



THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

17 September 2012

Sehr geehrter Herr Minister, lieber Guido,

Wie du weißt, werde ich bei dem letzten Treffen der Zukunftsgruppe leider nicht teilnehmen können. Deshalb möchte ich diese Möglichkeit nutzen, um meine größte Hochachtung für die von dir initiierte Arbeit der Gruppe auszudrücken. Da ich eine Kopie dieses Briefes an die anderen Teilnehmer der Gruppe sende, werde ich auf Englisch fortsetzen.

The work in the Future Group constitutes an important element in our efforts to strengthen the debate about Europe. The process has been extremely useful, and the final report will no doubt form a basis for further discussions on the issue, as it reflects the individual contributions of participating ministers. Personally, I highly appreciate the various ideas, even though I do not agree with all of them. Some of the suggestions – for example concerning strengthened economic governance - could be very controversial in a Danish context.

Against this background I fully agree with the suggestion of presenting the report to the president of the European Council as an informal contribution to the further discussions about the future of Europe. Also, I believe it is absolutely necessary to broaden the debate to ensure the citizens stay fully involved and that their views are taken into account. Danish ministers are already actively pursuing such efforts.

There is indeed a need to make the case to the European citizens about what we want to achieve together in the European Union. What is our vision and how do we make a positive difference for Europe and Europeans through our cooperation? At the same time we must be clear that institutional reform and economic reform are not goals in themselves; they are means to our goals. The debate about Europe's future should therefore not primarily be about institutions, competencies and processes. The debate should first and foremost be about what we want to achieve. Furthermore, Danish participation in any discussion on these issues will of course have to take place with full respect of the Danish opt-outs.

Dr. Guido Westerwelle
Bundesminister des Auswärtigen

I would like to highlight a number of areas where we could develop positive visions for Europe within the existing treaty framework. First and foremost, we should make it clear that economic reforms and the further development of the Economic and Monetary Union should support sustainable growth and employment. At the same time, we must further develop our goal of a green future for Europe, building on the important progress made most recently through the agreement on the Energy Efficiency directive. Globally, the EU should be a leading actor on human rights and respect for the individual as well as a leader in peace and reconciliation through enhanced diplomatic efforts, preventive actions and active contributions to peace-keeping missions. The European Foreign Policy should be strengthened, moving towards a "One EU" principle on the ground. Finally, we must recognize that national parliaments are the source of the democratic legitimacy of the Council and the European Council. They have the opportunity and responsibility to engage in debate with citizens about the choices that will shape the EU in the coming decades. A strengthened involvement of national parliaments would mean increased national ownership of EU legislation and facilitate faster and more streamlined transposition into national law.

Mit besten Grüßen


Villy Søvndal