

FORWARDING NOTE

from : Secretariat

to : Convention

Subject : Working groups

- Exchange of letters

Members of the Convention will find attached a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Convention by twelve members as well as the Chairman's reply.

Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing
Chairman of the European Convention

Your Excellency,

The importance of the Working Groups for the work of the Convention was highlighted in several interventions during the last plenary session of the Convention. This importance is also emphasized by the broad mandate of the Convention, as well as by the obvious limitations in the use of the plenary session for detailed and in-depth discussions.

The designation of the chairpersons of the Working Groups is not settled in the Working Methods of the Convention as they stand. While we appreciate the valuable role the Praesidium plays and should play in the planning and coordination of the work of the Convention, we consider that the question of the chairmanship of the Working Groups should be approached with the perspective of maintaining the balance between the Praesidium and the Plenary of the Convention, as well as the overall geographical balance.

Such a balance is of crucial importance for the Convention to succeed in its work. Therefore, in choosing the chairpersons for Working Groups of the Convention, the Praesidium should feel free to choose the most suitable candidates from among all the Members of the Convention, members as well as non-members of the Praesidium.

We see this proposal as a practical way to ensure the balance as well as strengthen further the idea of the Convention as a project to be taken further as a common effort by all the "Conventionists". We trust that you, Mr President, will bring it to the attention of the Praesidium at your next meeting.

Yours sincerely,

KIMMO KILJUNEN

MATTI VANHANEN

Kimmo Kiljunen

Matti Vanhanen

Representative of the

Representative of the

Finnish Parliament

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REINHARD BÖSCH

HENRIK DAM KRISTENSEN

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HANNES FARNLEITNER

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Ben Fayot
Representative of the
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SÖREN LEKBERG

GÖRAN LENNMARKER PETER SKAARUP

Sören Lekberg
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Swedish Parliament

Göran Lennmarker
Representative of the
Swedish Parliament

Peter Skaarup
Representative of the
Danish Parliament

TEIJA TIILIKAINEN

Teija Tiilikainen
Representative of the
Prime Minister of Finland

Brussels, 21 May 2002

Mr Kimmo KILJUNEN
Mr Reinhard BÖSCH
Mr Hannes FARNLEITNER
Mr Sören LEKBERG
Mrs Teija TIILIKAINEN
Mr Matti VANHANEN
Mr Henrik DAM KRISTENSEN
Mr Ben FAYOT
Mr Göran LENNMARKER
Mr Caspar EINEM
Mr Paul HELMINGER
Mr Peter SKAARUP

Dear Convention Member,

You were good enough to ensure that your letter about Convention working groups arrived in time for the Praesidium to discuss it at their meeting on 8 May. They fully shared your assessment of the importance of such groups, in particular to explore complex issues in depth, with a view to putting forward considered options for the Convention to consider. They noted your suggestions about the appropriate criteria for choosing the right people to chair groups, and did not dispute their validity. But they thought several other criteria (e.g. expertise in the particular field to be explored by each group; the need to maintain a balance between the various components in the Convention, and the need to maintain coherence in our work) should also be given a certain weight.

On the basis of the Convention's March and April debates, the Praesidium identified six questions (to be announced at next week's Plenary session) which it believes should be examined by a first batch of six working groups. It took the view that these six could most appropriately be chaired by members of the Praesidium. But it is clear that there will be a need to establish further groups in the light of further discussions in Plenary; and I am certain that as the Convention work proceeds the Praesidium will bear in mind the considerations highlighted in your letter.

You have asked that your letter should be circulated to all members of the Convention. The Secretariat will accordingly ensure that it, and this reply, is so circulated.

Very cordially yours,

V. Giscard d'Estaing

