

**CONV 599/03**

**CONTRIB 268**

**COVER NOTE**

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from	Secretariat
to	The Convention
Subject :	Contribution submitted by several members of the Convention: - “Keep the IGC timetable from Nice and Laeken”

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The Secretary-General of the Convention has received the contribution annexed hereto from:

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Mr Kenneth KVIST, Mr Ingvar SVENSSON, Mr Per DALGAARD, Mr Esko HELLE, Lord TOMLINSON, Mr Pat CAREY, Ms Genowefa GRABOWSKA, Mr Ülo TÄRNO, Mr Mihael BREJC, Mr István SZENT-IVÁNYI, Mr Guntars KRASTS, Mr Arturs Krisjanis KARINS, Mr Farn HORVAT, alternate members of the Convention.

Contribution to the European Convention

## **Keep the IGC timetable from Nice and Laeken**

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## **Keep the IGC timetable from Nice and Laeken**

The New Member States have a right to fully participate in the debate on the Future of the Union, since they will be full members in the future Union. As Members of the European Convention representing National Parliaments, we share a particular responsibility for making sure that the Constitutional Treaty, and the process for adoption, respond to the wishes from the citizens to have a greater say in European Union affairs. The Laeken mandate makes it abundantly clear that one of the major concerns in Europe today is the need to reconnect the European project with its citizens. With this in mind, we have come to the following conclusions as regards the method and timetable for the finalisation of the Convention, and for the start of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC).

1. Since Nice and Laeken, an extra element has been added, namely the date of 1 May, 2004, for the accession of the large group of New Member States. There will be referenda on the whether to join the EU in these states. Before their respective referendum, the New Members will not have reached their full negotiating potential in Brussels. The citizens in the New Member States need time after the referenda to debate the Convention outcome.
2. The timetable established at Nice, which foresees the IGC for 2004, makes sense. The outcome of the Convention will most likely be comprehensive, covering the whole range of EU co-operation. This outcome deserves to be debated all over Europe. Such a broad, public debate will only be possible if there is a gap of at least six months between the end of the Convention and the commencement of the IGC.
3. It is of utmost importance that our Parliaments are given real opportunities to pronounce themselves on the Convention outcome, thereby shaping the mandate for the ensuing IGC. The Convention having been initiated with much political fanfare, there must be ample time to discuss the outcome before the Heads of State and Government negotiate and lock themselves in different bargaining positions.
4. The Nice Declaration, as mentioned above, clearly states that the IGC will be convened in 2004. This was a unanimous decision by the Heads of State and Government. It is for those who now propose a different timetable to establish why a change is necessary.

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