

Contribution from the Italian delegation on the weightings of votes in the Council (16 June 2000)

Caption: On 16 June 2000, the Italian delegation communicates its position to the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the reweighting of Member States' votes in the Council of the European Union.

Source: Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States Transmission note – IGC 2000 – Reweighting Member States' votes in the Council of the European Union, CONFER 4751/1/00. Brussels: 16.06.2000. 13 p. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/cig2000/EN/04751en.pdf.

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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/contribution_from_the_italian_delegation_on_the_weightings_of_votes_in_the_council_16_june_2000-en-eac3b212-71d7-411a-abe6-3c02d1de7acb.html

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**CONFERENCE
OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS
OF THE MEMBER STATES**

**Brussels, 16 June 2000
(OR. it)**

**CONFER 4751/1/00
REV 1**

LIMITE

COVER NOTE

from : Italian delegation

to : delegations

Subject : **IGC 2000**

– Reweighting Member States' votes in the Council of the European Union

Please find attached a contribution from the Italian delegation on reweighting Member States' votes in the Council of the European Union.

ANNEX**Reweighting Member States' votes in the Council
of the European Union: Italian position****A. Background**

The worsening position of the more highly populated countries as regards their share of total votes in the Council following the successive enlargements means that it is necessary to readjust the balance of the system in order to ensure that the Union has greater democratic legitimacy, that Council decisions are more representative and that the institutions as a whole function better.

Any further worsening in the relative positions of the States with larger populations within the Council would, from any angle, constitute a very serious distortion of the decision-making process and would therefore be unacceptable.

It is not of course a question of fully restoring the relative positions of the States with larger populations to the original levels obtaining before the enlargements occurred, but rather of avoiding a situation which would be altogether unjustified on any political, statistical or demographic grounds. Moreover, those States with larger populations are required to give up their second Commissioner and, in the light of the Protocol on the institutions annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam, this renders even more acute the need to readjust the balance.

The idea of reweighting is in line with the need to define a new arrangement for the Council which will, at the end of the day, be able to reflect the Union's twin sources of legitimacy (as a Union of States and a Union of peoples) and at the same time will be transparent and comprehensible to Europe's citizens, can be applied easily and effectively and will stand the test of time.

B. Technical analysis

1. The percentage of population represented in any decision by Europe has evolved from at least 67,70% when there were six Member States; 70,62% when there were nine, 70,13% when there were ten and 63,29% when there were twelve to 58,16% today and will be a little more than 50% after the coming enlargement (according to the current criteria). It should also be noted that the ratio (between the percentage of votes and the population as a percentage of the total) has now progressively worsened in the case of Italy until it is equivalent to 0,74%; if the present pattern continued in a linear way, the ratio would fall to 0,62%. The attached table and chart showing developments in percentages of votes in the Council (from a Europe of 6 to one of 28, in the two versions proposed in the Presidency's document, i.e. a simple extrapolation of the present pattern and a partial reweighting) are very clear and show that there is a particular worsening in the situation of the more highly populated States and that this would continue, in both cases, for a Europe of 28.
2. Member States with larger populations could, as provided under the Treaty of Amsterdam, give up their second Commissioner only if they were to be compensated by a reweighting of votes. Such reweighting is necessary to ensure that a qualified-majority decision represents at least 60% of Europe's population and also to avoid the possibility of a decision being adopted despite the fact that Member States accounting for a sizeable percentage of Europe's population have voted against it.
3. To achieve these results, it is necessary to amend the decision-making process. Two options are technically available: the reweighting of votes or the introduction, alongside a majority of votes, of a second majority based on population size¹. Italy would prefer straightforward reweighting. The introduction of a dual majority does not seem a very good idea for a number of reasons: since, by an exclusively mathematical application of the population criterion, which is already taken into account when allocating European Parliament seats to each Member State, it would undermine the Union's twin sources of legitimacy; it would render the system more complex and less balanced; it would prevent the four Member States

¹ Italy is not in favour of approaches which combine the two (by the introduction, alongside a weighted majority of votes, of a second majority based on population) because they are excessively complex.

with larger populations from being compensated by an increase in their number of votes for giving up their second Commissioner, in accordance with the Amsterdam Protocol; as also pointed out during the Intergovernmental Conference by some of the Member States with smaller populations, it would penalise those States with medium-sized or small populations, since the limited size of their populations might marginalise them when decisions were taken; it could, on the other hand, lead to the formation of a blocking minority of States with medium-sized or small populations, accounting for little more than 11% of the population of Europe, which would prevent the adoption of decisions supported by States representing a very large percentage of Europe's population.

