

Speech of Jozsef Szajer in the Convention on the Future of Europe

Bruxelles, 15 May 2003

Mr. President,

The candidate countries, including my country, Hungary agree that the European Union needs important reforms. We also support that these reforms reach some elements of the present institutional system for more effective and transparent working of the union.

We also accept that the rotation of the presidency of the Council should be more effective and flexible. We also see that there are certain hesitation about the size of the Commission. For these reasons we are ready to go forward for certain compromises.

However my country, as a newcomer to the Union considers it very important that the equality of the member states should be maintained. In case we would give up the idea of rotation of presidency of the Council or the rule that each member state has the right to nominate a commissioner we may loose a highly important keystone of this equality. The public discussions before the referenda held in the candidate countries clearly demonstrate that these peoples are particularly sensitive to their countries' future rights and status in the enlarged union. Given our recent history of Soviet occupation and communist oppression this sensitivity is completely legitimate.

Preserving these rules of rotating presidency and one commissioner for each country is also important for the stronger identification of the public of the member states with the institutions of the Union. In case we would give up these arrangements we might risk of weakening further the already problematic popular acceptance of the EU in our countries, which is contrary to our mandate accepted in Laeken. Nations - regardless of their size - who see their political leaders acting for a certain period on behalf of the Union feel that the union is theirs and that they have a voice in the European political process. Mutatis mutandis the same applies to the nomination of the commissioners. Acting in the opposite direction some member countries could feel that they are marginalized, or left out of the common business of Europe.

Therefore I fully support the amendments of my colleagues from the European Peoples' Party tabled for flexibly preserving these rules for the benefit of a more democratic and transparent European Union. (My name is missing from these amendments only for technical reasons.)

Mr. President,

I would like to remind my fellow conventioners to an other highly important issue. This issue is the striking lack of national minority representation in the union's presently exclusively majoritarian institutional system. I tabled an amendment based on my previous contribution and intervention concerning the establishment of a representative body of national minorities according the already existing model of Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of Regions. This institution would be capable to establish a presently missing minority dimension for the EU, and it could soften the overly majoritarian institutional system.