

CONV 10/02

NOTE

from : Praesidium

to : Convention

Subject : Requests by the candidate countries

1. The representatives of the candidate countries made three requests at the inaugural meeting of the Convention:
 - (a) to have two representatives (one appointed by the Governments and the other by the national Parliaments) or, by way of compromise, at least one representative in the Praesidium;
 - (b) to enjoy language provisions similar or comparable to those of the Member States;
 - (c) to have one of their nationals as a member of the Convention Secretariat.
2. The following points could, in the Praesidium's view, be taken into consideration:
 - (a) the Laeken Declaration did not provide for a seat to be reserved for the candidate countries in the Praesidium. Nevertheless, the Praesidium considers it desirable to take account of their concerns and would be prepared to invite to all its meetings until the end of the Convention one person from a candidate country who would therefore have the status of "guest".

It could be suggested to the representatives of the national Parliaments that they consider designating as a guest a member of the Convention who represents a candidate country.

- (b) the question of the language provisions is a complex one:
- on the one hand, the Laeken Declaration provides only for the languages of the Member States; moreover, the Language Service of the Council Secretariat (or indeed those of the other institutions) is not equipped to translate from or into the languages of the candidate countries;
 - on the other hand, to ensure that public opinion in the candidate countries can keep abreast of the Convention, an effort will have to be made to satisfy their demands.

The Secretariat therefore took the initiative of convening a meeting with the Missions of these countries to the EU. Following that meeting, most of those Missions indicated to the Secretariat that they could provide translation into their respective languages of the summary notes concerning the plenary sessions and of the contributions by their representatives. The Convention Secretariat for its part is prepared to provide assistance in ensuring that such translations are "formatted" like the other Convention documents and to disseminate all documents on the Convention Website.

- (c) recruitment to the Convention Secretariat of a candidate from a candidate country is currently under way.

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3. In addition, the representatives of the candidate countries and the representatives of the national Parliaments of the Member States have asked for logistic support (office, telephone, fax, etc.) for the period of the Convention's work. The Praesidium feels that such a request is justified. Following contact between the Convention Secretariat and the European Parliament Secretariat, the latter has just indicated that a number of temporary offices equipped with the necessary facilities will be made available to these representatives for the duration of the meetings.

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