Meeting of 5 October 1996 in Dublin

I would like to underline the priority which the Irish presidency attaches to enlargement. It is my firm belief that one of the major contributions which we can make to the accession process is to ensure that substantial progress is made in the Intergovernmental Conference by the end of this year.

Dublin I also reaffirmed a general willingness of Member States to pursue ambitious objectives in terms of the content of the Treaty. From the perspective of the Irish presidency the meeting was helpful in advancing the substantial work of the IGC.

There was a wide measure of agreement among Heads of State or Government that a primary objective of the reform of the Union under consideration at the Conference is to provide concrete responses to direct concerns and expectations of our citizens. There was strong emphasis, for example, on the part of many of the participants on the need to demonstrate that we can strengthen the Treaty provisions on employment at the level of the Union. Furthermore, there was wide agreement on the need to demonstrate that we can, at the level of the Union, play an important role in combating the problems of international crime and drug-trafficking more effectively.

There is growing recognition that the IGC should make the necessary changes to ensure that the Union is able to ensure greater coherence of its international action in the political and economic fields and to exercise a constructive international political influence especially in terms of helping to resolve conflict and promote peaceful resolution of disputes.

Moreover, there is emerging agreement that the institutional adaptations must be made to the Union structure and decision-making processes so that the Union can be made more efficient, effective, visibly democratic and firmly rooted in public acceptability so that the Union can cope with further enlargement. Clearly, the pattern of all intergovernmental conferences in the past, some of the more sensitive institutional issues are likely to be settled at the end of the negotiations. The issue of flexibility will be a major concern. In this regard I should mention the very interesting contribution made by my colleagues in the Council, Klaus Kinkel and Hervé de Charette, to this debate. Dublin I has played a constructive part in advancing the work of the IGC. The Irish presidency remains on target to fill our mandate to produce an outline of a draft revision of the Treaty for consideration at the European Council in December.