4. A new approach involving straightforward reweighting is therefore required.

Italy thinks that:

- *the threshold for a qualified majority in terms of votes should remain fixed at around 71%;*
- *the reweighting of votes should be based essentially on the populations of the Member States;*
- *a reweighting that favours those States which have given up their second Commissioner, in accordance with the Amsterdam Protocol, should be a fundamental and non-negotiable part of the final agreement;*
- *it is essential to continue working on the basis of grouping Member States into homogeneous clusters, while recognising the need for a greater degree of differentiation between the various clusters, to enable more account to be taken of the specific situation of those States which have given up their second Commissioner;*
- *as regards the minimum population percentage, the gradual erosion compared with the Community of nine (70,62%) or twelve (63,29%) should be firmly stemmed, with an increase from the present 58% to more than 60%;*

5. The straightforward reweighting approach outlined by the Presidency in 4745/00 of 24 May 2000 seems to be a step in the right direction, but needs to be considerably improved and elaborated on in the light of the parameters indicated.

An approach in line with these parameters could provide an increase for everyone, based on various coefficients for multiplying the present number of votes (3,3 for those States which are losing their second Commissioner; 2 and 1,5, as appropriate, for all the others), and on this basis incorporate the future Member States in homogeneous-population clusters. This approach is outlined in the Annex in a version involving all applicant countries and in a version involving those countries which have already embarked on negotiations.

In the first version, any duly adopted decision would represent at least 61,33% of the population, i.e. an increase over the present 58%; at worst, a blocking minority would represent 16,77%, i.e. an increase over the present 12,38%.

In the second version, any duly adopted decision would represent at least 64,81% of the total population of the Union; at worst, a blocking minority bloc would represent 17,42%.

Until now, a majority of votes duly cast has, albeit in the absence of any explicit regulation, always meant in practice a simple majority of Member States. In the new approaches to reweighting, designed to prevent any further worsening in the positions of Member States with smaller populations and to ensure the democratic legitimacy of decisions, it is conceivable that a decision with a large majority of Europe's population behind it would not have the backing of a majority of States, (for example, 11 or 12 Member States, accounting for more than 80% of the population, might suffice).

Three graphs are attached, showing a straight-line interpolation between votes and populations. The first graph is based on the current situation and the second and third on the approach proposed by Italy. While there is a considerable distance between the individual points and the line in the first graph, this is much less in the second and third, which means that the system represented inclines towards greater balance.

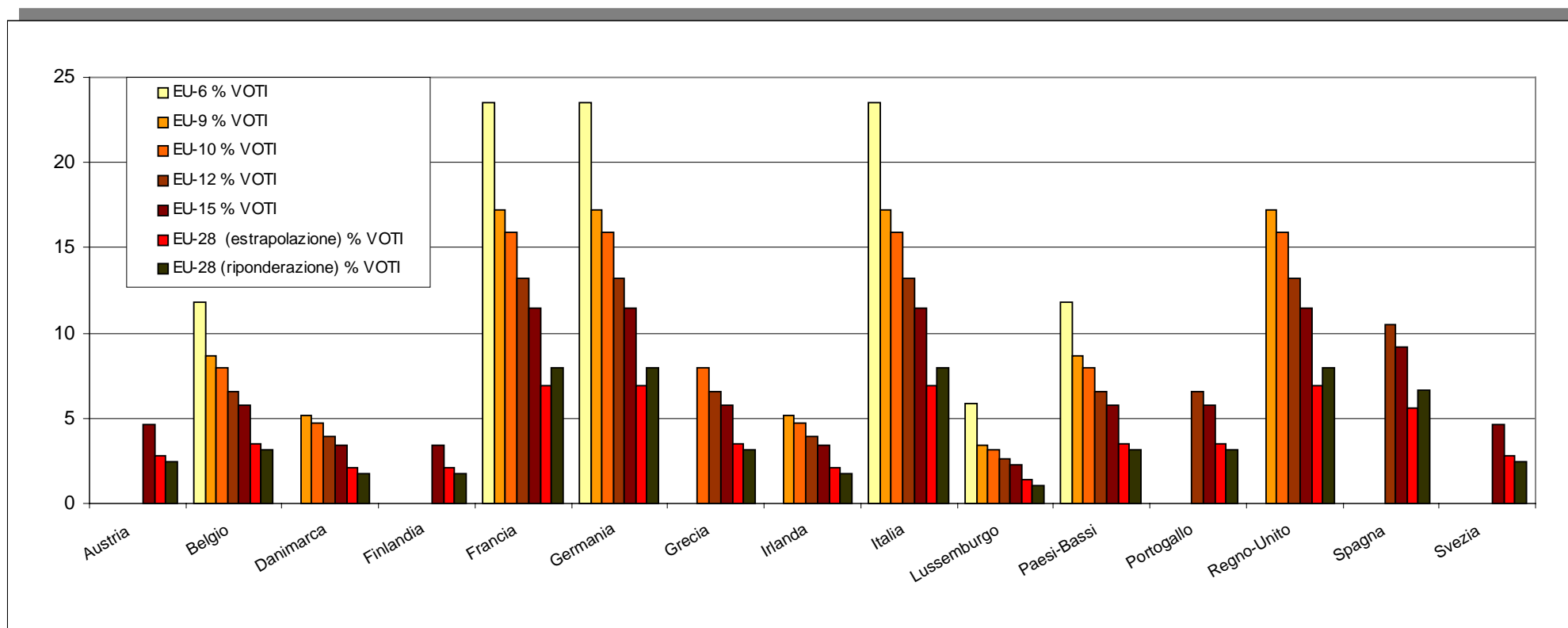
**EVOLUZIONE DELLE PERCENTUALI DI POPOLAZIONE SULLA POPOLAZIONE TOTALE DELL'UNIONE
E DELLE PERCENTUALI DI VOTI IN CONSIGLIO RELATIVE AI 15 STATI MEMBRI**

