the High Representative and the External Commissioner has shown that it is too early to make a radical step in the field of external relations by a full merger of the functions in the Commission.

Maintaining the two distinct functions of the High Representative and the Commissioner – would preserve the status quo by trying to keep the external role both for the Council and the Commission. This would not present any major change to the present situation.

The proposal to establish the European External Representative is a considerable step forward. But it is a kind of partial compromise. Do we care about one single voice or one single message? Defining the future role of the Commission and reforming the presidency system – these are still great challenges ahead of us! And the outcome of those decisions will undoubtedly touch upon the functioning of the external representative.

We discuss and propose options without knowing what institutional questions will come up at the end. I mean here for example the question of the Presidency of the Union which we should not exclude.

One of the big issues from the Polish perspective will be the future relations of the Union with its eastern neighbours. The Union needs a new quality of partnership with this region (going beyond the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements). Both in economic and political terms. And as I have already stressed here, Poland wants to contribute in shaping the relations between the Union and its future eastern neighbours, sharing with them our experience and know-how of the transition period.

Of course nations east of the EU will by themselves have to decide whether they rather belong to Europe or to the Community of Independent States. Regardless of their choice, it is in the EU's interest to have this decision taken as a result of democratic, conscious and not abrupt process.

