

**Statement by Erwin Teufel,  
Minister-President of the German Land Baden-Württemberg  
(member of the Convention;  
representative of the German Bundesrat)  
in the plenary debate on  
Expectations for the European Union  
at the meeting of the Convention on the Future of Europe  
on 21-22 March 2002 in Brussels**

**- Check against delivery -**

Address,

Behind us lies a successful history of fifty years of European unification. Ahead of us lies the enlargement of the European Union. What do we and the citizens in general expect from the future European Union?

We should set a demanding standard: the enlarged European Union must be even more successful than the existing one. We will only meet this standard if we succeed in making the European Union fit to face the challenges that enlargement, in particular, brings with it. To achieve this, we must above all make the European Union more comprehensible for the average citizen, and thus more open and friendly to the people. If we do not succeed in taking the people along with us on the “way to Europe”, we will lose them on the way, and the project will fail.

But I am confident: by including civil society, we are on the right track in the Convention. However, it is the results that will count in the end.

We need to develop a concept for a lasting order of the future of Europe. One thing is certain: this Convention is about more than merely a (further) reform of the European Union. It is about Europe playing an active role in the world. And it is also about the internal cohesion of the new, larger EU.

What do we need to do to prepare the European Union for the future? First, we need a change of perspective: we have to consider the European level, but we must not consider only the European level. In our search for the future shape of Europe, we must not lose sight of the foundations: the Europe of the future must have a federal structure based on the principle of subsidiarity. It must be built from the bottom up, on the basis of local self-government in the final analysis.

It is the urban and rural local authorities, the regions and provinces or states, and the member countries which play a decisive role in the daily life of our citizens; so we must think and build Europe from the bottom up, and not from the top down.

Applying the principle of subsidiarity, the initial concern of the Convention should be an allocation of responsibilities that specifies clearly which are to be handled at the European level and which at the national level: what may European agencies do, and which tasks and powers should be exercised by the member countries and their regions—by the States (*Länder*) in Germany?

Those responsibilities of the member countries in which the EU may not interfere must also be specified in a list of powers. To name one example: the internal structure of the state, with local self-government and the core public services.

The convention must come to an agreement on

- what is to be a European responsibility in future,
- what is to remain a national one,
- and what is to be returned to national responsibility.

I would remind you of the words of Mr. Prodi, the President of the Commission in his opening address to the Convention.

Let me repeat: only what exceeds the abilities of lower levels should be positioned on the European level. What we are seeking is a European structure that is arranged from the bottom up!

The ordering of powers is therefore the first and foremost question. If it is answered clearly, the second step will be a matter of course: wherever the European Union is responsible in future, it must be strong and able to act, both internally and externally. It must become more democratic, transparent, and efficient. Then it will also be more comprehensible to the citizenry.

This is the mandate the people of Europe have given us.