

The President of the House of Representatives  
of the States General  
Binnenhof 4  
The Hague

European Integration Department/  
Internal Affairs Division (DIE/IN)  
Bezuidenhoutseweg 67  
Postbus 20061  
2500 EB Den Haag

Date 20 November 2001  
Our ref. DIE-610/01  
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Re AIV interim report on the future  
of the European Union  
Cc The President of the Senate

Dear Mr President,

I am pleased to enclose the government's response to the new interim report by the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV). The report addresses the question of what subjects must receive particular attention in drawing up the agenda for the debate on the future of the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Jozias van Aartsen  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Professor Frans Andriessen  
Acting Chairman of the Advisory Council on International Affairs  
Postbus 20061  
2500 EB Den Haag

.. November 2001

Dear Mr Chairman,

The Minister of Defence, the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Minister for European Affairs join me in expressing our thanks for the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV)'s interim advisory report on the question of what subjects must receive particular attention in drawing up the agenda for the debate on the future of the European Union. The AIV presented this report on 9 November 2001 in response to the Government's request of 19 July 2001 for advice on the problems listed in the Nice Declaration on the future of the European Union, attached to the Final Act. The Government very much appreciates the AIV's issuing its report quickly enough to be used in determining our definitive position for the European Council in Laeken.

As the AIV itself indicates, your choice of the subjects to be dealt with generally corresponds with what the Government put forward in *The State of the European Union 2002*. The Government fleshed out the fourteen substantive priorities mentioned in *The State of the European Union*, which the AIV report refers to, in the policy memorandum on the future of the European Union that we sent to the House of Representatives on 8 June 2001. In the Government's view, these points can eventually be included in the organising framework of a European constitution.

To prepare for the Laeken Declaration, the Presidency is currently working on a list of themes and corresponding questions that can ultimately be included in the Declaration. The Government believes that these themes and questions will provide sufficient opportunity to discuss the great majority of the subjects the AIV mentions. In general, these specific subjects are in keeping with the broader themes of legitimacy, democracy and the coherence of the Union's external action that the Government proposes to tackle. The Government very much appreciates the AIV's explicit endorsement of the decision to focus on these broader themes. We also appreciate your observation that the themes address the core issues of the European Union's functioning.

The Government agrees with the AIV that the events of 11 September 2001 will inevitably give the subject of counterterrorism and security a prominent place on the agenda of the debate. We also agree with your observation that vigilance is needed to ensure that attention to topical issues does not detract from thorough discussion of the Union's functioning.

The AIV mentions that it had in earlier advisory reports already examined many of the subjects proposed for discussion at the Convention. For the record, we would note that the Government responded to those reports at the time.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Jozias van Aartsen  
Minister of Foreign Affairs