

## Declaration by the representatives of the Member States of the European Union (Ioannina, 30 March 1994)

**Caption:** On 30 March 1994, during the negotiations for the accession of Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden to the EU, the Council of the European Union comments on the decisions taken regarding the reform of the decision-making procedure in the various European institutions.

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The 12 present Member States of the European Union agreed that if four new Member States join the Union, the threshold necessary for the qualified majority required by the Treaties will be fixed at 64 votes. They have also agreed that the question of the reform of the institutions, including the weighting of votes and the threshold for the qualified majority in the Council, will be examined at the Conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States which will be convened in 1996, in accordance with Article N(2) of the Treaty on European Union.

They have further agreed to invite the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to draw up a report on the functioning of the Treaty on European Union. These reports will provide input for the work of a discussion group of representatives of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, which shall be set up by the European Council in Corfu and start work in mid-1995. This Group will work in association with the European Parliament. It will, *inter alia*, prepare options based on the positions and arguments of all Member States on the weighting of votes and on the threshold for qualified majority decisions, taking into account future enlargement. These options should reconcile the need for efficient decision-making with further democratic development of the institutions.

They take note that the Council has decided that, if members of the Council representing a total of 23 to 26 votes indicate their intention to oppose the adoption by the Council of a decision by qualified majority, the Council will do all within its power to reach, within a reasonable time and without prejudicing the obligatory time-limits laid down by the Treaties and by secondary legislation, such as those in Articles 189b and 189c of the Treaty establishing the European Community, a satisfactory solution that can be adopted by at least 68 votes. During this period, and with full regard for the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the President, with the assistance of the Commission, will undertake any initiatives necessary to facilitate a wider basis of agreement in the Council. The members of the Council will lend him their assistance.

Lastly, they agree that the various elements of this Declaration will continue to apply until the entry into force of an amendment to the treaties, following the 1996 Conference.