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**INTERVENTION OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HELLENIC
GOVERNMENT
AND MEMBER OF THE PRAESIDIUM OF THE CONVENTION**

Mr George Katiforis MEP

EXTERNAL ACTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels 11 July 2002,

Our Convention, in the debate on the objectives of the Union, has already positioned itself with emphasis in favour of a powerful international presence for Europe. This was the objective that assembled the greatest support amongst colleagues here, as indeed also amongst our fellow European citizens who, with a percentage above 70% ask for more, much more, Europe on the world scene. This preference of Europeans is and isn't natural. It is not natural because Europe today does not face direct external threats so that it should be mobilised for its self-protection. It is natural because the European citizen sees that the cultural and economic "superpower" of Europe is not translated into corresponding international diplomatic presence. On the contrary, it sees our Union on the one hand overshadowed by the USA and on the other hand be treated sometimes offensively by governments of small countries whose only qualification is their big impudence. The European citizen is indignant with this situation more for reasons of principle and pride and less for reasons of self-interest. This feeling of discontent is intensified by the absurdly aggressive, for the European, differentiation of the United States on a whole series of subjects some of which are issues of principle, such as the International Criminal Court, some are of strategic importance, as the one-sidedness in the Middle East, some concern the survival of the planet, such as the unilateral abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, some concern the self-interested trespass upon fundamental principles of free trade.

The European citizen would worry less if he saw that what the Union does not achieve could be achieved by the nation state. But he sees that there is not the slightest hope of resistance against the giants that surround us in the modern world. We do not have to choose between a European external policy and national foreign policy, we have to choose between a European external policy and the non-existence of external policy.

The current Treaty that we are debating and which we want to improve contains a base for the determination of a common external policy. And in practice certain steps have taken place,

but they are very small vis-à-vis the dimensions of our needs and problems. We must agree on certain steps that will not put us in a new stage, because this is difficult and will take a long time to be completed but at least will put us on the road for the new stage, on a superior track towards it. I would propose that the Convention study three steps:

(a) To ask for the establishment of one annual big debate in the national parliaments where the role of Europe in international relations will be debated. This should be followed by a debate in the European Parliament, on the basis of a proposal by the Commission that will utilise also the opinions of the national parliaments. Such a debate will conclude with the determination, each time of at least one area where unanimity in Council bodies will be replaced by qualified majority and co-decision. Thus gradually we can approach a single European doctrine of common external policy.

(b) The Member States must decide to acquire single diplomatic representation.

(c) European institutions must merge, within a certain period of time which will be proposed by the Convention, the functions of High Representative of the Council and of Commissioner for External Affairs.

All this effort must give priority to the defence of European values over and above European interests. It is time to point out that the major danger for us is to find ourselves in a world that will have rejected our values. If that happens everything else will also be lost. Europe gave birth to Machiavelli. The time has come for us to outgrow him precisely in order that we can continue the course of the great society that was founded during the Renaissance in Europe.

George Katiforis MEP
Brussels, 11 July 2002