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**COVER NOTE**

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**Subject :** Contribution by Mrs Pervenche Berès, Mrs Maria Berger, Mr. Carlos Carnero Gonzales, Mrs Elena Pacotti; alternate member of the Convention - Mr. Olivier Duhamel, Anne van Lancker; member of the Convention.

**"The Europe we need: Essential Requirements of New Federalism "**

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The General Secretariat of the Convention has received the contribution set out in annex hereto from Mrs Pervenche Berès, Mrs Maria Berger, Mr. Carlos Carnero Gonzales, Mrs Elena Pacotti; alternate member of the Convention - Mr. Olivier Duhamel, Anne van Lancker; member of the Convention.

## **The Europe We Need**

### **Essential Requirements of New Federalism**

The dramatic global situation and Europe's internal state of integration require the European Union to take its responsibility. The war in Iraq and the inability of the EU to react to the crisis show that the Union must take a new step forward in order to play its role in creating a more peaceful, prosperous and socially just world. Only a united Europe with strong policies and efficient instruments can shape globalisation to the advantage of the citizens. Minimum standards of social protection must be safeguarded against erosion by uncontrolled market competition. Europe must become an area of freedom, security and justice, democratically controlled and efficiently governed. Europe as the biggest and wealthiest economic block on the planet has a major role in tackling the problem of global injustice between rich and poor, as well as the problems of social exclusion within our societies. Europe with its model of peaceful cooperation must be a major partner for sustainable development in the world. We therefore demand the following aims for our future European Union:

- 1) A European social model guided by social justice and inclusion.
- 2) A competitive Europe which allows to share the benefits of economic development
- 3) A Europe which uses its political and economic force for sustainable development and peaceful conflict resolution in the world.

These aims can be achieved if the necessary competencies and instruments are given to the Union. The debates in the Convention have reached a stage when core aims must be realised. The achievement of a social, democratic and efficient European Union is now necessary. We have to concentrate our efforts to push this through. We therefore call on the Convention members to ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled:

### **A SOCIAL Europe**

The European social model must be a market economy completed with social protection and developed public services. The European Constitution must therefore include the creation of an area of social justice, of economic, social and territorial cohesion, of full employment, solidarity and sustainable economic development as well as a cultural dimension and the protection of its cultural diversity among the aims in its first chapter. The EU must set common minimum standards for social protection and social policy.

The Constitution should therefore contain a horizontal clause that places a stronger emphasis on the social dimension of the Union's policies. Clearer competencies (as for example in the area of health protection, collective rights for workers,...) must allow the EU institutions to develop specific action at European level including tax harmonisation. It also means that the Charter of Fundamental Rights with its strong commitment to social rights, must become an integral part of the European Constitution, visible to the citizens. In order to deliver on its commitments to turn Europe into the world's most competitive knowledge-based economic area, the Lisbon strategy must be anchored in the Constitution and the Monetary Union must be rebalanced by the establishment of a real

economic and social governance based on a strong capacity of initiative at the European level beginning with the Eurozone. At the same time, essential services of general interest must be protected and made accessible to all by a framework law based on the new Constitution. A European tax should be established in order to enhance EU own resources and to provide her the means to conduct her policies. A strengthening of the social dialogue is another important step towards the development of a social Europe. The European Constitution should therefore improve the role of social partners in economic, employment and social policy .

## ***A DEMOCRATIC Europe***

The European Union cannot work if it does not have the backing of its people. The Union should get closer to its citizens by adopting a more understandable structure. A parliamentary democracy is the best way to ensure democratic, transparent and efficient governance of the European Union. The EU Constitution must reflect the dual legitimacy of the EU as a Union of citizens and a Union of States, while the separation of powers between the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council must be achieved.

A minimum requirement of democratic reform is therefore that the European Parliament obtains full co-decision power in all areas of legislation, including the entire budget of the EU. The European Parliament should elect the president of the European Commission to encourage a European political process. The Constitution should provide an institutional basis for the civil dialogue. The European Commission should acquire a full right of initiative in all EU policy areas. The Councils' legislative and executive functions should be clearly separated, so that legislation can be adopted in full transparency and by qualified majority. The ECJ should have judicial control over the policies of the EU.

The Constitution must be written and adopted under a democratic procedure. The Constitution, prepared by the Convention and agreed by the Intergovernmental Conference should be approved by the citizens and their representatives. Referendums on the Constitution could be held simultaneously on the days of the European Parliament elections in 2004. Future changes to the European Constitution should be decided by a Convention.

## ***A STRONG Europe in the world***

Recent developments show that a world with only one hyper-power is destabilising the entire global system. A united and strong Europe is necessary to make the United Nations organisations' work possible and to restore their authority. Europe has the duty to play an important role in ensuring the progress of the international community towards democratically adopted procedures, improved regulation and a world collectively governed by law and not by force. Europe must therefore use its influence towards a fairer distribution of wealth in the world, fair trade, international cooperation, sustainable development and agricultural policy and peaceful conflict resolution. To fulfil its responsibility as a global player, the EU needs the political will and the instruments to develop a genuine Common Foreign and Defence Policy.

The European Constitution must ensure that a European Foreign minister has the institutional standing, the logistical resources and the political backing to carry out a foreign policy in the interest of Europe and the world. The community method must be applied to the Common Foreign and Defence Policy. This would make the decision-making in this area more efficient by subjecting

it to qualified majority voting. The European Parliament needs to be empowered to exercise democratic control also in the area of Foreign policy of the EU. The "double-hatted" European Foreign Minister must be answerable to the European Parliament and the Council. A European diplomatic service should be built on the basis of the existing Commission structures. In the area of a common defence policy, a permanent council of European defence ministers should be set up to coordinate defence matters and to oversee the deployment of the European rapid reaction force. A European agency for arms production and procurement must be part of a coordinated European defence policy.

## **A Coalition of European progress**

We are committed to achieve these aims with all member states where possible, but even if it means that some countries have to move ahead without all member states agreeing. The EU therefore needs a mechanism to allow a coalition of European progress between those countries which are ready and willing to move forward. In a Union of more than 25 member states we cannot always wait for the slowest ship in the convoy. This coalition of European progress should be open for every country that wants to join in.

If these core elements are included in the European Constitution, the European Union of the 21st century will meet our objectives of a social, strong and democratic entity. The Convention offers a unique opportunity to realise the potential of Europe for its citizens and in the world. This opportunity must not be missed!

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