

## Government statement by Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on the outcome of the Gothenburg European Council (21 June 2001)

**Caption:** On 21 June 2001, the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, delivers to the Bundestag an address in which he gives a positive assessment of the outcome of the Göteborg European Council with particular regard to the enlargement of the European Union.

**Source:** Policy Statement by Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder to the German Bundestag on the results of the Göteborg European Council Thu, 06/21/2001. [ON-LINE]. [Berlin]: The Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, [18.04.2005]. Disponible sur <http://www.bundesregierung.de/en/News-by-subject/Europe-11061/Goeteborg-European-Council.htm>.

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## Policy Statement by Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder to the German Bundestag on the results of the Göteborg European Council (21 June 2001)

Mr President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

[...]

The main message from Göteborg is this: The enlargement process is irreversible. That cannot be called into question even by the negative outcome of the Irish referendum. In point of fact, the enlargement negotiations went so well over the past six months that in Göteborg we were able to spell out in more precise terms the objectives agreed in Nice:

- The goal we have set ourselves is to complete by the end of 2002 negotiations with those candidate countries that are then ready.

- If that can be achieved, it should - secondly - be possible for the first candidate countries to become members in time to participate in the European Parliament elections in 2004.

That is an ambitious programme to which we are committed. And we are also committed to the principle that all candidates will be judged solely on their own merits.

Here, I may say, there is a need for considerable efforts still on the part of the candidate countries. Reaching their objective, however, is ultimately a matter for the candidates themselves.

At my meeting in Frankfurt an der Oder on Monday with Prime Minister Buzek of Poland we reaffirmed our common desire to see Poland achieve the goal set. That will be no easy task. But together we will leave nothing undone to help Poland make the most of this opportunity.

The same goes for all candidate countries. It is up to the candidates themselves whether they make sufficient progress in the negotiations and transposing the European acquis. For my part, by the way, I am very optimistic the objectives agreed at Göteborg can be achieved.

Over the past six months we have made substantial headway in the enlargement process. The Common Position adopted by member states on the free movement of workers and capital even constitutes a breakthrough.

Hungary is the first candidate country to have closed the negotiating chapter on the free movement of workers by agreeing to the proposed seven-year flexible transition period in this area.

This week Latvia, too, has agreed. I am sure others will soon follow suit.

That means an important German negotiating objective, one to which I have given strong backing, has been achieved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The enlargement process will only be an overall success if it continues to enjoy popular support. To ensure such support it is crucial that here, in the area of freedom of movement, we find a solution both sides can live with.

By the same token, border regions particularly affected by enlargement must receive help in managing the foreseeable difficult adjustments that will be necessary. That the European Council has once again reaffirmed. The Commission is to submit a communication to this effect shortly.

[...]

Today, however, we live in a different Europe. In Nice at the latest it became obvious the diplomatic consensus model had reached its limits. In a Union of currently fifteen and soon twenty or more member states insistence on adhering to past procedures means that in far too many cases we end up with the lowest common denominator instead of the broadest possible measure of agreement. And that is too little if we want an enlarged European Union to remain a viable polity.

[...]

Göteborg - and not least the meeting with all candidate countries at the end of the European Council - has helped make the larger Europe still more tangible. But it has not yet become reality. We have a difficult road ahead. Under the incoming Belgian Presidency decisions have to be taken over the next six months on the shape and form of the debate on Europe's future. Together we must also keep up the momentum in the enlargement negotiations.

[...]