

## *The Convention on the Future of Europe*

### References:

The Future of the European Union - **Laeken Declaration**, 15/12/2001

"Preparing the Council for enlargement", report by Javier Solana, Secretary General of **the Council** of the European Union - Brussels, 07/03/2002

The **European Parliament** adopts a [report](#) on the legal personality of the European Union - [verbatim report](#) of the debate - Strasbourg, 13/03/2002

The **European Parliament** report on relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments in the area of European integration - verbatim report of the debate Strasbourg, 06/02/2002

Communication of the **Commission** on the future of Europe - Brussels, 05/12/2001 COM (2001) 727

Website of the **Convention** [www.european-convention.eu.int](http://www.european-convention.eu.int)

Website of the **Forum** of Civil Society [www.europa.eu.int/futurum/forum\\_convention](http://www.europa.eu.int/futurum/forum_convention)

First Contribution of **EWLA** to the Convention April 2002

The Laeken Declaration outlines the task of the Convention to consider the key issues arising for the Union's future development and try to identify the various possible responses:

1. More democracy, transparency and efficiency in the European Union
  - a. How can the authority and efficiency of the **European Commission** be enhanced? How should the President of the Commission be appointed: by the European Council, by the European Parliament or should he be directly elected by the citizens? Should the role of the European Parliament be strengthened? Should we extend the right of co-decision or not? Should the way in which we elect the members of the European Parliament be reviewed? Should a European electoral constituency be created, or should constituencies continue to be determined nationally? Can the two systems be combined? Should the role of the Council be strengthened? Should the Council act in the same manner in its legislative and its executive capacities? With a view to greater transparency, should the meetings of the Council, at least in its legislative capacity, be public? Should citizens have more access to Council documents? How, finally, should the balance and reciprocal control between the institutions be ensured?
  - b. The **role of national parliaments**. Should they be represented in a new institution, alongside the Council and the European Parliament? Should they have a role in areas of European action in which the European Parliament has no competence? Should they focus on the division of competence between Union and Member States, for example through preliminary checking of compliance with the principle of subsidiarity?
  - c. Improvement of the **efficiency of decision-making and the workings of the institutions in a Union of some thirty Member States**. How could the Union set its objectives and priorities more effectively and ensure better implementation? Is there a need for more decisions by a qualified majority? How is the co-decision procedure between the Council and the European Parliament to be simplified and speeded up? What of the six-monthly rotation of the Presidency of the Union? What is the future role of the European Parliament? What of the future role and structure of the various Council formations? How should the coherence of European foreign policy be enhanced? How is synergy between the High Representative and the competent Commissioner to be reinforced? Should the external representation of the Union in international fora be extended further?

2. Towards a **Constitution** for European citizens

- a. **simplifying the existing Treaties** without changing their content. Should the distinction between the Union and the Communities be reviewed? What of the division into three pillars?
- b. **reorganisation of the Treaties**. Should a distinction be made between a basic treaty and the other treaty provisions? Should this distinction involve separating the texts? Could this lead to a distinction between the amendment and ratification procedures for the basic treaty and for the other treaty provisions?
- c. Should the **–revised?– Charter of Fundamental Rights** be included in the basic treaty?
- d. Should the European Community accede to the European Convention on Human Rights?
- e. Adoption of a **constitutional text in the Union**. What might the basic features of such a constitution be? The values which the Union cherishes, the fundamental rights and obligations of its citizens, the relationship between Member States in the Union?