

**Information Conference “The Common Agricultural Policy and
Enlargement: Opportunities and Perspectives”**

Sofia, 16 March 2004

**Closing intervention by His Excellency Mr Mehmed Dikme
Minister of Agriculture and Forests of the Republic of Bulgaria**

*Excellencies,
Dear Mr Fischler,
Ministers,
Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

At the end of this conference, which I believe was successful, I have pleasure to address you and to express my deep gratitude for your competent and useful participation.

In the framework of two days, we familiarized ourselves with the vast opportunities of the information tools in the field of agriculture that are at the disposal of the European Commission. We also had a favourable opportunity to discuss in detail matters pertaining to the Common Agricultural Policy and its future in the enlarged Union, and the perspectives and challenges before us. The simultaneous workshops discussed the perspectives and opportunities for development of agricultural markets in an enlarged Europe, key elements of the enlargement negotiations, SAPARD instruments on the eve of accession, and rural development measures.

My special thanks go to the Directorate General for Agriculture of the European Commission for the wonderful initiative and the good organisation of the conference.

I thank Mr Schierhuber and Mr Olsson, Members of the European Parliament, who were our guests and shared their rich experience in agriculture with us. I also thank my colleagues De Lacroix, Ahner, Lange, Munch, Moegele, Wilkinson and Courades for their useful participation as keynote speakers at the conference.

I take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Mr Franz Fischler, Member of the European Commission Responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, for his valuable contribution to the holding of this high forum.

Let us thank him, and let us congratulate him upon the high award of *Doctor Honoris Causa* conferred to him this morning by the President of the University of National and World Economy of Sofia for his general contribution to the development of agriculture in United Europe.

Finally, let us wish to meet again in the immediate future to step up and further develop our fruitful co-operation in the framework of the enlarged European Union.

Thank you for the attention.