

Working Group VII

Working document 16

Working group VII – "External Action"

Subject: **"Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CFSP"**
 - Paper by Mr Bobby Mc Donagh, alternate member of the Convention

Members of the Working Group VII will find hereafter a paper by Mr Bobby Mc Donagh, alternate member of the Convention.

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CFSP

Elements for Discussion

Submitted by Bobby McDonagh, Alternate Representative of Irish Government

The European Union is uniquely placed, as a community of values and common interests, to play a significant international role for peace, stability and prosperity. The unique range of instruments at our disposal has been highlighted in the initial discussions at the Working Group on External Actions. The institutional architecture in the external actions area, where both the Commission and, through the Council, the Member States play an important and mutually reinforcing role, reflects this. A coherent strategic approach drawing on the appropriate mix of instruments and the right institutional balance is clearly the way forward.

The appointment of the High Representative has greatly improved the role and visibility of the Union on the world stage. The changes agreed at Seville, including the establishment of the General Affairs and External Relations (GAERC), also offer the prospect of bringing greater coherence to the Union's external actions. However, there is widespread agreement, both in the Convention and beyond, that there is further scope to improve significantly the coherence of CFSP and other aspects of the Union's external action.

There are a number of practical measures, which could be taken to enhance the role of the High Representative and improve the efficiency of the CFSP:

- The High Representative should have the right of initiative alongside the Member States. Where appropriate, he or she should be able to table a proposal jointly with the Commissioner for External Relations.
- To facilitate and encourage greater coherence in the external policy of the Union, the High Representative should regularly attend relevant meetings of the Commission.
- The post of High Representative should be separated from that of the Secretary-General of the Council so as to allow the High Representative to focus exclusively on CFSP matters.
- The task of representing the Union on the world stage has become increasingly complex and time-consuming. It is simply not possible for one man or woman to represent the Union in different parts of the world at any one time. For this reason, the High Representative should be supported by a limited number of Deputy High Representatives (DHRs) who would act on behalf of and deputise for him/her as appropriate. These DHRs could be given regional responsibilities: i.e., Asia, Africa, Latin America.

- The High Representative should be supported by a reinforced Council Secretariat to which Member States would second experienced personnel on a temporary basis. This would maintain a synergy between the Secretariat and the Member States. The Secretariat would assume responsibility for preparing meetings in various formations, drafting documents and statements and other organisational and secretarial work currently performed by the Presidency in CFSP matters.
- The role of the Political and Security Committee in providing the High Representative with policy guidance should be reinforced.
- Where appropriate, common services could be shared between the Council Secretariat and relevant Commission Directorates.
- A single, unified system of EU representation should be established in third countries and international organisations, staffed by an appropriate combination of Commission and Council Secretariat personnel, reporting to both the Commission and the High Representative. EU Delegations should work in closer liaison with the diplomatic missions of Member States.
- Appropriate budgetary provision beyond the present allocation will be required if the Union is to develop its activities under the CFSP. A revised allocation should include provision for the funding of Special Representatives appointed by the Council and any other instruments, which the High Representative may recommend.

It has been argued that there would be greater visibility and coherence in the external relations area if the role of the High Representative in presenting the Union's position on CFSP issues were to be significantly enhanced. This is a suggestion which has received widespread support from the members of the Working Group. Under such a scenario, the High Representative and the Commissioner for External Relations, either jointly or separately, depending on the issues involved, would normally take a lead in representing the European Union in dealings with third countries and international organisations. This arrangement would be without prejudice to the role of the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission or to the responsibility of the Presidency to make statements on behalf of the Union in international organisations including the United Nations.

The High Representative derives legitimacy and authority from the European Council, which appoints him or her, and is answerable to the Council. Some have proposed that the High Representative should also chair the external relations part of the General Affairs and External Relations Council. This could mean, in practice that the same person would be responsible for setting the Council agenda, tabling proposals, chairing meetings of the Council, executing Council decisions and representing the Council with third parties. This would involve a considerably greater concentration of power than that invested in the Commission in the first pillar.

The present arrangement, whereby the Council is chaired by a Member State, ensures that the High Representative operates under the oversight of the Member States and is democratically accountable for his or her actions. For this reason, the General Affairs and External Relations Council should continue to be chaired by the Member State holding the Presidency. This would also help to maintain the identification of the people of the Member States with the work of the Council.