

**EUROPESE CONVENTIE**

SECRETARIAAT

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van: het secretariaat

aan: de Conventie

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Betreft: Bijdrage van de heer Adrian Severin, plaatsvervangend lid van de Conventie

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De secretaris-generaal van de Conventie heeft van de heer Adrian Severin, plaatsvervangend lid van de Conventie, de bijdrage ontvangen die in bijlage dezes staat.

The Missions of Europe

**Contribution of Mr. Adrian Severin, MP (Romania),  
alternate member to the European Convention**

Mr. President,  
Dear Colleagues,

**1. Context**

When speaking about the future missions of Europe and the competences of the European institutions we must realize that our own task and our great **opportunity** is to lay down a draft treaty comprising a **brave vision on Europe**. We do not have the right to miss this opportunity. Our activity should be not limited to a **mere reform of what is today the European Union, but it must result in a project of a new Europe, the united Europe of tomorrow**. That Europe should integrate all the valid achievements of the actual Union, while responding adequately to the present and future challenges.

*The Convention cannot limit itself to an institutional improvement only to solve Nice's leftovers. The stake is much higher. We have gathered here to debate and to agree on a "Constitutional Treaty for Europe". That is not only to yield a corrective act but also to engage in a creative work.*

*Which will be the missions the future united Europe should undertake? Which are the needed institutions in order to fulfill those missions? Which must be the competences of the European institutions, accordingly? These topics are central to the European project and they require a reflection on the nature of the European integration.*

Both the international environment and our citizens' aspirations compel us to set up a **political Europe**, a union with **substantial federal elements which will transform the existing "Europe-market" into a new "Europe-power"**. This presupposes **more competences for the Union, leading to concrete solutions for nation-states' problems**.

## 2. Criteria for a stronger Europe

### Why do we need a stronger Europe, a more political Europe?

**a) The first criterion** to be taken into consideration when deciding the missions of Europe must be: **Europe as a solution for the nation-states' problems.**

When we think about a stronger Europe we usually ask ourselves if we should accept a limitation or a diminishing of our states' sovereignty. In fact there is not about a limitation of sovereignty, but about a different way to exercise the sovereignty; i.e. to exercise it in common.

In the context of globalization, it is not possible any longer to exercise the sovereignty in the traditional way. *Defined as a phenomenon of progressive integration of the markets and rapid – both short and long distance - communication, the globalization brings with itself a dense cross-border transfer of both good and bad things. Consequently the individual governments of the nation-states are more vulnerable than ever and it is increasingly difficult for them to secure the main two aims of good governance: security and prosperity for their citizens.* We have to give credit to the absolute concept of sovereignty for its decisive contribution to the development of the nation states during the past couple of centuries. However, in present times the absolute character of the sovereignty no longer offers full guarantees for the national development. Therefore, European states make the best use of their sovereignties **by sharing them and by pooling them at a superior level.**

*Europe should add value to the governance of the actual nation-states by dealing with issues which cannot be anymore solved (properly) at the national level.*

**b) The second criterion: Europe as a global player.** Europe must have a major role in the decision-making process when the normative framework for two essential global regimes is established:

- i) **Global (hard) security regime.** *Europe must remain dedicated to the idea of peace that inspired the first cooperative and integrative exercise proposed by the founding fathers of today's European Union. Europe has to be a systemic and a structured peace provider.*

*To this end it should place itself into a position allowing it to decisively influence the adoption of the global code of conduct in the field of global defense and security.*

- ii) **Global socio-economic regime.** *The present global dominant economic pattern characterized by the preeminence of the market's mechanisms over the social life must be Europeanized. Only a strong political Europe, i.e. a union of states with consistent federal components, could twin **the efficiency and the solidarity, the freedom of human contacts and the prospective for a decent future everybody could enjoy in their own country.** Likewise, only a strong political Europe – at the same time social and prosperous – could compete successfully with the other poles of the globalized world in terms of **labor market flexibility and technological progress.** Thus the future united Europe will mitigate the negative social shocks induced by globalization and will play a relevant role in shaping the international economic order.*

A nation which “invests” its sovereignty in a project concerning a united Europe wants to be sure that in return it gets shares into a powerful “joint venture”. Europe can become a strong global player only through its political integration. Unless Europe becomes a political Union it will be likely to face disintegration, parochialism and marginalization. Each and every European state is interested in avoiding such a prospective.

c) When building the future Europe we cannot ignore the interests of its constitutive nations. Fundamentally these interests are: **security, dignity and prosperity.** In a political Europe with substantial federal elements, **freedom/independence** will live and develop within and through the fulfillment of the abovementioned interests. None of these interests could be satisfied without appropriate policies elaborated and implemented at the European level.

In respect of **security** we must not ignore the need of building the **social solidarity** and the **labor market flexibility** at the continental level.