| STATI MEMBRI | EU-6 | | EU-9 | | EU-10 | | EU-12 | | EU-15 | | EU-28 ¹ (estrapolazione) | | EU-28 ² (riponderazione) | |
|--------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--|-------|--|-------|
| | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP | % VOTI | % POP |
| Austria | | | | | | | | | 4,60 | 2,15 | 2,78 | 1,48 | 2,43 | 1,48 |
| Belgio | 11,76 | 5,36 | 8,62 | 3,80 | 7,94 | 3,64 | 6,58 | 3,06 | 5,75 | 2,72 | 3,47 | 1,87 | 3,13 | 1,87 |
| Danimarca | | | 5,17 | 1,96 | 4,76 | 1,89 | 3,95 | 1,59 | 3,45 | 1,42 | 2,08 | 0,97 | 1,74 | 0,97 |
| Finlandia | | | | | | | | | 3,45 | 1,37 | 2,08 | 0,95 | 1,74 | 0,95 |
| Francia | 23,53 | 26,47 | 17,24 | 20,28 | 15,87 | 19,89 | 13,16 | 17,22 | 11,49 | 15,71 | 6,94 | 10,81 | 7,99 | 10,81 |
| Germania | 23,53 | 32,11 | 17,24 | 24,15 | 15,87 | 22,73 | 13,16 | 18,96 | 11,49 | 21,86 | 6,94 | 15,04 | 7,99 | 15,04 |
| Grecia | | | | | 7,94 | 3,58 | 6,58 | 3,09 | 5,75 | 2,81 | 3,47 | 1,93 | 3,13 | 1,93 |
| Irlanda | | | 5,17 | 1,20 | 4,76 | 1,27 | 3,95 | 1,10 | 3,45 | 1,00 | 2,08 | 0,69 | 1,74 | 0,69 |
| Italia | 23,53 | 29,29 | 17,24 | 21,32 | 15,87 | 20,86 | 13,16 | 17,59 | 11,49 | 15,35 | 6,94 | 10,56 | 7,99 | 10,56 |
| Lussemburgo | 5,88 | 0,18 | 3,45 | 0,14 | 3,17 | 0,13 | 2,63 | 0,11 | 2,30 | 0,11 | 1,39 | 0,08 | 1,04 | 0,08 |
| Paesi-Bassi | 11,76 | 6,59 | 8,62 | 5,23 | 7,94 | 5,24 | 6,58 | 4,51 | 5,75 | 4,20 | 3,47 | 2,89 | 3,13 | 2,89 |
| Portogallo | | | | | | | 6,58 | 3,16 | 5,75 | 2,66 | 3,47 | 1,83 | 3,13 | 1,83 |
| Regno-Unito | | | 17,24 | 21,94 | 15,87 | 20,78 | 13,16 | 17,63 | 11,49 | 15,79 | 6,94 | 10,86 | 7,99 | 10,86 |
| Spagna | | | | | | | 10,53 | 11,97 | 9,20 | 10,50 | 5,56 | 7,22 | 6,60 | 7,22 |
| Svezia | | | | | | | | | 4,60 | 2,36 | 2,78 | 1,62 | 2,43 | 1,62 |

