

Address given by Claude Turmes on the achievements of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Brussels, 22 June 2005)

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[Claude Turmes] Madam President, I would like to start by thanking the Luxembourg presidency for the good and pragmatic work it has done. I think more presidencies with such a pro-European attitude and less in the way of a pettifogging national outlook on the part of whatever government is at the helm would do us all a lot of good. In the aftermath of the summit, Europe is the subject of much negative language and sentiment. We did of course have something of a hangover in the first few days after it was over, and I am glad that our Prime Minister in the Luxembourg parliament yesterday and in this House today has regained his old form, and that we are aware of the need, more than ever, for a forward-looking and positive attitude to this Europe of ours. The crisis is made less profound by the fact that more members of the public than ever before are taking an interest in Europe, and there are two things that they want: they want more input into debates, and they want Europe's actual policies to go in a different direction. As far as the new direction for European policy is concerned and I see Mr Barroso looks to be already on the edge of his seat with anticipation it is my view that, having presided over the Commission for a year, you really should think about to what extent your Commission's decisions on Bolkestein, the Working Time Directive, REACH and climate change have helped to promote a positive attitude to Europe, or whether, on the other hand, they tend to turn even more members of the public against the Constitution. My final point is that, in Luxembourg, on 10 July, we will be campaigning for the Constitution. We in the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance will be doing our bit to help get a yes, for Europe is not the problem, and this Constitution is not the problem, but rather the solution to our problem.