

**Speech of the representative of the Government of the Slovak Republic Jan Figel
at the second plenary session of the Convention on the Future of Europe
Brussels 21 March 2002**

The future of Europe is not a theoretical but a practical topic because it has practical implications for both possible outcomes of EU's development:

1. In case of success when we will be able to bring people more peace, security, stability and prosperity;
2. And in case of failure when we will not be able to act in this sense timely and effectively.

We have fresh examples for both lines of such development.

Slovakia, which I represent, wants to contribute to finding answers to issues of Europe's future in this Convention but also at home. Thus a year ago we have established the National Convention on the European Future of Slovakia. Political parties and economic associations but also civic NGOs and church representatives discuss the same topics as we discuss here in this pan-European forum. Therefore I believe that such a broad spectrum of public institutions should be represented also in the Convention's Civic Forum.

We have to keep alive the spirit of unified Europe. Characteristic features of this spirit are integral humanism a solidarity – the cement of peaceful human and international relations. We have to keep alive the ideas of unification of the continent, especially those of Robert Schuman, the father of Europe. In that sense the Slovak parliament has recently adopted the Declaration on sovereignty of EU member states in ethical and cultural issues. This is an important step in preserving important values in our European and national development.

Mr. President,

There are three important principles for the future of Europe:

1. The **enlargement** should be seen as the unification of Europe. Not as a problem per se, but as a solution of problems which we have in the field of security, economy, regional development and social cohesion. In this way we can overcome the waves of nationalism, xenophobia or extremism on our continent. Enlargement – the largest indirect change for EU expected by people.
2. Concerning reforms - we need them and therefore we support further **deepening of communitarian policies** in the 1st pillar (single market, EMU). Slovakia wants to contribute to the efficiency of the emerging ESDP. Europe cannot be a giant standing on weak legs. We also feel that more can be done in the application of Schengen acquis, creating the European space of freedom, security and justice.
3. The leading principle for reforms is **subsidiarity** – a just principle based on freedom with responsibility, justice in application of public power and accountability close to the people on all levels.

Dear colleagues,

If we stick to such policies we will meet the historical challenges for a stronger and more democratic Europe of the 21st century.