¹ Cfr. doc. CONFER 4745/00 DEL 24.5.2000

² Cfr. doc. CONFER 4745/00 DEL 24.5.2000

EVOLUZIONE DELLE PERCENTUALI DI VOTI IN CONSIGLIO PER I 15 STATI MEMBRI



Proposta italiana sulla Riponderazione dei Voti

| Stati | Popolazione | Percentuale | Voti | Ratio ¹ |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|
| Germania | 82,038 | 15.03 | 33 | 0,65 |
| Turchia | 64,385 | 11.80 | 33 | 0,77 |
| Regno Unito | 59,247 | 10.80 | 33 | 0,84 |
| Francia | 58,966 | 10.79 | 33 | 0,84 |
| Italia | 57,612 | 10.56 | 33 | 0,86 |
| Spagna | 39,394 | 7.22 | 26 | 0,99 |
| Polonia | 38,667 | 7.08 | 26 | 1,01 |
| Romania | 22,489 | 4.21 | 10 | 0,91 |
| Paesi Bassi | 15,760 | 2.83 | 10 | 0,97 |
| Grecia | 10,533 | 1.92 | 10 | 1,43 |
| Repubblica Ceca | 10,290 | 1.90 | 10 | 1,44 |
| Belgio | 10,213 | 1.87 | 10 | 1,47 |
| Ungheria | 10,092 | 1.86 | 10 | 1,47 |
| Portogallo | 9,980 | 1.83 | 10 | 1,50 |
| Svezia | 8,854 | 1.62 | 8 | 1,36 |
| Bulgaria | 8,230 | 1.51 | 8 | 1,46 |
| Austria | 8,082 | 1.48 | 6 | 1,48 |
| Slovacchia | 5,393 | 0.99 | 6 | 1,66 |
| Danimarca | 5,313 | 0.96 | 6 | 1,71 |
| Finlandia | 5,160 | 0.94 | 6 | 1,75 |
| Lituania | 3,701 | 0.68 | 6 | 2,42 |
| Irlanda | 3,744 | 0.66 | 3 | 2,5 |
| Lettonia | 2,439 | 0.47 | 3 | 1,74 |
| Estonia | 1,446 | 0.28 | 3 | 2,92 |
| Slovenia | 1,978 | 0.34 | 3 | 2,41 |
| Cipro | 0,752 | 0.14 | 3 | 5,85 |
| Lussemburgo | 0,429 | 0.07 | 3 | 11,71 |
| Malta | 0,377 | 0.05 | 3 | 16,04 |
| TOTALE | 545,564 | 100 | 363 | |
| <i>Quorum</i> | | | 258 | |
| <i>Minoranza di blocco</i> | | | 106 | |

¹ Rapporto, per ciascun Stato membro, tra la percentuale di voti e la percentuale di popolazione sul totale

Proposta italiana sulla Riponderazione dei Voti

| Stati | Popolazione | Percentuale | Voti | Ratio ¹ |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|
| Germania | 82,038 | 17,05 | 33 | 0,57 |
| Regno Unito | 59,247 | 12,31 | 33 | 0,81 |
| Francia | 58,966 | 12,25 | 33 | 0,81 |
| Italia | 57,612 | 11,97 | 33 | 0,83 |
| Spagna | 39,394 | 8,19 | 26 | 0,95 |
| Polonia | 38,667 | 8,04 | 26 | 0,97 |
| Romania | 22,489 | 4,67 | 14 | 0,89 |
| Paesi Bassi | 15,760 | 3,28 | 10 | 0,92 |
| Grecia | 10,533 | 2,19 | 10 | 1,38 |
| Repubblica Ceca | 10,290 | 2,14 | 10 | 1,41 |
| Belgio | 10,213 | 2,12 | 10 | 1,42 |
| Ungheria | 10,092 | 2,10 | 10 | 1,44 |
| Portogallo | 9,980 | 2,07 | 10 | 1,46 |
| Svezia | 8,854 | 1,84 | 8 | 1,31 |
| Bulgaria | 8,230 | 1,71 | 8 | 1,41 |
| Austria | 8,082 | 1,68 | 8 | 1,44 |
| Slovacchia | 5,393 | 1,12 | 6 | 1,61 |
| Danimarca | 5,313 | 1,10 | 6 | 1,64 |
| Finlandia | 5,160 | 1,07 | 6 | 1,69 |
| Irlanda | 3,744 | 0,78 | 6 | 2,03 |
| Lituania | 3,701 | 0,77 | 6 | 2,35 |
| Lettonia | 2,439 | 0,51 | 3 | 1,76 |
| Slovenia | 1,978 | 0,41 | 3 | 2,19 |
| Estonia | 1,446 | 0,30 | 3 | 3 |
| Cipro | 0,752 | 0,16 | 3 | 5,62 |
| Lussemburgo | 0,429 | 0,09 | 3 | 10 |
| Malta | 0.377 | 0.08 | 3 | 11,25 |
| TOTALE | 481,179 | 100 | 330 | |
| <i>Quorum</i> | | | 234 | |
| <i>Minoranza di blocco</i> | | | 97 | |

