

CONV 566/03

CONTRIB 252

**COVER NOTE**

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from : Secretariat

to : Convention

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Subject: **Contribution from Mr Péter Balázs, Ms Irena Belohorska, Mr. Jan Figel, Mr. Alain Lamassoure, Ms Liene Liepina, Mr Rytis Martikonis, Mr. Rihards Piks, Mr. József Szájer, Mr. Pál Vastagh and Mr. Edmund Wittbrodt, members of the Convention and Ms Genowefa Grabowska, Mr. Krisjanis Karins, Mr. Guntars Krasts, Mr. František Kroupa and Mr. Szent-Iványi István, alternate members of the Convention**  
– "On the full participation of the acceding states in the European Convention, and on the timing of the Intergovernmental Conference to follow"

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The Secretary-General of the Convention has received the attached contribution annexed hereto from Mr Péter Balázs, Ms Irena Belohorska, Mr. Jan Figel, Mr. Alain Lamassoure, Ms Liene Liepina, Mr Rytis Martikonis, Mr. Rihards Piks, Mr. József Szájer, Mr. Pál Vastagh and Mr. Edmund Wittbrodt, members of the Convention and Ms Genowefa Grabowska, Mr. Krisjanis Karins, Mr. Guntars Krasts, Mr. František Kroupa and Mr. Szent-Iványi István, alternate members of the Convention.

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**Contribution by Mr Péter Balázs, member of the Convention  
and other members of the Convention**

**On the full participation of the acceding states in the European Convention, and  
on the timing of the Intergovernmental Conference to follow**

1. The final result of the European Convention should reflect the consensus of its participants. This must be built on generally accepted principles and solutions. Work in the Convention as well as inside the Presidium has accelerated, and reached a decisive stage recently. At the same time there is a growing concern on the real support behind the various ideas emerging throughout our debate.

Therefore it is vital to render the process of consensus formulation more transparent. Appropriate procedural guarantees must be provided to check the exact level of support on each item under discussion, to test the existence of consensus.

2. The European Council in Laeken set a timeframe, according to which the next Intergovernmental Conference should start in 2004. The new members welcomed the European Council's decision in Copenhagen, providing for their full participation in the next IGC, furthermore the European Council also stated, that the new Treaty will be signed after accession, without prejudice to the timing of the conclusion of the IGC. In each candidate country a referendum will be organised to confirm the results of the negotiations, which were conducted on the basis of the existing *acquis communautaire*, including the current institutional arrangements.

It is essential to have a proper reflection period after the end of the Convention to digest and discuss its results in the new member states. This means, that ideally, the originally envisaged timetable should be kept for the next IGC. We do realise though, that the Convention unfolds faster, and with more determination than some may have believed, and this may also necessitate certain flexibility concerning the IGC's timing. However, it should be in harmony with the forthcoming phase of enlargement:

- The next Intergovernmental Conference should by no means start before the last referendum in the newly acceding states takes place, which is foreseen in September 2003.
- The IGC should not be finished before the ratification process comes to an end in all current Member States, and the new states actually become full fledged members themselves.

3. The Convention's plenary session welcomed the conclusion of the accession negotiations with ten states on 20 December 2002. A new stage will begin after the signature of the accession treaty, foreseen on 16 April 2003, as these countries will be granted active observer status. According to the above mentioned Copenhagen decision their status in the next IGC will be equal with that of the current member states. The quality of the new members' participation in the Convention should be adjusted to both of these changes.

Therefore I suggest, that after 16 April 2003 the ten new countries should obtain equal status with the current members in the Convention as well. This would provide legal clarity, but above all, it would have a major political and symbolic significance contributing to the success of the referendums on accession. I do hope, that this proposal will be supported by the Praesidium and the plenary session of the convention, so the European Council in Athens will be able to confirm the necessary decision.

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