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Θέμα: ACED draft declaration NEW VERSION

Συνημμένα: ACED\_declaration\_reworked\_23MAY.pdf; ACED\_declaration\_reworked\_23MAY.doc



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Dear member of the ACED,

Please find attached a new draft version (.doc and .pdf) for the declaration to be presented at the press conference on 4 June.  
It is an adapted version of the first draft in consideration of the written comments made and shall serve as basis for the discussion on Sunday 3 June.

On behalf and with kind regards,  
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## THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. The mission of the **Action Committee for European Democracy** (ACED) is to contribute to the debate on Europe's political prospects, fostering a new consensus on how Europe can master its future. The structure and the content of the draft proposal for a new Treaty presented by ACED members as engaged citizens, independent experts, based on their political experience, engagement in the constitutional debate and knowledge of member states, reflects the assumption that the current treaty framework, as amended by innovations of the Constitutional Treaty, constitutes a solid and comprehensive base for finding a good solution on which member states can build their common future.
2. The European Union needs to move forward again to continue its great success in delivering peace, stability and prosperity, for which it stands since fifty years. Faced with an increasingly globalised political and economic environment, we need more effective tools to participate in shaping the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, the EU of 27 member states has to become more responsive and participatory for its 494.6 million citizens to meet their expectations and increase the trust in a democratic Union. To ensure that Europe will continue its successful unification and serve the interests of its citizens, the European Union has to improve its policies and institutions.
3. The Constitutional Treaty, elaborated by the European Convention after listening to Europe's civil society and adopted unanimously by an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), was intended to improve Europe's governance. This remains still a mission to be accomplished. Despite the drawbacks that have led to a period of reflection, it must not be neglected that the ratification process never really stopped but that European citizens and governments continued to express their support for a broader reform project and the European idea. Of the 50 million citizens consulted by referendum in four countries, 26.6 million have voted in favour, only 22.6 million against.
4. We believe that the negative votes were not a rejection of the European Union as such, but an expression of dissatisfaction with the general state of affairs in Europe. The phase of reflection has been useful in making it clear which solutions for a more democratic, transparent, and effective Union are at stake and how costly the consequences of missing this chance for reform would be. In turn, it also has provided a period for review and re-definition of positions and thereby increased the comprehension between divergent views in order to prepare the ground for a common answer to the shared challenges we are faced with in the EU.
5. The need for reform is still pre-eminent. The problems spelled out in the *Declaration of Laeken* in 2001 and its mandate to provide answers to the reform agenda are still to be settled. We are convinced that there is a large agreement on the Laeken questions among citizens and their representatives alike (DANUTA HAS DOUBTS ON THIS). This implies that although the form of the constitutional Treaty is not considered appropriate by many, the substance of the reform project proposed by the Convention in response to the Laeken Declaration is still valid: defining the competences of the EU, simplifying its instruments, improving transparency, efficiency and democracy.

## ACTION COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

6. Therefore, the European Council in June should convene a new Intergovernmental Conference to be completed before the end of 2007, with the clear and stringent mandate to stipulate a simplified Treaty preserving the innovations on which all Governments have already agreed and with a view of ratifying it in all Member States before the European Parliament elections in 2009. Each Government will choose the adequate way to represent citizens' will.

7. The new Treaty has to be as short and accessible as possible. It should be an addition to the existing Treaties rather than replacing them. Thus, instead of founding the Union newly, the new Treaty should be accompanied by amending protocols on both the institutional modifications consequential to its clauses and the most required policy innovations to be ratified as one comprehensive package for renewal. (Member states that want to depart from the present Treaty they signed in 2004 should respect the 'golden rule' to only suggest changes that have the same backing amongst the states as the original provision) (SENTENCE IN BRAQUETS SUGGESTED BY INIGO BUT OPPOSED BY CHRIS).

8. Since the Constitutional Treaty was negotiated, the world has kept changing. Thus, we see some challenges that were not considered at the time but which have come to the fore since. Being faced again with the task to finalise a Treaty could be a chance to go beyond the most urgent institutional reforms and to include further policy issues that were not yet envisaged as crucial six years ago. The following list represents points of departure for what we hold the most relevant challenges that will come up for the EU in the next decades. The suggestions are of merely additive nature, they cannot and must not replace any of the reforms pledged for. It will be up to the Heads of State and Governments to evaluate their importance to be added to the catalogue of immediate concerns:

- Climate change
- Citizens' rights for information
- Social dimension
- Energy policy
- Stimulating debate on pan-European policy issues

9. The Laeken Declaration explicitly stated the long-term option of a future Constitution for the European Union. After the reflection period it is clear that more time is need for this option. In this context it may be useful for the European Council to reconsider the Constitution option at a future date. In order to strengthen democratic legitimacy, the European Council in June may give a mandate to the next European Parliament to examine the options after the 2009 elections. (SUGGESTED BY STEFAN)

10. The Action Committee for European Democracy intends to be helpful in supporting the governments of the Member States in the difficult process of the incoming months. The Committee is well aware that our citizens want a more effective Union. But institutional reforms are not an alternative to more effective results. On the contrary, they are the foundation on which better policies depend and have to be built.