The future of the European Union

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The Council, on the basis of a new contribution by the presidency, continued its discussions concerning preparation for the Laeken Declaration on the future of the Union . Following the discussion, the President noted that the general structure of the Declaration put forward by the presidency in three parts – political analysis of the state of the Union and citizens' expectations; reminder of the content of the Nice Declaration, taking the Nice terms as a starting point; decision convening a Convention – was welcomed. With regard to the subjects for the Convention, the draft text should be as developed as possible so that delegations could prepare for Laeken in full knowledge of the facts. These subjects would be presented in the form of questions. Furthermore, certain additional points of reference were adopted, namely: - the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; - the legitimacy of the European Parliament, the link between the European Parliament and national parliaments and the increased role of national parliaments; - not questioning the Community acquis; - the Union's enhanced external dimension; - the effectiveness of the Union's decision-making process.