

**Intervention by Mr. Rytis Martikonis,  
Representative of the Lithuanian Government  
Plenary session of the European Convention**

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Mr. President, dear colleagues,

It is clear - achievements of the European integration, values of the European Union and its citizens have to be promoted. They also have to be protected. We need European area of freedom and also of security and justice. Over the last years this need has climbed to the top of the political agenda: from Amsterdam Treaty to Tampere European Council political ambitions and objectives have been set up for both present and future member states; after September 11 they have become practical imperative.

It is clear - new challenges are beyond capacities of an individual state. Legal peculiarities, historic and national sensitivities are there but they should be addressed by more rather than less of co-operation. Hence such discussion as we have today [on border management; policies on immigration and asylum, action against organised crime and terrorism] is nothing else but emergence of our strong common interest. The main challenge – as I see it – is how to bring into coherent framework very complex spheres of activities and wide range of practices related to public order and personal security. But in working for that we should rely on tested experiences and methods - using the ‘community approach’ as well as open co-ordination - while clearly bearing in mind the interests of the enlarged Union.

It is wider Union – the Union of 2004 – and not only Union of today that we must keep in mind. It is 25 or perhaps more states that should participate in all the stages of these projections. And it was right to hold the first thematic session of the Convention on this topic.

Creation of European area of security and justice is special for my country. In a way it is warranted by Lithuania’s geography. Vilnius – the capital of Lithuania – is only thirty kilometres from the future Eastern border of the European Union. Living on this doorstep, we feel double responsibility - for my country and for Europe. It also seems natural to expect that responsibilities like this are shouldered by all beneficiaries. Therefore, the right balance between the Community and national capacities will have to be found.

In this context I can only welcome recent initiatives of the Commission [on the common border management] and important feasibility studies conducted by different groupings of the member states. These are the projects that we have to bring forward. You can count on Lithuania.

No doubt the final document of the Convention will reflect in a substantial way the results of these discussions and also the spirit that is manifested here today.