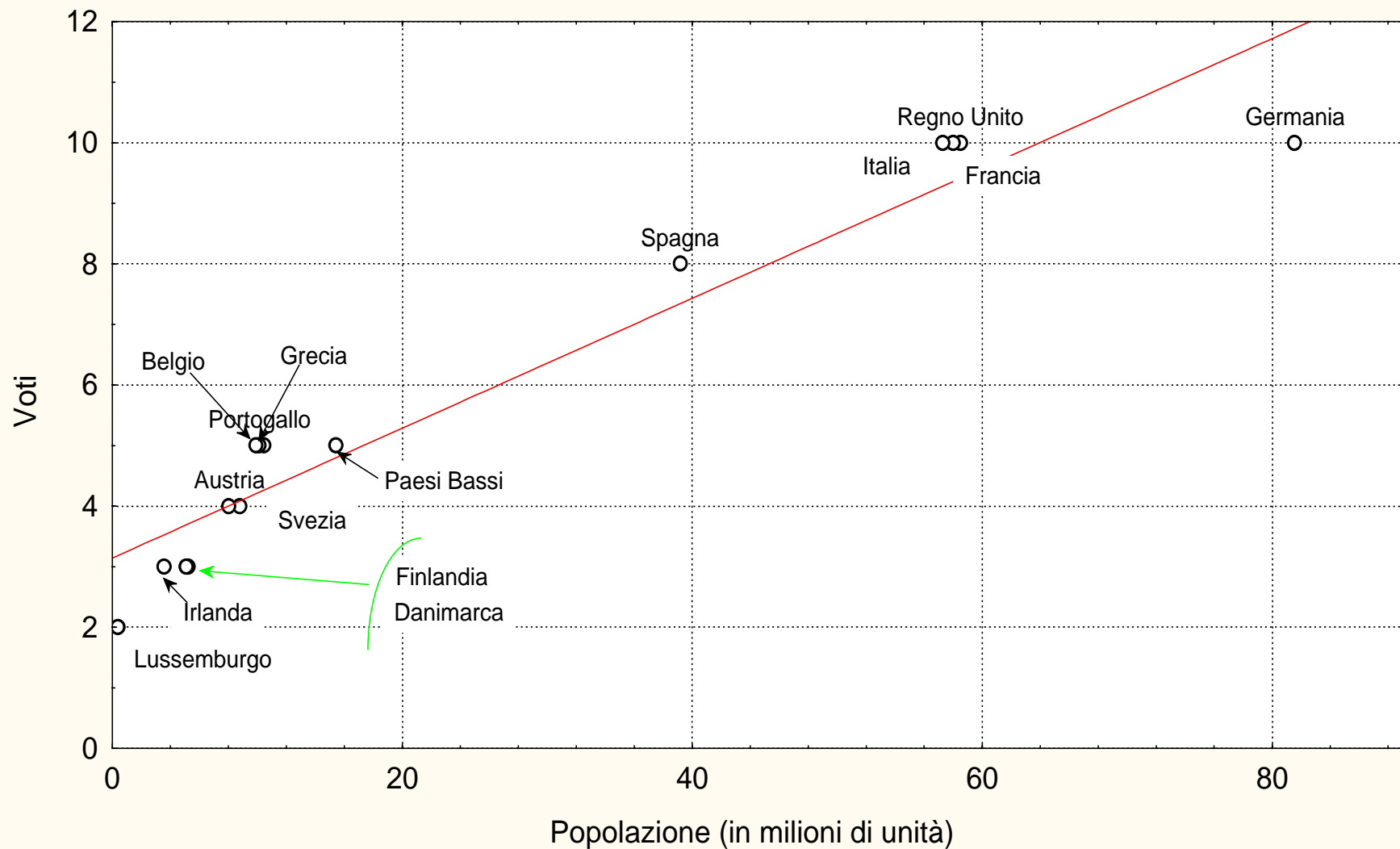
Fonte : Eurostat 1999, tranne Malta (1998).

