

(Non official translation)

H.E. Mr Constantinos Simitis  
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Athens

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The Presidency's decision to convene an extraordinary informal European Council on the Iraq problem is, I believe, very timely. Following the Security Council meeting of yesterday (Friday), we in Europe now have some further elements to aid us in our assessment of the situation in Iraq. Europe can contribute a great deal to international peace and security and also to effective pressure on Iraq to comply with the United Nations resolutions.

I write to set out some ideas which I hope may prove useful for our intense work in Brussels on Monday:

In my opinion, the best principle for our meeting is to take as our starting point the common position arrived at by consensus in the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 27 January. Naturally, we have to take into account the two reports delivered by the UN chief inspectors. It is also important that we do not forget any commitments reached by the Atlantic Alliance.

On Monday 17 in Brussels we should keep to the agreement reached on 27 January. I believe our discussions should focus on the strict application, within a short time frame, of Resolution 1441. In drawing together the different interests, the European Council could become a particularly useful occasion for our Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Lastly, allow me to draw attention again to something we all consider to be highly justified: the great interest expressed by the 13 Enlargement countries in participating in the European Council or at least in the dinner afterwards. The opinions of the European Council will commit them in the near future and indeed already affect them as they do everyone else. The additional efforts made by the Presidency to welcome them at some stage during the day would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you as always for your dedication,

Best wishes