

**Speech of Peter Gottfried, alternate member of the European Convention
at the 15-16 April, 2002 session**

During the last fifty years a unique kind of regional integration emerged in the Western part of Europe. Unique, as it managed to reconcile the idea of freedom – be it the freedom of the economy or the freedom of individuals, with the principle of solidarity and the wellbeing of people. Thanks to the vision and the Community method and the supranational nature of its institutions the European Union now is far more than the free internal market. It also provides for mechanisms to address social inequalities, to a healthy environment and other important issues. What is more, the process of integration also gives certain protection against the negative effects of globalisation.

I think Europe has a very special mission that is to humanise the processes of globalisation, driven primarily by technical developments and economic interests. The European Union, being a union of countries sharing common values and principles should endeavour to give moral dimension, ethical substance to these processes.

The results and experiences of the European model, the historical traditions, intellectual capacities, and the sustained diversity enables the Union to influence global economic, political, environmental and social developments in a positive manner.

However, only a more united, economically and institutionally stronger Europe can undertake this mission. This Europe must be capable to speak with one voice, and act with one will, and must have the necessary powers to act.

I believe dismantling existing Community powers or renationalisation of whole community policy areas should be avoided, particularly those implementing principles, such as the principle of solidarity, like cohesion policy of those forming part of the internal market like the common agriculture policy.

It is also clear, that in the future some new areas may require management and co-ordination above national level. The appearance of the euro may require more harmonisation of economic policies. As many earlier speakers, I can well imagine a European Union with a stronger security dimension to achieve a proper balance between its political and economic weight. This should go beyond an enhanced common foreign- and security policy, could involve deeper co-operation in the field of justice and home affairs.

Finally, I believe it is important to avoid creating an inflexible system through fixing the competencies once for all. This would result in an unnecessarily rigid system. The possibility to extend EU's competencies in certain spheres to the Union should be maintained.