

Statement by Mr Brok, Mr Dini, Mr Duff, Mr Hänsch and Mr Lamassoure, members of the Convention (19 November 2003)

Caption: On 19 November 2003, Elmar Brok, Lamberto Dini, Andrew Duff, Klaus Hänsch and Alain Lamassoure, members of the Convention on the Future of Europe, call on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to respect the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe drawn up by the Convention.

Source: Statement by Elmar BROK, Lamberto DINI, Andrew DUFF, Klaus HÄNSCH et Alain LAMASSOURE, members of the Convention. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: European Parliament, [03.05.2005]. Disponible sur <http://www.europarl.eu.int/europe2004/textes/Duff-Brok-et-al19-11-03-en.htm>.

Copyright: (c) European Parliament

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_mr_brok_mr_dini_mr_duff_mr_hansch_and_mr_lamassoure_members_of_the_convention_19_november_2003-en-e4189644-ae5a-4b92-a39d-f6b0f52f0547.html

Publication date: 05/09/2012

Statement by members of the Convention (19 November 2003)

Elmar Brok MEP (PPE), chairman of European People's Party group in the Convention and European Parliamentary representative at the IGC;

Senator Lamberto Dini (ELDR), chairman of the national parliamentary delegation in the Convention;

Andrew Duff MEP (ELDR), chairman of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reformist group in the Convention;

Klaus Haensch MEP (PES), European Parliamentary representative at the IGC.

1. After 16 months of transparent deliberation, the European Convention reached a new and large consensus on a comprehensive constitutional settlement for the enlarged European Union. It considered all the options, engaged in a rich analysis and prolonged debate, and agreed proposals for the political and institutional reform of the EU that protected the *acquis communautaire*, respected the equivalence of all member states and preserved the essential institutional balance. The outcome of the Convention represents the optimum advance that can be achieved at the present phase of integration. It also contains a number of indispensable provisions that allow for future constitutional evolution as circumstances permit.

2. The Intergovernmental Conference is now in danger of undermining the achievements of the Convention. In particular, we deplore the fact that several key elements of the Convention package deal are being called into question, as follows:

- The proposal for a Legislative Council already appears to have been jettisoned. The purpose of the Convention's proposal in this regard was to achieve a greater separation of legislative from executive functions of the Council so as to ensure more transparency, better scrutiny and tighter coordination of the Council's law making.
- Certain individual ministries and sectoral Councils are bringing their own narrow proposals to the table, thereby undermining the cohesion of member state governments that is a prerequisite for stable negotiations.
- Some participants at the IGC are questioning the Convention's formula for establishing a qualified majority in the Council. This is designed, however, to balance the interests of both larger and smaller member states, to be clearer and simpler than the system enshrined in the Treaty of Nice, as well as to facilitate decision making in the enlarged Union.
- Many governments and the Commission itself appear now to be opposing the Convention's proposals for the shape of the Commission after 2009. This is designed to ensure that the Commission is both strong and manageable, and that all nationalities have an equal chance to be represented at the level of the college. If any adjustment is made by the IGC, it should be restricted to enhancing the status of the 0 Commissioners.
- Several governments are challenging the Convention's proposals concerning the financial system of the Union. These are intended to streamline the present arrangements and facilitate decision making, to safeguard national prerogatives over the overall scale of EU expenditure, to strengthen financial discipline in the Union, and to guarantee and reinforce parliamentary accountability over the European budget.
- Certain governments seem to be contesting the compromise reached in the Convention whereby the Foreign Minister presides over a joint administration, to be established by an interinstitutional agreement, comprising Commission, Council and national officials. It is also important to maintain the Foreign Minister as Vice President of the Commission who chairs the Foreign Affairs Council.

3. We urge the IGC to rise to the challenge posed by the Convention, and to focus quickly on reaching a lasting political agreement on all these issues which is at least as convincing as that proposed by the

Convention.

4. We hope that the IGC will reach agreement on a genuine reform of the Council presidency which is credible, efficient and comprehensible.
5. We firmly believe that the Union will only be brought closer to its citizens if the Council always deliberates and decides in public. The consensus on the Legislative Council found in the Convention should be preserved, at least as an option to be introduced in 2009.
6. We insist that the number of seats per country in the European Parliament continues, as agreed by the Convention, to be governed by the principle of degressive proportionality and that the upper ceiling of the seats is not changed again. Seats in the European Parliament must not be used as casino chips on the gaming board of the IGC.
7. We doubt that a European Constitution that failed to give the European Parliament at least those budgetary rights as agreed by the Convention would command the approval of either the European or national parliaments.
8. We support the Italian Presidency in its efforts to open up a serious discussion at the IGC about reform of the constitutional revision procedures, especially with regard to those provisions of Part III which do not affect the division of competences between the Union and the member states.
9. We note that the credibility of the IGC is now seriously at stake.