

including a \$1.2 billion increase in VA health care. There will also be a 16 percent boost in funding for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to remedy the backlog of compensation claims as well as an additional \$300 million for the Veterans Hospital Emergency Repair Act. I am proud that Congress could pass this legislation before we return to our districts to honor our veterans.

There can be no compromise when it comes to our veterans. Defending the Constitution of the United States is the greatest duty the nation can ask of its citizens. These men and women answered the call to duty and performed it to the highest standard. I will do everything in my power to ensure that the promises made to our veterans are kept.

Today we must prove to the world our commitment to preserving peace and democracy. We are showing the world the pride we have in our country and the values that we hold dear. It is because of our veterans that we have this tradition of freedom. They defended the idea so many years ago. They fought and sacrificed to ensure our peace. They are the inspiration which keeps the dream of democracy alive for us and everyone around the world. And this weekend in Sussex County, we bring this point home as we honor the heroes in our midst. Let us renew the dreams and the spirit of brotherhood that brought this nation through more than two centuries of struggle and kept it vibrant and free.

Finally let me state as clearly as I can: I am committed to ensuring that Congress will take all appropriate actions to ensure that our veterans are properly supported. They were there when the nation called; now we must be there when they need our help.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Veterans of Sussex County, New Jersey, that will be recognized this weekend at the County Salute to all Military Veterans from Sussex County. And I urge my colleagues to join me in keeping our promise to our nation's heroes—our veterans.

RECOGNIZING MR. ROMANO PRODI, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND HIS REMARKS TO THE CYPRUS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on October 25, Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, spoke before the plenary of the Cyprus House of Representatives while on a two-day official visit to Cyprus.

During his speech, Mr. Prodi stated that Cyprus will join the EU and will be among the first candidate countries to do so. As a strong advocate of Cyprus' accession to the European Union, I believe that Cyprus' accession would be good for the stability of the region, as well as for the prospects for serious and good faith negotiations between the parties in Cyprus.

To that end, I am honored to submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the introduction and

text of Mr. Prodi's historic speech to the Cyprian House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MR. DEMETRIUS CHRISTOFIAS

It is with particular pleasure and great excitement that I have the privilege to welcome to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus the President of the European Commission Mr. Romano Prodi.

Mr. Romano Prodi is a distinguished personality of international calibre who has associated his name with the steady furtherance of the cause of European integration. At the helm of the European Commission since 1999 the systematic and principled culture on his part of the European voice effuses common values, beliefs and civilization originating from our common European heritage.

Your visit to Cyprus, Mr. President, is taking place at difficult times which humanity is experiencing in a tragic way today. It is comforting to note that with your firm positions you have struck the right note and given the right way of addressing terrorism by making clear that the reaction of the international community, with which the Cyprus Republic has aligned itself against terrorism, is not a war against cultures or a conflict of religions. It is imperative that the European Union oppose a united world of peace, democracy, equality, prosperity and international understanding and solidarity with Man in its epicentre against every sort of terrorists.

The Cyprus Republic believing unwaveringly in the future of Europe continues its efforts firmly and decisively for the harmonization of its national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. The Cyprus Parliament plays its own part and faces with responsibility as a first priority the harmonization process. Our progress in our accession negotiations is due to a great extent to the common effort of all the political powers in Cyprus but also to the general support offered by public opinion. These efforts made by Cyprus but also the proven dedication to democratic institutions and European ideals and principles are acknowledged and clearly recorded in the latest progress report by the European Commission on Cyprus.

As regards the process for the solution of the Cyprus problem, I would like to emphatically stress that the President of the Republic participates with the support of the National Council in the effort under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General with all goodwill for the solution of the problem on the basis of United Nations Resolutions and the High Level Agreements. I would like to underline that our expectation is that a united Cyprus join the European Union. I would like at the same time, however, to point out that our will must not be misinterpreted. It is not possible for Cyprus to accept the absurd demands made by Turkey and the Turkish occupation leader Mr. Denktash which are followed by threats. Especially his unrealistic claim for a direct or an indirect recognition of the occupation regime as a state entity just to reach a settlement to the Cyprus problem.

I would like to avail myself of the opportunity of your presence here, Mr. President, to express the warmest thanks on behalf of the Cyprus people for the firm promotion by the European Commission of the provision of the Helsinki Summit decision which envisages that the solution of the Cyprus problem is not a prerequisite for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union as well as for the conviction that Cyprus will become a mem-

ber of the European Union during the first wave of enlargement.

