

BULLETIN 29
Brussels, 11 June 2004

UPDATE ON IGC

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CIVIL SOCIETY CONTACT GROUP

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UPDATE ON IGC

New Presidency Paper issued for June 14 IGC meeting

In view of the next IGC meeting on Monday 14 June, the Irish Presidency has issued a new document ([CIG 79/04](#)). This document reflects final consensus and changes the document 76/04 slightly.

The slight changes in wording might, however, be significant. In Article I-2 on the values the Irish Presidency took out the notion "principle" when referring to equality between women and men. Even if the major claim of the Women's Lobby to have equality written into the first sentence of the values of the Union was not achieved, this change can be seen as a compromise. The notion of "principle" brings with it the possibility of exceptions whereas now this limitation is taken out.

Furthermore, a declaration on Article III-2 (horizontal clause on eliminating equalities and promoting gender equality) has been introduced on the instigation of the Spanish delegation. It mentions the fight against domestic violence as an aim of the Union. This declaration has no direct legal consequences and does not mention women as target of such violence in particular but is now in the corpus of the (supposedly) agreed issues of the Constitution.

The other issues of our concern have been maintained or only been insignificantly changed in wording. We can therefore refer to our list of the last bulletin on the areas agreed upon:

- Article I-2 as above mentioned.
- The provisions on the Foreign minister (I-27).
- Principle of participatory democracy (I-46).
- The social clause (III-2a).
- The newly introduced provision on the tri-partite social summit for growth and employment that will contribute to the Social Dialogue is mentioned in the Treaty (I-47).
- The Declaration on social policy (III-107): Principle of social policy remaining within national competences, the EU's activity should concentrate on encouragement and cooperation and be complementary.
- The Provisions on Public Health (III-179), including the early warning system and the fight against tobacco and alcohol.
- Services of General Interest (III-6).
- Accession of the Union to the European Convention on Human Rights (I-7, the Union "shall accede").
- The provisions on animal welfare (III-5a).
- The revision procedures of the Treaty (IV-7a, IV-7b).

The IGC will meet on Monday on Foreign minister level and should close as many as possible for the supposedly final meeting of the European Council on June 17 and 18 next week. We will update you on the outcome of the discussions of Monday's meeting.

CIVIL SOCIETY CONTACT GROUP

Reminder: Open meeting on Article I-46 on June 14

The Civil Society is organising an open meeting on the implementation of Article I-46 as proposed by the Convention in the Draft Treaty. It aims to bring together NGOs from different sectors and draw up first concrete ideas about how Civil Society wants this article to be shaped. Some issues to be discussed might be: What forms should this dialogue have? How should the commitment of the institutions to an "open, transparent and regular dialogue" be measured?

The meeting will take place at Avenue des Arts 43, 7th floor, 1040 Bruxelles, from 9h30 to 12h30. Please register by sending an E-mail to assistant@act4europe.org. For further questions please call +32 2 508 16 38.

Financial Perspectives Appeal

The Financial Perspectives 2007-2013 are one of the major issues concerning the future shape of the Union. The letter of six net contributors claiming to limit the EU budget to 1% of its gross product has been one of the most noticed element within

the discussions. The European Summit in June is expected to make a decision on this that could be decisive for the further Budget and the scope of the Union's activity. The Contact Group, however, hopes that the future EU Budgets will be debated on the basis of what resources will be needed for the kind of Europe envisaged in the draft Constitution, rather than start from setting an artificial expenditure ceiling. It has sent out the following letter to all Heads of State, the Foreign ministers, the Finance ministers, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission, the Commissioners Schreyer, Kallas, Almunia Amann, the Chairwoman of the EP's committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Chairman of the EP's committee on Budgets and to the members of the Ad hoc working group on Financial Perspectives (Perm.Rep / Commission).

Dear xxxxxx,

This year's June European Summit will take important decisions that will affect the role the European Union can take to fulfil the expectations of its citizens. Many surveys have demonstrated that the people of Europe want the EU to deliver good jobs, quality of life as well as ending poverty and discrimination. They are simply turning away from a EU, which is content to limit itself to the promotion of the single market.

The summit will take place a few days after the European Elections with a likely high rate of absenteeism. The demand of six member countries to reduce the spending of the EU to 1% of the EU's GDP seems to play into that mood of apathy and might make it harder for the EU to create the kind of Europe its citizens would like to see.

The Civil Society Contact Group, bringing together European social, environment, women, human rights, development, and culture NGOs, **hopes that Member States and the Commission will debate future EU Budgets on the basis of what resources will be needed for the kind of Europe envisaged in the draft Constitution, rather than start from setting an artificial expenditure ceiling.**

Civil society organisations know that their constituency of support backs an EU which

- is a strong voice for peace, for the global fight against poverty, an EU committed to solidarity, justice, and equality.
- promotes equality between women and men, non discrimination, sustainable development, protection and improvement of the environment

We support the Convention's Draft Constitutional Treaty, even if a number of issues important to us were not included, because it represents an important step in the creation of the kind of Europe, which we have campaigned for.

Within this context we therefore support as a starting point the Commission's proposal for the **Financial Perspectives 2007-2013** and would like to suggest changes in the following respects:

- 1)** We would like the Council to affirm that "**Sustainable Development**" (name of the budgetary heading of the Commission's proposal) is clarified as to be, although also including economic progress, the challenge to ensure the achievement of clearly stated social and environmental objectives. This definition of Sustainable Development is at variance with the narrower definition we see being put forward by the Commission.
- 2)** EU spending must be seen **not to be damaging of the environment or detrimental to social conditions**. EU spending therefore must ensure environmental protection, promote

sustainable development worldwide and aim to eradicate poverty in developing countries. In this way we will move the sustainable development debate from words into action.

- 3) The **Lisbon Summit** set ambitious social targets for the EU, which will continue not to be met unless adequate resources are mobilized. We are concerned that social development and cohesion as well as the fight against poverty must not be addressed through economic growth policies and therefore should not be financed under that heading.
- 4) There is a need to **incorporate a separate chapter in the Financial Perspectives on development cooperation** to cover the EU's official development assistance to all developing countries. Development co-operation and humanitarian aid should retain their independence from the other external policies of the EU. The allocation of EU development aid should be based on the priorities and the needs of poor people, the promotion of the economic, social and cultural rights and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals
- 5) We believe that **adequate funds are necessary to promote good governance and the rule of law in third countries**. This will require greater funds to allow for a larger involvement of civil society in the advancement and protection of democracy and human rights. Adequate funds will also be required to ensure a high level of rights protection at home as a necessary complement to further enlargement and the new neighbourhood policy.
- 6) There is a **need to build-in the involvement of civil society in the design of overarching decisions that affect the Union**. This is very much the case as regards to the Financial Perspectives. Civil society organisations are often at the vanguard of change. They are also effective connectors between the public authorities and our citizens. Our ability to act as multipliers, is well known, but somehow continues to be under used. We believe that more thought should, be given to our potential role to widen the discussion on the large issues confronting the EU.

Yours sincerely

Giampiero Alhadeff
Chair
Civil Society Contact Group