



Contribution to the Second Sitting of the Convention of European Students in Rome

Group: IDENTITY

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Foreword to the Contribution:

This contribution is intended to offer concrete amendment proposals for discussion as well as the reasoning behind them according to the current state of the draft Constitution. Therefore it is *only necessary to consider the sections in **bold type for discussion***.

Following a divide in opinion on what a group contemplating Identity should concern itself with, we have decided to offer *two definitions of identity*,

1. **Future Enlargements**, concerned specifically with Citizen's Identity within the EU
2. **Europe's image in the world**, concerned specifically with how the EU will be perceived by the rest of the world in the light of the Constitutional Treaty and policies contained within this text.

Topic 1 - Future Enlargements

Introduction: Enlargement and Identity

Identity can consist of many aspects: values, culture, language, location, etc. In order to promote a European identity, it would seem necessary to know the limits of what might one day become the frontiers of our political union.

The definition of those frontiers cannot be based solely on geographical assumptions (even regarded as a sub-continent of the Eurasian continent, the frontiers of Europe are less obvious than that of the Indian sub-continent), nor on historical facts (Spain was for long integrated into the Arabic world; difficulties to determine the fate of Russia which switched throughout history between a rather European and a rather Asian orientation). Cultural identities are as well little helpful as Europe is built on cultural diversity, many of them shared with their neighbours in Northern Africa, the Near East or the former Soviet Union (not to forget that the girl "Europe", captured by Zeus, was herself born in present Lebanon). Also we cannot solely base the future frontiers on a Europe of values, this is because values and cultures in states and nations evolve at different speeds, the CEEC's are a particularly striking example of

how this can happen on a political level. We do not hold the same singularly important culture as does the USA. 25 Countries is bound to hold a complex set of identities. But when the Maastricht treaty introduced the notion of European citizenship, it said; "Union citizenship complements national citizenship, it is not a replacement".

We do have a common identity, it is, however unquantifiable but has tangible aspects: social democracy and rule of law, in this quality the democracy, the justice, the legality, the equality and the politics of pluralism in a Europe of multi-level governance as well as the promotion of interdependence with other regional arrangements and countries (special relations with ASEAN or MERCOSUR...), based on regional co-operation is our way.

At present in the Draft Constitutional Treaty:

Article I-57 (CONV 724/03) any states which wishes to become a member of the union may address its application to the Council. According to the article, the union will be open to all states who share the values set out in Article I-2 ("The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These values are common to the Member States in a society of pluralism, tolerance, justice, equality, solidarity and non-discrimination").

It remains unclear whether, for example, Canada could become a member or not and on what base other than the values of article I-2 the Council may decide who will become member or not.

As the building of a European identity (shared not only by sections of society such as the academic one) lacks substance because of an incomplete European public sphere (European media, linguistic/pedagogical borders), future enlargements should take into account, that Europe should be the promoter of commonly held identities such as democracy and human rights but also the defender of diversity. There is a certain sentiment among Europeans that there should be some concrete objective of the Union. With this in mind, the European identity should be considered as "*a socio-cultural variety of European States with a goal of social, political and economic cohesion*". Thus, in the context of an ever globalised world, it is obvious that the social, the political and the economic sides are interconnected and must be considered with respective weight as defining a European identity.

It is fundamental to the future of the EU to promote the fact that Europe is not going to be a super-state, and that it is an extremely exciting political grouping of a post-national order, where interdependence on all regions of the world is the defining element in our futures. The concept of membership is secondary to the supreme importance of the promotion of the values such as human dignity, etc within and outside of the EU.

For this reason, the European Union should expand only to those states where they and their peoples can involve themselves in the "European Public Sphere", and who are, for the majority, aligned with the fundamental beliefs underlying European Integration, "uniting peoples, not joining states". This is a criteria that has been overlooked, negligently so in the current globalising climate where the public sphere of life is becoming ever closer, events all over the world affecting us, as we are affecting events over the world. Otherwise Europe will be watered down and our own sense of belonging to a community will be left unbuilt.

Article I - 57 shall thus be amended as follows:

1. The Union shall be open to all the European States which respect the values referred to in Article I - 2, which are committed to promoting them together **and which are able to competently integrate into a European public sphere, promoting common European identity.**

2. Any European State which wishes to become a member of the Union may address its application to the Council. The European Parliament and the Member States' national Parliaments shall be notified of this application. The Council shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. The conditions and arrangements for admission shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the Candidate State. That agreement shall be subject to ratification by all the contracting States, in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

Article I-44: The principle of democratic equality

In all its activities, the Union shall observe the principle of the equality of citizens. All shall receive equal attention from the Union's Institutions.

In order to achieve democratic equality the member states should endeavour to promote in their population a common European identity especially through the means of national education systems, this promotion will enable the Union to remain in close proximity to its citizens and should be conducted in partnership with the other member states and the Union's institutions.

Article I-45: The principle of representative democracy

1. The Working of the Union shall be founded on the principle of representative democracy.

2. Citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament. Member States are represented in the European Council and in the Council by their governments, themselves accountable to national parliaments, elected by their citizens.

3. Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen.

4. Political parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of Union citizens.

Article I-46: The principle of participatory democracy

The Union Institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views on all areas of Union action.

The Union Institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.

3. The Commission shall carry out broad prior consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.

Topic 2 – Europe’s image in the world

Introduction: External image and Identity

The identity of Europe does not become as visible in any other domain than when it comes to the external image of Europe towards its immediate environment and third countries. If international relations sometimes appear to be a jungle with both friendly species and dangerous enemies, how should the Union behave? Shall the EU be a tiger (with military capabilities) promoting its interest / its values or rather an elephant (strong – economic – influence but rather peaceful)?

At present in the Draft Constitutional Treaty

Article I-56 (CONV 724/03) gives some indication with regard to the union’s immediate environment (“aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on co-operation”). For the common foreign and security policy as well as for its defence policy, such indications are missing. Only strong-point is the declaration that the union’s military engagements must be in accordance with article 51 of the UN charter.

Proposed Amendments

The union’s objectives in its international relations shall be made more visible by amending article I-39 paragraph 1 as follows:

The European Union shall conduct a common foreign and security policy, **aiming to promote peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding for cultural and religious differences**, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States, the identification of questions of general interest and the achievement of an ever-increasing degree of convergence of Member States’ actions.