With these few thoughts, Mr. President of the European Commission, I welcome you once again to the Cyprus Parliament.

SPEECH BY MR. ROMANO PRODI, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

In these changing and difficult times, I was particularly moved at being invited to speak today to the elected representatives of the people of Cyprus. For democracy is at the heart of our system of government in Europe.

Democracy is the guarantee not only of human rights and fundamental freedoms but also of security, stability and well being. Especially at the present time, when the international community faces so many challenges.

The European Union is a community of law and, you, the legislators of Cyprus, are working every day to ensure that your country becomes part of this community and strengthens it.

This is all the more important in the light of the appalling attacks on the United States on 11 September.

The European Union has expressed its solidarity with the innocent victims and is contributing vigorously to the fight against terrorism.

Cyprus, like the other candidates for EU membership, immediately expressed its abhorrence for those attacks and aligned itself with the EU position on terrorism and the operations to eliminate it.

But deeds are even more important than words. Cyprus has taken practical measures to combat illegal arms sales and transshipments and to freeze funds that might be used to sponsor terrorism. These, and the other steps taken by Cyprus since 11 September, are deeply appreciated in the European Union. Recent events vividly bring to mind the *raison d'être* of the enlargement process, and indeed, of the European Union itself.

The European Union exists to put an end to the conflicts of the past and to bring peace, justice and well being to our peoples.

It has achieved this to a remarkable extent over almost half a century. Today, peace, justice and well being are steadily being spread throughout Europe as preparations for enlargement go ahead.

This enlargement will benefit not only the old and new member states but also neighboring countries, with which we have close ties. No new dividing lines will be drawn across our continent. Indeed, each new candidate will bring to the EU its own political, economic, cultural, historical and geographical heritage, thus enriching Europe as a whole.

Cyprus's own heritage includes a tradition of good public administration, a vibrant economy, the talent and creativity of its people and the close links they have established in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

The flow of benefits is, of course, reciprocal. The European Union will bring to Cyprus a model of peace and reconciliation, the freedom of the single market and a set of institutions and policies that meet the needs of all member states.

However, those institutions and policies need redesigning to enable them to

meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Next year, Cyprus—together with the other candidate countries and the existing Member States—will be taking part in a structured debate on our future policies and how best to run the Union. “Who should do what” is one of the key questions.

The debate will lead to a new Inter-Governmental Conference in 2004, and Cyprus will already be invited to join in preparations for that IGC.

Another key issue in the great debate is how to involve Europe’s citizens more closely in designing and implementing European policies. After all, the European Union exists for its citizens and must be built by them.

In particular, we need their support for enlargement. People naturally fear the unknown, and political leaders (both in existing member states and in the candidate countries) should take time to explain to the general public why enlargement is in everyone’s interest.

It will boost not only economic prosperity but also political security and stability in Europe. We must spell this out to our citizens, who may be perplexed by the technical nature of the accession negotiations.

Cyprus is advancing well in these negotiations. This is above all a reflection of your own efforts as legislators in putting into place a system of laws containing the same principles and provisions as European Union law.

Parliament is working expeditiously and your fast-track procedure for transposing EU laws and rules, the “acquis”, is a model of its kind, on which I congratulate you.

It is thanks to your efforts, and to the efforts of your government and negotiators, that Cyprus is amongst the frontrunners in the accession process.

Your country’s preparations for membership must continue to be pursued vigorously. A number of politically or technically difficult issues such as taxation, competition, agriculture, justice and home affairs still have to be resolved. Further legislative work must also be done in some fields on which negotiations have been provisionally concluded, such as telecommunications and the free movement of goods.

We are aware that you are planning a major tax reform, partly aimed at adapting your tax regime to the EU system. We will follow with interest the progress of the reform legislation through this House.

Of course, passing the necessary laws is not the end of the story: those laws also have to be implemented effectively in each candidate country. Monitoring the candidates’ progress in this respect is, of course, the Commission’s job. But, as you know, the existing Member States are also closely following this progress, particularly in sensitive areas such as the environment, maritime transport, competition and the prevention of money laundering.

