

Rome Declaration by the Chairman of the European Convention (18 July 2003)

Caption: The Rome Declaration, issued on 18 July 2003 by the Chairman of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, to mark the handing-over of the full draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe to the Italian Presidency of the European Council.

Source: Rome Declaration, V. Giscard d'Estaing, Chairman of the European Convention, Rome, 18 July 2003. [s.l.]: Le président de la Convention européenne, 2003. 5 p.

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Rome declaration (Rome, 18 July 2003)

V. Giscard D'Estaing Chairman of the European Convention

I. On 18 July 2003 the Chairman of the Convention on the future of Europe, V. Giscard d'Estaing, accompanied by the two Vice-Chairmen, G. Amato and J.-L. Dehaene, on the Convention's behalf, officially handed over the full draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe to the Italian Presidency of the European Council.

When meeting President Ciampi and Prime Minister Berlusconi, Mr Giscard d'Estaing paid tribute to the key contribution made by the Italian members of the Convention, G. Amato, as Vice-Chairman, G. Fini, representing the Italian Government, L. Dini, representing the Italian Senate, and M. Follini, representing the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and their alternates.

Mr Giscard d'Estaing called on the Italian Presidency to conduct the Intergovernmental Conference at the highest political level, so as to bring it to completion under the Italian Presidency, in December 2003. After the Treaty of Rome, the Rome Constitution would thus come into being. Italy, as a founding member of the European Union, will have had a key hand in it.

The Constitution could then be signed in May 2004, just before the next European elections, which would set the seal of popular approval on it.

The ten new Member States will already be full members of the Union, by then, and the signing will come in time for the European elections in June 2004.

II. With this Constitution, Europe is taking a decisive step towards political union: a union of citizens and a union of Member States. The Constitution:

- enshrines citizens' rights by incorporating the European Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- turns Europe towards its citizens by holding out new opportunities for them to participate;
- establishes a clear, transparent apportionment of powers between the Union and its Member States, enabling national parliaments to intervene. The Union's powers are extended in areas where that is what its citizens want:
- implementation of an area of freedom, security and justice, with more effective action to combat major crime, and recognition by Member States of one another's different systems of civil law;
- gradual development of a common foreign and defence policy, with a European Foreign Minister to act and speak for Europe in the world, and establishment of a European arms agency;
- improvement of economic coordination between countries using the euro, so as to ensure the stability and success of our common currency;
- provides Europe with stable, democratic and effective institutions:
- the European Parliament becomes the Union's main legislature. It will enact laws together with the Council. European legislation will be the product of agreement between citizens' elected representatives and States;

- the Council will have a face and a measure of durability; its President will organise States' work and will be able to plan for the future and think ahead;
- the Commission, organised so as to fulfil its European role, will act as a driving force and the main executive. It will embody the common European interest.

III. The draft Constitution is a success because it strikes the necessary balance between peoples, between States new and old, between institutions and between dream and reality.

The draft is a success because it is a finished product, with no loose ends to be tied up, no options left open.

It is in the general interest. With that in mind, the Chairman of the Convention, together with the two Vice-Chairmen, called on the Italian Presidency – and the President of the European Council, Silvio Berlusconi, in person – to have the text left as it stands. Reopening it, even in part, would cause it to unravel.

The Chairman of the Convention places his trust in the Italian Presidency, confident that it will live up to that responsibility and that on 9 May 2004 the European Union will be able to sign its Rome Constitution.