

**Address by HE Mr. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign  
Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the Plenary Session of  
the Convention**

**(15-16 May 2003)**

There is no doubt that the functioning of the Union's institutional system should further be improved. This is, now, even more necessary in view of the fact that the institutional architecture had not been reformed following the previous enlargements. However, the improvements should take into account the significance of preserving the institutional balance of the Union. In that respect, the Laeken Declaration has asked for more clarity, simplicity, efficiency, democracy and responsibility in the institutional system. This being our objective, I would like to express a few remarks concerning the draft articles on institutions.

The institutional architecture that has been envisaged by the draft articles seems to me, at this stage of our discussions, not yet sufficiently clear, particularly with regard to the organization of the executive power. I acknowledge the need to enhance the Presidency but I am not sure whether the proposal to elect a European Council President for a term of two and a half years is a satisfactory answer for attaining the objectives of the Laeken Declaration.

The creation of a full time Presidency post for the European Council, as an additional figure to the current institutional architecture, could further complicate the already complex decision-making system. Strengthening of the Presidency should not be at the expense of the Community method. The second remark I would like to make is also related to the need of simplicity in the institutional system. The establishment of a Congress composed of Representatives of the National Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament would only add one more element to this already complicated architecture. I consider more convenient to improve the functioning of the COSAC and to assign to it the tasks envisaged for the Congress.

My third remark is about the Commission.

The Commission is the guardian of the European common interest. The role of the Commission in an enlarged Europe should be reinforced. The draft articles presented by the Presidium should be brought in line with this guiding principle. Moreover, a Commission in an enlarged Union should be able to operate as a college, and reflect the principle of equality of all Member States. This, I believe, is the way to show to the citizens that the views and concerns are being heard by the European Union and that the Commission belongs to them.

We welcome and support the remaining draft articles on institutions presented by the Presidium and, taking this opportunity, I would like to thank the Presidium for the valuable work they have carried out.

Thank you.