

Working Group VII

Working document 18

Working group VII – "External Action"

Subject: **"External representation of the EU"**
 - paper by Ms Danuta Hübner, member of the Convention

Members of the Working Group VII will find hereafter a paper by Ms Danuta Hübner, member of the Convention.

**Comments by Ms. Danuta Hübner,
Representative of Poland's Government
on the meeting of the Working Group "External Action"
held on 29 October 2002
"External representation of the EU"**

The existence of the political will of members of the European Union to pursue common goals is the first and foremost factor determining the strength and efficiency of the Union in performing its external functions. Only acting in a joint, coherent manner will make the EU deliver in this area. Pooling of resources, synergy of political action and using economic as well as other instruments at disposal of the EU will enable the Union to meet political challenges in the XXI century. It will also enable the EU to develop further partnership with NATO and with the United States of America in the transatlantic dimension.

The Union must speak with one voice on its external relations. There should be no room for more than just one centre of gravity in the sphere of the external actions. Therefore, it is worth considering that the institutions of the High Representative for CFSP and of the Commissioner for External Relations could be combined in a foreseeable future. This new EU representative would express the political will of the European Council on the one hand and as a member of the Commission, preferably as its Vice-Chairman on the other, would have at his disposal all instruments and resources of the Commission. He or she could chair GAERC and would enjoy a mandate and confidence of the Council as the Chairman of the Commission enjoys at the moment.

But the role and effectiveness of this new position will depend on the measures and resources at its disposal. Therefore, several questions must be posed and answered. How to furnish the intellectual and logistic base of the new external representative of the Union? Is there a will to establish a common CFSP budget? How diplomatic measures and resources of EU member states in the third countries should be co-ordinated? Pooling of resources of the member states is the basic requirement for making its external representative strong and efficient. He or she needs to feel the support of the whole European potential that can be used at every convenient moment.

The position of the single external representative can be defined only in conjunction with setting the function of the President of the European Council if the EU decides to establish the latter. My very personal view is that at present it would be premature to determine in a definite way the functions and the scope of competencies of this new actor. All of us need some time to think this issue over and look at it in a broader perspective.

Granting the EU a legal personality would be the paramount step forward to strengthen the role of the Union. The Union should benefit from an effective network of its foreign representation. In the long-term the Delegations of the European Commission in third countries should be transformed from what is often perceived as a mere technical outpost of the Commission into fully-fledged political agents of the Union. It would allow the EU to better use the potential of the personnel and infrastructure for the benefit of the external relations of the EU. The functions of the Delegations of the European Commission can be that way effectively expanded. The far-reaching goal would be to establish a kind of “Europe Houses”. An additional but very important function of the new delegations would be cultural promotion depicting “unity in diversity” of the EU member states.

The position of the EU in the international organisations and co-operation structures must be strengthened. In a rapidly changing international environment it is of utmost importance to secure the ability to harmonise the EU positions timely and accurately. More coherence between the bilateral and multilateral EU policies is needed.

The EU should have a natural proclivity in global fora such as the United Nations for uniting around its position countries in its immediate strategic vicinity, including Russia and Ukraine.

Since one of the goals of the Union is to promote its values in the world, it is vital to seek the support of the EU partners for its external policies. It will be very helpful to have the process of formulating the EU position more transparent and accessible to the EU closest partners (candidate countries, EFTA, NATO) at an early stage of the work on a common position. It would only increase the impact of that position at the international forum where it is to be presented.