Resolution on the next steps for the period of reflection and analysis on the future of Europe

2006/2576(RSP) - 14/06/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

In adopting a joint resolution with 347 votes in favour 212 against and 70 abstentions on the next steps for the period of reflection and analysis on the Future of Europe, MEPs confirmed their commitment to achieving without undue delay a constitutional settlement for the European Union as well as its endorsement of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Parliament warned against any attempts to unravel the global compromise achieved in the Constitutional Treaty, as this would seriously call into question the European political project and create the risk of a weakened and divided Union. Accordingly, it confirmed its opposition to the piecemeal implementation of parts of the constitutional package deal, as well as its opposition to the immediate creation of core groups of certain Member States as a way of circumventing the constitutional process for the Union as a whole. On the other hand, it supported certain democratic improvements to institutional procedures that could be agreed under the terms of the existing EU Treaties.

Parliament called on the European Council to move from the period of reflection to a period of analysis extending to mid-2007, with a view to reaching a clear proposal as to how to proceed with the Constitutional Treaty no later than the second half of 2007. The European Council must seek clear commitments from each Member State as to the ways and means by which it proposed to create a structured public debate focusing on the key questions relating to the future of Europe during the extended period of reflection. Parliament asked the Commission to adjust its 'Plan D' for the second phase of the period of reflection and to provide sufficient funding for the activities envisaged.

Parliament went on to call on the European Council to invite the Member States which had not yet finalised the ratification procedures to work out, by the end of the reflection period, credible scenarios as to how they intend to take matters forward. Parliament suggested that the European Council develop an appropriate framework so as to enable a specific dialogue to take place as soon as the political calendar allows with the representatives of those countries in which the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty had a negative outcome in order to explore whether and under what conditions it would appear possible for them to resume the ratification procedure.

Parliament asked the Commission to endorse this approach and to present to the European Council a 'road-map' for implementing it in the best possible manner. It drew the attention of the Commission to the fact that a constitutional order was essential in order to make the Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding, build a European democracy and make the Union more capable of action and more social. Parliament also called on the Commission to draw up a study of the costs incurred as a result of the fact the Constitutional Treaty would not enter into force as originally hoped on 1 November 2006.

It drew the following conclusions from the discussions with members of national parliaments of the Union's Member States which took place on 8-9 May 2006 in Brussels:

a) the need to continue the constitutional process of the European Union which is anchored in the concepts of peace and solidarity and other common values has been confirmed;

b) there is no doubt that the Member States of the Union will not be able to cope alone with the major political challenges facing Europe;

c) it is generally recognised that the Constitutional Treaty would provide the European Union with an appropriate framework for addressing these challenges;

d) a deeper analysis will be needed so as to allow proposals to be developed in 2007 which should lead to a settlement before the next European election;

e) the interparliamentary dialogue on the constitutional process in which the European Parliament and the parliaments of the Member States are partners is essential and needs to be continued. It also welcomes the announcement by the President of the Finnish Parliament that a second parliamentary forum would be held in December 2006;

f) debates in the parliamentary forums should be organised in such a way as to enable an intensive and lively exchange to take place.

Finally, Parliament reaffirmed its objective that the necessary constitutional settlement should be ready when the citizens of the Union are called to the European elections in 2009.