I am personally very pleased to see the high degree of consensus Cyprus has achieved on the transposition of EU law. It is a sign of your country’s healthy democracy that there is genuine diversity of political views and genuine competition between political parties, yet there is also underlying agreement on fundamental principles. This unity in diversity is the very essence of politics and society in Europe today.

Diversity is of course one of main characteristics of Cyprus. It is a source of richness

and of pride but it has also, over the years, been a source of recurrent conflict. The European Union lends its full support to efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem and salutes in particular the continuing work of Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General, and his special representative, Alvaro de Soto. The European Union would be delighted if their efforts were to bear fruit before enlargement, though—as you know—this is not a pre-condition for Cyprus’s accession.

How inspiring it would be for Europe, and for the world at large, if Cyprus were to heal its wounds and if Greek and Turkish Cypriots were to enter the European Union together on the basis of a settlement which took into account the interests and concerns of all parties!

The United Nations, and others working towards a settlement, are well aware of those concerns. In the months since the proximity talks were, alas, suspended, they have been working hard in the common interest of all citizens of Cyprus. We were disappointed that the Turkish Cypriot leadership did not accept the UN Secretary-General’s invitation to resume talks in September. Despite these disappointments, however, the UN is persevering in its efforts and the European Union gives them our full backing.

I very much welcome the recent improvement in relations between Greece and Turkey and hope that this will facilitate the search for a settlement of the Cyprus question. I am profoundly convinced that a settlement is within reach.

Let me stress that the European Union, with its *acquis*, will never be an obstacle to finding a solution to the Cyprus problem. The European Union never seeks to determine the constitutional arrangements or the security arrangements of its member states. Such matters are up to them.

I am confident that the European Union can accommodate whatever arrangements the parties themselves agree to in the context of a political settlement. As an EU Member State Cyprus will of course have to participate in the Council of Ministers “with one voice”.

The European Commission is seeking to broaden understanding of the *acquis*, and related issues, throughout Cyprus. Given a political settlement, EU membership will bring benefits to all Cypriots and in particular will enable those in the northern part of the island to catch up rapidly in terms of economic performance and living standards.

Following a settlement, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots will participate in the work of EU institutions, helping run the Union and shape its future.

Meanwhile, projects involving both communities on the island can address specific problems, dispel misconceptions and improve understanding.

Projects of this sort deserve the active support of all political leaders. They also demonstrate in practical terms the commitment of the people of this island to overcoming the problems of the past and reaching a settlement.

There is a window of opportunity now for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to reach an agreement before Cyprus’s accession. Every effort should be made to take full advantage of this opportunity. History would not look

kindly on those who knowingly let this opportunity slip.

A political settlement before Cyprus’s accession is our strong preference. But let me make one thing clear. Cyprus will join the European Union, and it will be among the first candidate countries to do so.

The timetable is set out. We are aiming to complete negotiations with all countries that are sufficiently prepared by the end of next year, with a view to accession in 2004. We hope that Cypriot citizens will participate in the European elections in 2004. There can be no question of delaying an historic process in which the security, stability and well being of Europe as a whole is involved.

During my visit to Cyprus, I shall be meeting citizens from various walks of life, including both Greek and Turkish Cypriot trade unionists. I detect a yearning on the part of all Cypriots to be part of the European project.

As President of the European Commission I say to all the people of Cyprus “Welcome! The European Union will only be complete when you, and the other European peoples who aspire to membership, are ready to join us”.

Thank you.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE
CENTER 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call to the attention of the House of Representatives an important anniversary which will be commemorated in my district on Nov. 13. The Domestic Violence Service Center (DVSC) will observe the 25th anniversary of its founding. I am pleased to have the opportunity to commend the center for its tireless dedication to helping women and children in crisis.

Originally called Womencenter when it was first conceived in October 1976, the DVSC began as an assessment agency to focus on the needs of area women. The pleas for help from battered women in the first six months were overwhelming. Because of this, the Womencenter refocused its purpose to address the issue of domestic violence and how it affects women and children in the Wyoming Valley. A task force was formed to study the issue. The result of that meeting was the founding of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV). The first coalition of its kind in the United States, the PCADV is still a leader in victims’ rights issues in the State and the Nation.

In 1977, the Womencenter received a grant to develop a full-time domestic violence program. Services expanded and a liaison with Legal Services of Northeastern Pennsylvania was established.