

Speaking Points/Comments for PM C. Simitis

Topic: Franco – German Contribution to the Convention

- We welcome the joint text of Germany and France on the institutional architecture of the enlarged European Union. It constitutes a major contribution to the work of the European Convention.
- We understand that the text represents a compromise of different views and approaches on how to institutionally structure the enlarged Union. We share fully the principles and objectives of reform set out in the text: clarity, legitimacy, effectiveness. We also fully support the emphasis on developing in a balanced manner the institutional triangle –Parliament, Commission, Council. Our concern is not to damage the “**community model** of integration” in our attempt at strengthening institutional structures.
- We see the future European Union not only as a “federation of member states” but also “.... **of peoples....**” (as well as a “system of solidarity and cohesion”).
- Need to stress equality of all member states
- The Union must enjoy single legal personality and a single institutional framework without pillars. The Charter of Fundamentals Rights must be in the Treaty.

With respect to the European Council,

- Its role is and must remain essentially a political one. The streamlining of its functions must therefore in no way impair the role, powers and functions of the European Commission.

- We are not fully convinced about the need for electing/appointing a long-term President for the European Council. A bicephalous presidential system in the Union could well give rise to confusion, uncertainties and conflicts. [We prefer a single President chairing the Commission and the European Council]
- At any rate, the bicephalous system can be examined in the context of a **satisfactory overall package** of institutional reforms and on the condition that the role of the Commission is fully respected and enhanced.

As far as the **Commission** is concerned,

- Its role, powers (exclusive right of initiative, etc) and executive functions must be preserved and strengthened especially in the area of economic governance (management of euro, Stability Pact).
- We agree for the election of the Commission President by the European Parliament and his approval by the European Council. However, the members of the Commission must be appointed as of today (regime of Nice Treaty).

With regard to the **European Parliament**,

- We support the strengthening of its powers especially the legislative functions by extending the co-decision procedure and budgetary role.

With respect to the **Council (of Ministers)**,

- It is desirable to distinguish between the legislative and executive functions of the Council. Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) must be extended. The deliberations of the Council in the legislative area must be open to the public.
- All member states must participate in the function of the Presidency of the Council. This is important for several reasons (political, educational, et.al.). So with the exception of the Foreign Policy/External Relations (Relex) Council, which could be chaired by

the European Minister of European Affairs, all other Councils must be chaired by member states on a “team presidency” formula with predetermined succession/rotation order respecting equality.

On the **external action of the EU**,

- We fully share the view for strengthening the external role of the EU. The merger of the role of High Representative for External Relations (double hatting) has been supported by Greece (we submitted relevant proposal).
- We can move to generalized qualified majority voting (QMV) in the area of CFSP only if we ensure that genuine national interests of vital nature are fully protected (the formula contained in the Amsterdam Treaty –“emergency brake”- is the right one).
- Reinforced cooperation/flexibility must be extended to ESDP.
- The Commission must progressively become more actively engaged in CFSP. The new treaty must not preclude that.

On **National Parliaments**,

- No need for new institutions like the Congress.

P.C.I.doc