

## Message to the Convention

Position paper (May 2003)

The European League for Economic Cooperation has adopted the following position:

- ◇ Considering that a Union of 25 Member States cannot be governed by a system of decision-making by unanimity and can only make progress at the speed of the lowest common denominator,
- ◇ Considering, while regretting it, that European political leaders in general are not yet ready to agree that majority decisions should apply in all fields of common interest,
- ◇ Considering that the accomplishment of an "ever closer union between the peoples of Europe", based on respect for democracy and human rights, risks, in view of the above-mentioned situation, being delayed or even de facto questioned,
- ◇ Considering that in consequence it is essential to respond appropriately to the dual challenge of the number and diversity of the present and future Member States of the EU,

the European League for Economic Cooperation:

- ◇ **considers** that in response to this dual challenge, an "imaginative formula" - as desired by some European political leaders and in accordance with a significant current of opinion within the Convention - must be proposed,
- ◇ **observes** that "advanced guard actions" have successfully been tried out either outside the treaty (the Schengen Agreement) or by being specified in the treaty (EMU),
- ◇ **esteems** that a general clause of reinforced cooperation, already allowed for in the Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice, corresponds to this expectation and must be incorporated into the future Constitution,
- ◇ **is of the opinion** that such a procedure, provided it can be implemented in a simpler and more operational way than prescribed by the preceding treaties, would be an encouragement for those countries that wished to move towards closer integration and also an invitation to other countries to join them when they wished and felt able to do so. Such an approach would strengthen the role and the voice of the Union in the world while allowing it to maintain its true identity and to be able to act rapidly and efficiently in all fields of common interest,
- ◇ **suggests** that this formula of reinforced cooperation be employed from now on to tackle a number of fields such as: defense and armaments, security, research and development.

In conclusion, ELEC stresses that the Constitution which is being drawn up should include this notion, which is the most appropriate way to confront the real challenge constituted by, on the one hand, the necessary reconciliation of the diversity of the positions and strategies of 25 countries and, on the other hand, the ability to attain the final goal of the political integration of Europe.

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