As for **dignity**, it includes, *inter alia*, the **equality of opportunities** and the **respect for the diversity of the cultural identities.** As long as the cultural groups have a transborder character, the matter of cultural protection must be approached at the European level. Thus, the very term of cultural/national minorities will disappear (since all cultural groups will be minorities in the future united Europe) and the background for the cultural conflicts will vanish. The member states, as civic nations, will hold the responsibility of guaranteeing the protection for the civil rights of their

citizens.

An essential part of the concept of **prosperity** is the **territorial development**. It deals with ensuring a balanced distribution of economic activities and resources among the member states. In this respect, Europe should preserve what has been done positive until now, as for instance **the structural funds and the common agricultural policies** as an expression of the solidarity policies and a source of European cohesion. At the same time it must establish **appropriate institutional mechanisms** for guaranteeing the balanced development of all territorial entities which will form the future union.

### 3. Subjective prerequisites for a more political Europe

*In order to build a more political Europe one should keep in mind two prerequisites of a rather subjective nature.*

*a) A first subjective prerequisite concerns **the readiness to accept the idea of a fusion of national interests**. In this respect one should remember the logic and the words of Jean Monnet: “What must be sought is a fusion of the interests of the European people and not merely another effort to maintain the equilibrium of those interests.”*

*b) The second prerequisite requests **a motivation for the European citizens in order to let them develop a true animus societatis europensis**. The attractiveness of a more political integrated Europe can be perceived only if a strong motivation is in place. The mere economic motivation is not any longer a satisfactory engine to move integration forward. There is a need of something which appeals not only to the economic interest but also to the people’s hearts and minds. In this way peoples could recover a sense of ownership over the European political process.*

*All those above ask for a European institutional mechanism which, besides its efficiency, should be **transparent, predictable, open and accountable**.*

### 4. Missions of Europe

**The missions of Europe should be explicitly written in the constitutional treaty.** This is necessary for both the transparency and the popular credibility of the future united Europe.

The relevant policies belonging to the second and the third pillars such as those related to **asylum and immigration, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, foreign policy and defense**, should be assigned at European level.

**Financing of the Union budget** should also be carried out at the European level such as to avoid the unproductive disputes between donors and recipients highlighted by the present system of the budget collection. We also need to avoid the option for a mere free exchange zone by empowering the Union to pursue a **concerted institutionalized economic development**.

Care should be given to **European diversity**, a major asset of our continent, which presupposes a protection of the **national/cultural specificity**. The latter would find a clearer **meaning by defining precise national and regional competences in the constitutional treaty** in areas like **culture (cultural development) and education**, while bearing in mind that the nation states members of the future European union/federation will have a civic (and multicultural) nature and not a ethnic one.

Summing up all those above, the core European missions should be (the list is not necessarily exhaustive): **common commercial policy, monetary policy, institutional economic development, asylum and immigration, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, foreign policy, defense, financing of the European budget, environment, free competition's protection, consumer's protection, social policy (by developing a European social model), energy, trans-European networks, economic and social cohesion, common agricultural policy, research and development, public services of general interest**.

A Europe-power needs **strong institutions** both in **legislative and executive branches**. The **European Executive** (the actual European Commission) must have all the competences which will allow it to define the appropriate policies for the general interest of the Union and the member states, to organize their implementation and to enforce them effectively. In this prospective the powers of that Executive should be bigger than those of today's European Commission.

The Executive must be subject of the parliamentary control at both European and national level. Consequently, the role and the powers of the **European Parliament** must be increased.

A **second chamber of the European Parliament**, formed by the representatives of the member states, as well as of the local and regional entities, would secure the necessary guarantees for the **nation states and local interests**. This will be an institution which will moderate the decisions of the European Parliament's political chamber and will reinforce the legitimacy of the union.

A **realistic distribution of competences** implies an approach that should strike a right balance between **transparency**, which would mean a more precise definition of the powers and thus a better understanding by the citizens, and **flexibility**, required by the multilevel governance and the dynamics of the real life.

The delimitation of the competences imposes, to the same extent, a debate on the interpretation and implementation of the **subsidiarity and proportionality principle**. The essence of this debate is how to establish equilibrium between **legitimacy** and **efficiency**. While trying to define this equilibrium, the Convention must bear in mind the need to avoid nationalistic selfishness in using or rather abusing the principle of subsidiarity. To this end one should develop **a theory or rather a system of the global subsidiarity**.

An adequate administration of that system can be done not only by a better formal demarcation of the competences, but also by **cooperation**, by the use of the “**best practices**” and by **procedures of conciliation and arbitration**. Therefore, the solution for the reform of the European governance cannot occur only by inventing new institutions and legal procedures, but also by an intensive use of the **interactive policy-making**.

## **5. Should the missions of the Union be settled now for all time?**

We have to leave Brussels in a year from now with the feeling of having accomplished our duty. This means that we shall have operated as **precise a selection of European institutions' competences** as possible, being aware, at the same time, that nothing is for ever.