I dati di Germania e Regno Unito si considerano stime.

Quelli di Francia e Irlanda sono dati provvisori.

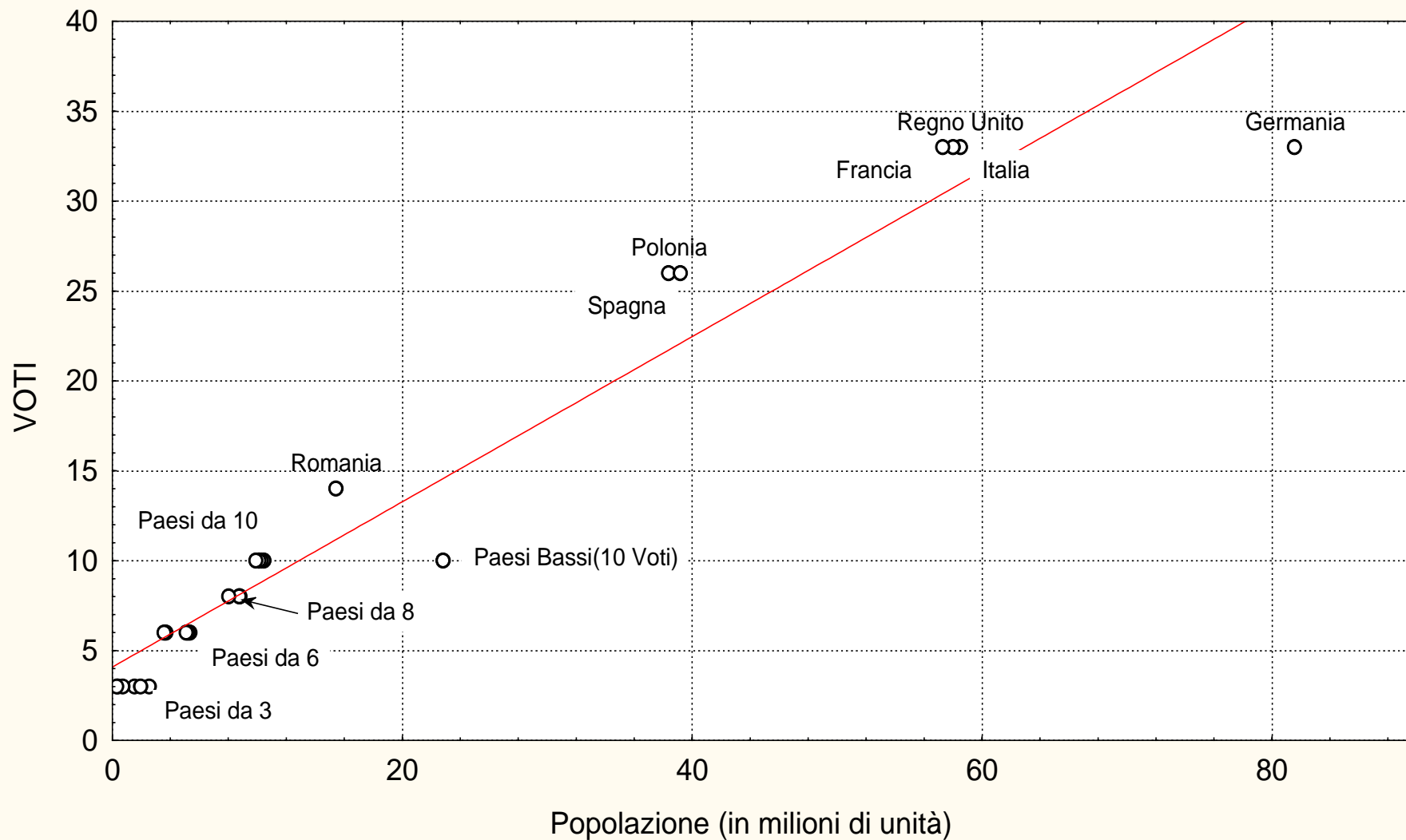
¹ Rapporto, per ciascun Stato membro, tra la percentuale di voti e la percentuale di popolazione sul totale

Capitolo 1. Situazione attuale. Unione a 15.



Capitolo 3. Prima Proposta.

Unione a 27 membri.



Proposta Italiana

