

Interview with Jacques F. Poos: the proliferation of treaties (Sanem, 16 April 2004)

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[Étienne Deschamps] Let us turn to the Treaties. Following the Single Act, we have had the Treaties of Maastricht, of Amsterdam, of Nice, not to mention the draft document setting out the new European Constitution. Would you regard this proliferation of European legal texts as a sign of the inadequacy or, conversely, of the gradual — perhaps chaotic, but nonetheless gradual — strengthening of the role of the European Union?

[Jacques F. Poos] It is not a sign of inadequacy. At the root of all these Intergovernmental Conferences there was the will to adapt the European Union to geopolitical changes, such as the fall of communism, the need to give ourselves a common currency, the integration of ten, twelve or thirteen new Member States. I think that we were ready, and that it was quite acceptable and correct to adapt our structures to an economic environment which had, after all, changed considerably since the end of the Second World War. The result of all that is always a compromise, neither ideal nor acceptable to everybody, and you have seen the referendums in Ireland and Denmark — there are also to be referendums on the draft Constitution as well — so there is now a question mark over its entry into force. I do not know when this Treaty will come into force, but what we do know is that at that point the ten that are due to enter on the 1 May will already be there.

[Étienne Deschamps] It will clearly be a strong pledge of goodwill in all matters European, or the contrary. Very soon, and after an accession, they will have to take a stance on some complicated issues. It is, to some extent, a test.

[Jacques F. Poos] ‘Learning by doing’; that is what they will have to do immediately after their accession. There will be some failures, but I think there will be some successes and some good decisions taken by the 25 as well.