

## **Third Information Conference on the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union**

**Opening address by Mr Plamen Mollov  
Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Agriculture**

**Sofia, 15 March 2004 (09:30 hr)**

*Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome you to Sofia to the opening of the Third Information Conference on the Common Agricultural Policy of the Union.

The Common agricultural policy is one of the main policies of the European Community. The enlargement of the European Union to the East will undoubtedly bring about a substantial increase in Europe's agricultural potential.

Negotiations on the agriculture chapter are of huge importance considering the extremely sensitive nature of this sector.

The CAP reform of July 2003 and the agricultural potential of the new Member States will undoubtedly influence the future economic development of Europe.

The modernisation of the Bulgarian agricultural sector and bringing it in line with European standards will contribute to meeting our membership obligations. This is a key priority of Bulgaria's policy.

We are currently witnessing the successful implementation of the measures of approved strategies for the development of several important sectors, like bio farming, viticulture and winemaking, dairy farming, rural and ecological tourism.

We note with satisfaction that Bulgaria was the first country to receive accreditation for its SAPARD Agency. The number of approved projects under this pre-accession programme and the interest of agricultural producers towards it have been steadily increasing. It is one of the key instruments of the agriculture policy of the State towards its main objective – development of a European model of farming, which is multifunctional, sustainable and competitive.

Bulgaria fully supports the new important aspects of the revised agriculture policy of United Europe aimed at promoting the development of the rural areas and creating better social and environmental conditions for the population in these areas.

Today's conference is an excellent opportunity for a detailed discussion of CAP issues and of its future in the enlarged Union, of the perspectives and challenges we all face.

I wish this conference success!

*Thank you for the attention.*