



**DEUTSCHER BUNDESTAG**

Ausschuss für die Angelegenheiten  
der Europäischen Union



**ASSEMBLÉE  
NATIONALE**

DÉLÉGATION POUR  
L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

**Joint Declaration**

**by the Délégation pour l'Union Européenne of the Assemblée Nationale and  
the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union of the German Bundestag**

**on the Intergovernmental Conference and the European Constitution**

Within a matter of days, the Italian Presidency of the European Council will open the Intergovernmental Conference on the European constitution. In light of this occasion, the Délégation pour l'Union Européenne of the Assemblée Nationale and the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union of the German Bundestag jointly reaffirm their support for the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, which was adopted by the European Convention on 13 June and 10 July 2003.

Under M. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's successful presidency, the best possible outcome has been achieved with this draft, which is a coherent and unified document. The Convention has succeeded, through a judicious combination of ambition and realism, in drawing together the disparate requirements of enlargement and deepening to create a European constitution which will continue to evolve. In doing so, it has safeguarded the enlarged Union's capacity to act through a clear division of powers.

Notwithstanding the necessarily divergent positions of the various actors, the Convention method, which was initiated by parliamentarians, has shown itself to be a successful new negotiating instrument for Treaty reform, involving the European Parliament, the national Parliaments and governments, and the European Commission. The Convention method has strengthened the parliamentary dimension and democracy in European politics. We therefore welcome the fact that draft Treaty revisions will in future be scrutinized in a Convention process after consultation with the European Parliament and the Commission. This approach will ensure

not only more closeness to citizens, more democracy and transparency, but also efficient and future-oriented results.

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We endorse the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council of 20 June 2003 and its decision on the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. We urge the Intergovernmental Conference to respect this draft as a good basis for its work and request that it bring the Convention's open, pluralist and consensus-minded spirit to the IGC's conference table too.

The Convention has supplied the national governments with a sound basis, whose further treatment will be monitored very closely by the German and French Parliaments. We are in favour of a fixed timetable for the Intergovernmental Conference. The successful conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference is extremely important for the future of the enlarged Union. We urge the Member States to conclude the Intergovernmental Conference within a short timeframe, preferably by December 2003, so that a broad public debate can take place before the constitution is signed on Europe Day, 9 May 2004, just before the European elections take place in June.

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We welcome the pledge that the European Parliament will be closely involved in the deliberations at the Intergovernmental Conference. We call on the Heads of State and Government to inform the national Parliaments promptly about all aspects of the Intergovernmental Conference's work. Regular and detailed exchange with the national Parliaments will also ease the way for subsequent ratification. We therefore wish to see an intensive exchange of views between the national Parliaments and the European Parliament in this context. This is possible, for example, at the meetings with representatives of the national Parliaments which are to be organized by the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs, and at meetings of the Convention's parliamentary members, as proposed by the Vice-President of the Italian Senate, Lamberto Dini. In this exchange of information and ideas, the European Parliament's observers at the Intergovernmental Conference would play a particularly important role.

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The role of the national Parliaments in the European Union must be further strengthened, especially through stronger controls over their governments' actions in European affairs. The draft Constitution grants them more opportunities for participation. In this context, the national

Parliaments have a central role as the guardians of subsidiarity. Through this involvement at the start of, and throughout, the legislative process, the national Parliaments will have the opportunity to take on more responsibility, especially through their scrutiny of the Council's work. Moreover, it is important to explore how Europe's significance can be underlined more effectively in the national Parliaments. One option is to proceed on the basis of the proposal made by René van der Linden, the Dutch parliamentary representative in the Convention, that in future, the relevant committees of all the Member States' national Parliaments and the European Parliament should deliberate the European Commission's annual work programme in the same week of sittings. This would reinforce the importance of the Commission's work and parliamentary scrutiny thereof at national level, and would also help to enhance democracy in European politics and therefore encourage the development of a European consciousness.

We are convinced that a key task for the national Parliaments and the European Parliament in the coming months will be to promote broad popular approval for and acceptance of the constitutional process. As the Déléation pour l'Union Européenne and the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union of the German Bundestag, we therefore propose that the deliberations and outcomes of the Intergovernmental Conference be dealt with, as far as possible, in parallel sittings of the Assemblée Nationale and the German Bundestag.

As part of their close cooperation, the Déléation pour l'Union Européenne of the Assemblée Nationale and the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union of the German Bundestag will continue to engage in an exchange of information on their positions on the Intergovernmental Conference and hold joint sittings in order to ensure that the historic project to establish a constitution for Europe is brought to a successful conclusion.