



A CAMPAIGN OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY  
CONTACT GROUP

**BULLETIN 14**  
*Brussels, 20 October, 2003*

EDITORIAL

IGC

FUNDING FROM THE MOTT FOUNDATION

ACT4EUROPE

- Campaign coordination event 7 October 2003
- Toolkit picked up by Polish intellectuals
- Toolkit translated into German

SECTORS AND OTHER CAMPAIGNS

- Eurostep's IGC pack
- NGO campaign for equal civil dialogue: deletion of art 51 on privileged dialogue with the Churches

**EDITORIAL**

Dear Friends

The IGC has started and though it is too early to judge, we must face the facts that they are doing what we feared most: horse-trade national interest behind closed doors. You will find the recent developments summarized below. The debate for non-institutional matters (including Part III) is scheduled for 27 October. **Please write to your Head of State and Foreign Minister again, stressing your demands for the policy part of the Constitution and reminding them of the need to look closer at Part III and make it more flexible (while safeguarding the achievements of the Convention, particularly those relating to development). They also need to be reminded of the urgent need for more transparency of the IGC.**

The CSCG Strategy meeting two weeks ago seems to have been much appreciated by the participants. We give you an overview of the most important strategic decisions.

The toolkit has now also been translated into German and is available, as well as the English, French and Spanish versions on our website [www.act4europe.org](http://www.act4europe.org).

It has apparently made an impact in Poland, and we are happy to hear that it has become such an important tool to many of you. Eurostep has also produced a development NGO toolkit for the IGC; you can find the details below.

We have particularly good news to report to all of you: act4europe has received a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott foundation, which will ensure the continuation of the campaign.

We are alerting you once more to the NGO campaign for equal civil dialogue below, there have indeed been some quite worrying developments in this respect.

Good luck with your campaigning and please let us know more about your actions!

Nicolas Beger  
Coordinator  
Civil Society Contact Group/act4europe campaign

---

## **IGC**

By Ike Picone

The doors are closed and the few vibrations that do reach us are not promising any good. That is how we could describe the IGC so far. The Heads of State and their Ministers don't seem to take the work of the Convention that seriously and national interests are taking precedence over the future of Europe as a whole.

The 2 MEP's representing the European Parliament at the IGC, Indigo Mendez de Vigo and Klaus Hänsch, are very sceptic when reporting the Council meetings. They launched a serious warning after the second IGC session on Monday evening in Luxembourg pointing out the very real risk of putting the consensus achieved at the Convention in danger. According to Mr Mendez de Vigo, the Heads of State are wasting their time discussing positions on which the Convention already largely debated and reached a consensus.

There obviously is a tendency towards fewer ambitions. Already some essential ideas proposed are or are about to be dropped by the IGC.

- The Legislative Council has been eliminated without in-depth discussion. This was a central element in the draft, but the commitment to transparency in the legislative function of Council has been maintained (it will become a mechanism of agenda setting). This will maintain the expert knowledge of particular Council formations, while endorsing the newly introduced transparency,
- The majority of Member States is not in favour of a downsized Commission. Especially the Accession Countries and 'small' members are against the idea of Commissioners without voting right. The founding countries indicated that they could agree to a scam of 15 members. Luxembourg will propose a compromise solution: an Commission of 18 members,
- Several countries and especially the UK want to diminish the rank and therefore role of the European Minister of Foreign Affairs, that according to Jack Straw, British Foreign Secretary, should not be called a Minister, but a Representative or Secretary General. He mentioned the disadvantages of the 'two hats'-authority

- of a Minister, answering to both the Commission (as vice-president) and the European Council,
- The decision on the voting system in the Council is likely to become a major point of disagreement. Mr Prodi fears for a Nice night revisited next December, during the last European Council of this IGC.

The European Parliament of course regrets some of the recent moves at the IGC. Pat Cox, president of the European Parliament, called on Heads of States and Governments at the European Council in Brussels last Thursday to put a brake on this drift towards a more national-centred approach. Austrian Green Johannes Voggenhuber, MEP and former Convention member has appealed for an 'alliance' between national current members from national parliaments to form a block against the IGC's disrespect for the consensus reached by the Convention. National parliamentarians must get organised in the next few weeks to make the IGC open the doors behind which it is amending the Draft Constitution without real debate.

The Council legal experts have published their first draft of the Constitution text and on 9 October, the expert group on technical change (including all Member States and Accession Countries) began its work. It is, thus, still time to influence technical legal changes. We also now have an updated time-table, which schedules all non-institutional debates (including Part III) for **27 October. Please write to your Head of State and Foreign Minister again, stressing your demands for the policy part of the Constitution and reminding them of the need to look closer at Part III and make it more flexible (while safeguarding the achievements of the Convention, particularly those relating to development). They also need to be reminded of the urgent need for more transparency of the IGC.**

You can find the new draft and the time-table on the IGC website of the Council:  
<http://ue.eu.int/igc/index.asp?lang=EN>

## **FUNDING FROM THE MOTT FOUNDATION**

The act4europe campaign received a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott foundation to continue its work in cross-sectoral civil dialogue around the Future of Europe debate, with a particular focus on accession countries. Together with the contributions to the campaign that have already been given by the Social Platform and OSI, we are now able to assure continuation in 2004, and are very grateful to the Mott Foundation for their generous support of civil dialogue across Europe.

