



## **European Council of 15 and 16 december 2005: Statement made by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic.**

(Paris, 17 December 2005)

This morning, Europe has given itself a budget for the next seven years.

It is good news because Europe has concluded a good agreement. Firstly, this agreement allows us to finance our common policies, essential for the whole of Europe and particularly for France, both the Common Agricultural Policy and the research and innovation policy which needs a significant boost.

It is also an agreement which addresses the needs of the enlargement. Europe means peace, democracy and development. And development concerns everyone. Past experience has shown that the countries whose development has been assisted have brought wealth and employment to the whole of the European Union. This budget will encourage the development of the new member countries.

It is also a budget which strengthens solidarity and justice inasmuch as it affirms at last that every country has to contribute equally and fairly to the cost of the enlargement and, in this respect, has reviewed the mechanisms of what is known as the British rebate, which gave Britain an advantage which was no longer justified.

It is above all a budget on which Europe has come together. A Europe which has thus affirmed itself politically as ambitious and mutually supportive. France and Germany played a major role in the decision-making process, alongside the British presidency. Here, you will allow me to pay tribute to the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who displayed great courage, initiative and responsibility throughout the period when this agreement was being prepared.

Now we must think of the next stage and, with our partners, with due regard for the decision of the French [in the referendum on the draft Constitution], think and take the initiative on our institutions. Our institutions are no longer today really tailored to an enlarged and modern Europe. So we must have more democratic and more efficient institutions. This will be the great ambition of the Austrian presidency which will bring us together at the end of the next six-month period so that we can take some new initiatives. On this, I shall have the opportunity to make some ambitious proposals for tomorrow's Europe, this Europe which I wish to be simultaneously political, social and mutually-supportive. I shall make these proposals so that Europe moves forward, so that Europe confirms its role as one of the major players of tomorrow's world.

