# The future of the European Union

2001/2180(INI) - 22/10/2001

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Jo LEINEN (PES, D) and Iñigo MÉNDEZ DE VIGO (EPP-ED, E) on the Laeken European Council and the future of the Union. The report focused on the nature of the Convention which would lay the groundwork for the next reform of the Treaties, saying that its composition should reflect the full range of European political opinion, as in the case of the Convention that had drafted the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The applicant countries should take part as permanent observers, as should the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. The Convention's work should be directed by a Bureau or Praesidium, chaired by a distinguished European political figure chosen by the Convention itself and including representatives of the Commission, the national parliaments, the European Parliament and the Council. Once the Convention had completed its work, the Bureau should play a full and active part at all stages and levels of the IGC which would have to ratify the Treaty changes proposed by the Convention. The committee also said that the Convention's proceedings should be fully transparent. Dialogue with the public should be stepped up and maintained throughout the process. The Convention's task should be to draft a single coherent proposal to be submitted to the IGC as the sole basis for negotiation for the reform of the Treaties. It should start work immediately after the Laeken European Council and complete its work in time to allow the IGC to wind up its proceedings by the end of 2003, with the new Treaty being adopted in December 2003. The Union that emerged from this process should fulfil the Community's original objective of being a union of peoples and states capable of meeting the criteria of democratic legitimacy, transparency and efficiency, which were essential for enlargement. Thus, the Treaty reform should include, in addition to the 4 topics listed in the Nice Treaty, an updating of the tasks performed by the Council, a review of the system of presidencies, simplification and transparency of legislative procedures (use of qualified majority voting (QMV) in Council and codecision with Parliament as the norm) and election of the President of the Commission by Parliament. Lastly, MEPs added that recent international events had put internal and external security issues on the European agenda once again. There was therefore a need to develop a common security and defence policy, consolidate fundamental rights in the Treaty and devise a common policy on police and justice issues, both civil and criminal.