

CONV 289/02

WG IX 4

NOTE

from : Secretariat
to : Working Group IX on Simplification
Subject : Note summarising the meeting on 19 September 2002

1. Membership of the group

The Chairman, Mr Giuliano Amato, announced changes to the membership of the group, which will be joined by two new members, Mr Nicolas Schmit and Mr Francesco Speroni. Ms Linda McAvan has decided to switch groups.

2. Timetable and working methods

Further to comments by the members of the group on CONV 259/02, the Chairman undertook to look into the possibility of changing the dates of the meetings on 23 October, 8 November and 20 November.

Notwithstanding comments from several members, the limited resources of the institutions' interpretation services mean that only interpretation from and into French and English can be provided. The possibility of passive interpretation from other languages may be envisaged if an actual need arises.

Only agendas, summary notes and the group's final report will be translated into all the languages and published on the web site. The other documents will be distributed in French and English. Contributions from members of the group will be distributed in the original language. Members may provide translations of their contributions.

Public access to group meetings will have to be handled pragmatically, allowing for the constraints of security requirements in the Justus Lipsius building and the space available in the meeting room. The same applies to attendance by members' assistants.

Hearings of experts may be envisaged.

3. The group's mandate

Following a general presentation of the group's mandate (CONV 271/02) by the Chairman, many members took the floor, mainly to discuss the fine details of the mandate. Several matters were raised, some of which (see below) do not appear in the document mentioned:

- incorporating the financial perspective into the Treaties
- assent procedure in the framework of international agreements
- right of legislative initiative
- procedure for qualified majority voting in the Council
- Commission's legislative programme
- decision-making procedures (not just legislative and budgetary)
- seat of the European Parliament

Some speakers counselled caution: to cast the net too wide would be to risk losing sight of the group's core task. Some of the issues raised (right of legislative initiative, qualified majority voting in the Council, the Commission's legislative programme) may be discussed by the group because they are part of its allotted subject-matter, but others could complicate the task to the point of being counter-productive.

3. Operational conclusions

The next meeting, on 2 October, will be devoted to legislative and budgetary procedures. The members of the group will receive in due course:

- Commission statistics on the codecision procedure;
- a table of the existing procedures, showing which institutions and bodies of the Union are involved;
- a table showing the basic structure of the various procedures, including the budgetary procedure;
- a list of instruments, with examples of how they are applied in practice.

To ensure a fully-informed examination of the matter, the group could hear the views of those involved in applying the procedures in the various institutions. The Chairman will make the necessary contacts to that end.

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