

Debate on the Reports of the External Action Group and the Defence Group

Speech of Mr. Adrian Severin, MP (Romania) to

The European Convention

(Brussels, 20 December 2002)

Mr. President,

Dear colleagues,

First I would like to congratulate both Mr. Dehaene and Mr. Barnier for their Herculean work. As a member of the Group for External Action I, of course, support the recommendations of the Working Group. These recommendations express a compromise with which we can live. But could we be really happy and proud about it? As we say, the most beautiful girl cannot give more than she has. In fact the mountains have worked and a mouse was borne. And it is not the Mighty Mouse.

I believe that our vision, if at all, must be based on four concepts: clarity, efficiency, coherence, and legitimacy. In our case it is about clarity of the goals; efficiency of the institutions; coherence of actions and competences; legitimacy residing in the consistency between what we recommend and the expectations of our people.

1. As for the goal it must be clearly stated that this is the one of a Europe able to play the role of a first hand actor in a global world. Even if all of us claim their support for such a goal, we must recognize that only some of us really mean it. All the opinions are to be respected, except the one which wants to hide this truth.
2. For those who mean it, the institutional efficiency could be summarize in the following seven principles: one head (even with several hats); one voice; one administration; one budget; one negotiation; one ratification; one representation. The QMV should be added to these principles.
3. In terms of coherence one must make sure that the internal missions of the Union are consistent with the external action or vice versa and that the different external tools or endeavours of the Union are consistent with its external goals and ambitions. At the same time the strategic powers (i.e. the identification of the long term goals) should go to the

Council, the tactical ones (the implementation of the strategies and the crisis' management) to the Commission and the political oversight (possibly including a call back right) to the European Parliament (and the European Legislative Council, if any). From this point of view we must say that if the recommendations in the reports are endorsed by the Convention, Europe is going to make some progress. However we should not fool ourselves by saying that this is yet a breakthrough.

4. This leads me to the fourth and last point. The recommendations are falling short of the expectations, I should say instructions, we have gotten from our peoples according to the public opinion polls or to the debate of our own Fora of European Youth and European Civil Society. In this respect I would like to warn against the danger that our peoples become hostages of their own governments who tend to say that they know better than their citizens what the latter really need. That is why I think that the future European Constitution must give at least a prospective to those who believe in a political Europe if we cannot deliver yet what we are expected to deliver, by including in appropriate terms a kind of a road map and a subsequent procedure in form of a rendezvous/appointment clause indicating the future steps towards the goal we claim to have in common.

As far as the Barnier Report is concerned I call for the endorsement of its recommendations, namely those concerning the Weapons Development Agency, the Defense Council and the Solidarity clause (the terms union, community or alliance, on one hand, and the term neutrality, on the other hand, cannot stay together within an orderly thinking), as well as the need for a deeper consideration of the institutional reforms since indeed without the right institutions, Europe could not perform the right policy.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the credibility of our Convention and the future of a meaningful political Europe will greatly depend on the degree on which the final constitutional text will be or will not be hostage of a blocking minority and on which the minimal denominator will not be too close to "zero".