## **ACT4EUROPE**

### **STRATEGY MEETING**

By Ike Picone

Both EU and national level NGOs present expressed satisfaction with the meeting and with the ideas to go forward. The cross-sectoral collaboration has not lost any of its

relevance in the actual process, just the opposite; it should be re-enforced at national level.

After Anne Van Lancker's contribution, a short update on the IGC and an overview of the sector's demands towards the IGC, the actual strategy debate started. The decisions taken are listed below. For a more complete report we refer to the website [www.act4europe.org](http://www.act4europe.org) (CSCG Events)

- The first strategic decision made is not to drop the common position, but to support our friends in the specific NGO actions in all sectors, ie. to be aware of the sensitivities and demands of others that might be implicated in the demands made by NGOs, e.g. the call to make Part III coherent with Part I carries the danger to loose the gains of the development sector in Part III.
- Every sector should have it's own specific demands ready, but we should match this different strategies at different levels so we can come to a few points we as Civil Society would like to see implemented as such. The nutshell demands could be made more concrete,
- The different sectors should try to work out proposals on how we can inform citizens and member NGO's and how we can organize that concretely at a national level,
- A campaign to withdraw article 51 is going on. The sectors are free to sign up and will distribute to their members. Act4europe will advertise the campaign again, but the Contact Group cannot as a whole join in.

It is important to maintain an information flow at different levels, particularly now between national and EU level. Coordination and cross-sectoral work can only be successful if we have a good understanding of the sector's demands and know where demands might have a negative impact on each other. The Contact Group was asked to put more emphasis on spreading IGC info and actions via their membership; the act4europe list is not sufficient. It is crucial to stress that members need to pass the info on to their national levels, and act4europe can help to connect people who are already working in links to EU networks. Act4europe can now be especially useful as an information provider. **Therefore we ask all NGO networks to inform their members that they can contact the act4europe coordination office for any kind of information or strategic advice concerning the IGC.**

Finally, a regular dialogue with civil servants and ministers has to be kept up at all levels. We have to hammer on the fact that we won't allow horse-trading behind closed doors at the IGC.

### ***TOOLKIT PICKED UP BY POLISH INTELLECTUALS***

On 11 October 2003, 200 Polish intellectuals published their opinion on the place Poland should play in the European Union. The letter shows Polish public opinion expressing their wish for a different Europe from that presented by Polish politicians and Polish mainstream media. It is an important voice in a debate on EU constitution showing that what Polish politicians are saying is not in accordance with what people think in Poland. They don't want Poland to be an obstacle to integration, a symbol of conservatism and particularism.

The Open Letter was published in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", "Le Monde" as well as in both leading Polish daily newspapers: "Rzeczpospolita" and "Gazeta Wyborcza". The signatories include Agnieszka Grzybek of The National Women's Information Center OSKa. The Center made use of the toolkit provided by act4europe for this campaign. For more information on this civic initiative, write to [oska@oska.org.pl](mailto:oska@oska.org.pl) or visit [www.oska.org.pl](http://www.oska.org.pl), where you also will find the complete letter in the different languages.

### **GERMAN TOOLKIT**

Finally the IGC Toolkit issued by the act4europe campaign is also available in German. You can find it on our homepage [www.act4europe.org](http://www.act4europe.org).

## **SECTORS AND OTHER CAMPAIGNS**

### **EUROSTEP'S IGC PACK**

*Eurostep* has finalised the IGC Pack to help Development and humanitarian NGOs in their advocacy on the Intergovernmental Conference, at national level. You will find in the IGC Pack explanations on the need for development NGOs to implicate in the campaign on the IGC, as well as a simplified analysis of the Draft Constitution from a development and humanitarian aid point of view. A set of tools and instruments can also be used in NGO campaigning at national level.

You can find the IGC Pack on:

<http://www.eurostep.org/strategy/future/IGC%20PACK.pdf>

For any information on this Pack or on Development and humanitarian aid campaign on the IGC, feel free to contact [fsebban@eurostep.org](mailto:fsebban@eurostep.org)

### **EQUAL CIVIL DIALOGUE**

Act4europe wants to alert again to a NGO campaign ensuring equal civil dialogue for all parts of civil society and against a special dialogue for the churches, and particularly the plans of the Commission to grant the Catholic Church an in-house structured pre-legislative consultation process that no other part of civil society has.

The IPPF European Network, Catholics for a Free Choice, ILGA Europe, European Network "Church on the move", European Humanist Federation, Right to die in Europe, and the European Association for Teaching have mounted a large campaign with their member organizations in all EU Member States and Accession Countries requesting the withdrawal of Article 51. At the initiative of the Belgian member of the European Humanist Federation (EHF), Centre d'Action Laïque, a meeting with the representatives of the Belgian Senat will take place next week in order to explain the campaign for the withdrawal of Article 51. The coalition of NGOs is working on a similar initiative to take place at the European Parliament in November. The Churches have managed to arrange several meetings with the Presidency, including with Berlusconi himself on 14 October, on the support of art. 51 and the inclusion of Christian heritage and Christian roots into the Constitution. No other part of civil society has been granted such high level meetings with the Presidency.

Please forward information on this to all your members at national level and if you wish to participate you can obtain further information from IPPF or Catholics for a Free Choice.

Elfriede Harth, European Representative - Catholics for a Free Choice Galaxy 189 - 6,  
rue de la Paroisse F 78000 Versailles – FRANCE Tel/Fax: +331 3902 7890  
eharth@catholicsforchoice.org  
www.catholicsforchoice.org