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og deres stedfortrædere

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Til underretning for Folketingets Europaudvalg vedlægges formandskabets
hørdebrev til møde i Det Europæiske Råd den 17.-18. juni 2004 i Bruxelles.

P. H. Orskov

15 June 2004

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
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Dear «FirstName»

I look forward with great pleasure to welcoming you to the meetings of the European Council and Intergovernmental Conference which will take place in Brussels on 17 and 18 June.

We will start our meeting on Thursday afternoon at 14.00 with a session devoted to the Intergovernmental Conference. I hope and expect that over the two days we will reach agreement on the Constitutional Treaty. In March, we committed ourselves to reaching such agreement. Since then, our Foreign Ministers have made very good progress, including at their meeting earlier this week, in resolving many issues and in clarifying those which remain for decision.

In advance of our meeting, I intend to circulate two papers: one containing texts on all those issues on which the Presidency does not believe that further discussion is required, and the other setting out proposals on the small number of outstanding issues. This paper will be the subject of our discussions on Thursday afternoon and again, as necessary, on Friday.

On Thursday evening at dinner, Heads of State or Government will discuss the appointment of the next President of the Commission and the designation of the Secretary General of the Council/High Representative for CFSP and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council.

At a separate working dinner Foreign Ministers will have an opportunity to discuss a number of international issues, including the Middle East Peace Process, Iran and Afghanistan.

The European Council meeting will begin at 09.30 on Friday 18 June with the customary meeting with President Cox. Following this I propose that we review progress in implementing the Declaration on Terrorism which we adopted at the March European Council in the aftermath of the Madrid bombings. The safety of our citizens is paramount and I know we are all agreed on the importance of moving forward with the substantial agenda we

set ourselves on 25 March. We will look forward also to the next phase of our work on the Justice and Home Affairs agenda. We will then move to adopt the conclusions and conclude our session by 11.30hrs.

After a short break for a Family Photo of Heads of State or Government and Foreign Ministers participating in the IGC and press conferences, we will resume the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference at 12.00hrs.

I strongly believe that the time is now ripe to achieve a fair and balanced agreement, creating a Constitution which we can present to our people as making their Union more effective, more democratic and more transparent. It is inevitable and natural that every delegation will in the final negotiations continue to argue for its own preferred outcomes. But we must not lose our sense of perspective. We have already agreed to maintain the great bulk of the Convention's recommendations, and have reached consensus on most other points. It is our shared responsibility to complete the IGC in a positive and open spirit, and to reach the necessary compromises. That is the spirit in which the Union has grown and developed. It is vital that we demonstrate to ourselves and the world that our enlarged Union can and will continue to overcome challenges and achieve the objectives it sets itself.

Yours sincerely

Bertie Ahern
President of the European Council