

COVER NOTE

from :	Secretariat
to :	Convention
Subject :	Letter from the Chairman to members of the Convention concerning the Convention's working method during its final stages

Members of the Convention will find attached a letter addressed by the Chairman on 8 May 2003 to all members of the Convention concerning the Convention's working method during its final stages.



The European Convention

The Chairman

Brussels, 8 May 2003

Dear fellow member of the Convention,

The Convention is now entering its final stages. Like you, I am anxious to work as efficiently as possible to achieve the best possible result in the relatively short period of time which the European Council has given us. I would therefore like to offer some pointers as to how our work might be organised.

At its next meeting, on 15 and 16 May, the Convention will be discussing draft articles on the Union's institutions, external action and defence. These are very important articles, and we should make sure that we use the time available effectively.

We could organise our discussions as follows: the Convention will meet, as announced, from 9.30 to 13.00 and from 15.00 to 20.00 on both days. Both sessions on the Thursday, and possibly also part of the morning session on Friday, will be devoted to the Union's institutions. The rest of Friday will be devoted to international politics and defence.

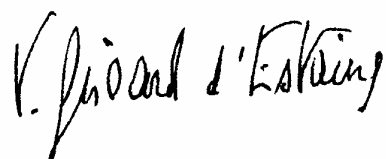
To clarify the discussions, you could let the Secretariat know if you wish to take the floor twice and, if so, you could split your intervention into institutional topics on the one hand and matters relating specifically to external action and defence on the other.

After the discussions on the institutions and external action, the Praesidium will be in possession of the final pieces of information it needs to complete revision of the draft texts presented to you so far and to draw up the preamble. Part Two of the Constitution will contain the text of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In the case of Part Three of the Constitution ("policies"), the Praesidium will take the basic document prepared by the Legal Service experts, who have followed the recommendations of the Working Group on Simplification, and finalise it by inserting new articles, some of which (e.g. on external action and the area of freedom, security and justice) will already have been examined in plenary, and others will reflect the Convention's debates on other subjects, such as the coordination of economic policies, social policy and the budgetary procedure. You should thus be receiving a complete draft constitutional Treaty by the end of May. It could be discussed at the plenary meeting on 30 and 31 May.

That discussion will enable the Praesidium to finalise the method to be followed at the next two plenary meetings (5–6 June and 12–13 June) in order to reach a consensus on the final product. It is clear that our working method in this very last phase will have to be more flexible. Please ensure that you are in Brussels for at least three full days (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) during each of those weeks: meetings of the political or component groups, or of the working circles may be held in order to identify questions which remain to be resolved and to work out solutions to make it possible to reach a final consensus. The Presidency of the Convention (the Vice-Chairmen and myself) will be involved in consultations and contacts, enabling the Praesidium to evaluate progress towards consensus as events unfold.

I hope that this method suits you and that you will be able to contribute to the full in establishing the European Union's Constitution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'V. Giscard d'Estaing'.

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

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