

CONV 604/03

CONTRIB 271

BEGELEIDENDE NOTA

van: het secretariaat

aan: de Conventie

Betreft: Bijdrage van the Earl of Stockton, plaatsvervangend lid van de Conventie:
"De hervorming van het institutioneel kader"

De secretaris-generaal van de Conventie heeft van the Earl of Stockton, plaatsvervangend lid van de Conventie, de bijdrage ontvangen die in bijlage dezes staat.

Submission to the Convention on the future of Europe

The Earl of Stockton MEP - Alternate Member of the Convention

"Reforming the institutional framework"

The selection of the Commission of the European Union and the President of the Commission remains one of the more intractable issues facing the Convention. The events of 1999 and subsequent surveys of public opinion show that, rightly or wrongly, the Commission is seen as the embodiment of all that is wrong with Europe.

The function of the Commission should be running the European Union. It does not need democratic legitimacy per se, that is provided by the Parliament. It does not need to be representative of national interest, that is the function of the Council. What it needs is ability, efficiency and probity.

My proposal therefore is that the President of the Commission should be elected by the Parliament. While there are others, my preferred method would be that immediately following the European election, a special Committee of the Parliament should receive nominations from wherever and should draw up a list of candidates to be interviewed and produce a short list of three (or five) to appear before a special plenary of the Parliament in September.

The Parliament would vote for the preferred candidate who would then be endorsed by the Council. It would be the function of the President to choose the Commissioners -how many, for what functions and with what portfolios. Each of his nominations would appear before the special committee (made up of the chairs of Parliament Committees plus five or six others) and if endorsed would then appear before the full Parliament and the Council, following a process similar to the "Advice + Consent" procedure of the U.S.

If the President did not reflect the political, national and structural concerns of Europe (large nation/small nation; north/south, protestant/catholic; atlantic/mediterranean etc) then the Parliament would be reluctant to endorse the candidate. It would also be the responsibility of the Council to ensure that the balance of the Commissioners reflected fairly the national and political composition of the Member States.

The President should be allowed a maximum of two terms of five years and have to re-submit his Commission for the second term. As the membership of the Parliament would have changed (by an average net change of 30 percent per election) re-endorsement would not be automatic.

The Special Committee would have the power to examine and if necessary remove any individual Commissioner at any time with the endorsement of a special Parliamentary Plenary and the Council by qualified majority vote.