Resolution on the progress report on the Intergovernmental Conference

2003/2585(RSP) - 04/12/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the IGC, ccalling on the Heads of State and Government to continue their efforts and overcome their differences in order to arrive at a balanced and positive result on 13 December 2003. The resolution was adopted by 346 votes in favour, to 106 against with 58 abstentions. Parliament expressed its concern at the calling into question by certain Member States of the Convention's proposals for institutional reform. Any solution found to the reform of the three institutions must respect the balance between representation and efficiency. Parliament stated that it supported for the proposals in the draft Constitution regarding the definition of 'qualified majority and felt that there was a margin for compromise on the proposed figures, provided that such a compromise respects the principle of the double majority and the lowering of the threshold fixed at Nice. There must be no retreat from the Convention proposals for a measured extension of qualified-majority voting. Parliament stressed the importance of the Convention text on simplified procedures to move from unanimity to qualified-majority voting or from a special legislative procedure to the ordinary legislative procedure (general bridging clause). Parliament also deplored the apparent decision to do away with the Legislative Council, which was intended to effect a clearer separation between the Council's law-making and executive functions, and to guarantee full transparency of the legislative process. It hoped that at least the option of introducing the Legislative Council at a later stage would be maintained. Parliament moved on to warn the IGC not to call into question the general balance achieved in the Convention on the financial and budgetary provisions, rejecting any attempt to weaken Parliament's current budgetary rights as this would be a major attack on Parliament's core principles. It supported the proposals in the draft Constitution concerning the composition of the Commission. There is a danger that appointing one Commissioner per Member State would impart an intergovernmental character to it. The IGC must also uphold the compromise reached in the Convention whereby the Union's Foreign Minister, as a full Vice-President of the Commission, presided over a joint administration comprising Commission, Council and national officials within the Commission and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council. Finally, Parliament felt that a proposal to limit the remit of the public prosecutor to the fight against fraud affecting the Union's financial interests must be accompanied by the application of the ordinary legislative procedure.