

UDENRIGSMINISTERIET

EUROPAUDVALGET

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og deres stedfortrædere

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Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges i forbindelse med Det Europæiske Råd i Thessaloniki den 19.-20. juni 2003 brev af 13. juni 2003 fra de nordiske & baltiske statsministre til formanden for Det Europæiske Råd.

P. H. Orskov

13 June 2003

Prime Minister Costas Simitis
President of the European Council
Athens

Dear Costas Simitis,

We look forward to our coming European Council in Thessaloniki and our discussion on external relations, including the European security strategy to be presented by Secretary General Javier Solana as well as developments on the international scene.

In this connection, we wish to propose including our relations with the Arab world in our deliberations.

The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 and events since then have demonstrated the need for closer political dialogue between the Euro-Atlantic countries and countries in the Arab world.

In November 2002, EU Foreign Ministers set up a group of personal representatives, the Extreme Fundamentalism and Terrorism Group (EFTG), to analyse the links between fundamentalism, extreme fundamentalism and terrorism, and to explore the root causes of these links.

In their report of 5 May 2003, the personal representatives of our Foreign Ministers lay out a number of relevant recommendations that deserve full attention. The report proposes a new Partnership for Progress and Reform with the Middle East and North Africa, enhanced political dialogue on democracy and good governance, promotion of economic and social development in the Arab world, support for more pluralistic media as well as enhanced cultural and religious dialogue with the Muslim world. The partnerships should be established individually as a partnership of opportunity, starting with a vanguard of interested Arab countries.

The recommendations of the report are to a large extent inspired by the findings of the UNDP's Arab Human Development Report 2002.

We believe we can all agree on the need for closer political dialogue with the Arab world and for measures in support of pluralism, democratic reform and economic development. Obviously, we are talking about a mutual process, launched as a genuine partnership. We are aware that in order to succeed renewal must take place on terms acceptable to everyone concerned, which means we must engage in active dialogue between nations and cultures.

We see a need for close cooperation also with our Atlantic partners on this endeavour. Concerted efforts are vital in order to achieve progress. We therefore recommend that the idea of a new Partnership for Progress and Reform be discussed at the upcoming EU-USA Summit on 25th June.

We also suggest that the European Council invite the Commission and the High Representative to carry forward the work and to formulate a detailed work plan to be presented to the European Council in October this year for the implementation of the idea of a new Partnership for Progress and Reform with the Middle East and North Africa, taking into full account existing policies and programmes (e.g. the Euromed process). Such a plan could include the appointment of a special representative of the European Union on this important issue and a conference between the European Union and the Arab League to seek common ground.

We look forward to discussing the above ideas and the way ahead at our European Council in Thessaloniki.

We are sending a copy of this letter to colleagues in the European Council, to President Romano Prodi and to Secretary General Javier Solana.

Yours sincerely,

Anders Fogh Rasmussen
Prime Minister of Denmark

Einars Repše
Prime Minister of Latvia

Juhan Parts
Prime Minister of Estonia

Algirdas Brazauskas
Prime Minister of Lithuania

Anneli Jäätteenmäki
Prime Minister of Finland

Göran Persson
Prime Minister of Sweden