

## **Suggested directions for the priorities of the EU's next presidencies**

Proposal by the "Europe and Strategy" Study Group  
adopted by the Central Council (Brussels - 8 December 2006)

After the period of stagnation which followed the rejection by referendum of the constitutional treaty in France and the Netherlands, the European Union's future seems once again to be debated these past few months and to give rise to new proposals worthy of examination. They have issued from, among others: Josep Borrell Fontelles, president of the European Parliament; Jo Leinen, president of its Constitutional Affairs Committee; Nicolas Sarkozy, candidate for the forthcoming presidential election in France; and, more recently, Andrew Duff, British MEP, whose proposals have received the support of Jacques Delors' think-tank "Notre Europe".

In this context, it is clear that the next presidencies of the Council will be of great importance. Therefore ELEC considers it its duty to adopt firm positions on what should be their priorities. It invites its National sections to reflect upon these and to discuss them, and meanwhile it submits to them the following orientations.

The "roadmap" of the German presidency due to begin next January 1<sup>st</sup> has been made public by Chancellor Angela Merkel and comprises five main axes: to confirm and defend common values - to define the EU's external borders - to improve its economic dynamics - to establish an economic and social world order - to clarify the EU's goals and strategy for the future. This roadmap will naturally be detailed and completed at the start of next year.

These five axes obviously represent important guidelines for the EU's future actions. ELEC thinks nevertheless that in addition tangible progress should rapidly be made on the following eight points:

- ◇ a better coordination of economic policies in order to strengthen the eurozone's economic governance;
- ◇ a significant increase of the European budget, whose minimal size today is clearly insufficient to carry out the Union's current missions, let alone to undertake new ones;
- ◇ the elaboration of a great European project that includes some priority aims of the Lisbon Agenda;
- ◇ a better integration of financial markets, in the sectors of commercial and retail banking in particular;
- ◇ a European policy for managing the existing transport infrastructures and for developing new connections;
- ◇ a policy for the environment better integrated with structural policies aimed at improving economic competitiveness;
- ◇ a harmonized energy policy;
- ◇ a common policy for immigration;

◇ the search for and definition, by Europe, of an economic and social order able to humanize economy's globalization;

◇ a resumption of the institutional reform process, failing which the management of the enlarged EU will become increasingly difficult.

-----