

## Interview with Catherine Lalumière: the objectives of the IGC (Paris, 17 May 2006)

**Source:** Interview de Catherine Lalumière / CATHERINE LALUMIÈRE, Étienne Deschamps, prise de vue : François Fabert.- Paris: CVCE [Prod.], 17.05.2006. CVCE, Sanem. - VIDEO (00:04:56, Couleur, Son original).

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**Last updated:** 05/07/2016

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[Catherine Lalumière] In six months, around six months, a great deal of work had been done within this IGC. The three recalcitrant countries were there. We really worked hard, and I remember that, on behalf of France, I carried out a lot of bilateral work during this time, work behind the scenes, nothing spectacular, but, at the time, it was clear that, at institutional level, France had a leading role to play. It was not alone, but ... it was expected to provide ideas and ideas for solutions as well, not necessarily highly advanced ideas which have no chance of being accepted, but ideas which facilitate compromise, which enable certain countries to save face. I remember having made several return journeys to various capital cities. At a higher level, Roland Dumas did the same thing, and, at a higher level again, François Mitterrand did the same thing, and that is how we arrived in Luxembourg.

[Étienne Deschamps] Why a revision of the Treaties? At that time, what were the problems facing the Ten — the Twelve — to which they wanted to find a solution?

[Catherine Lalumière] Well, there are always the same problems. The latest draft Constitutional Treaty had to overcome the same problems. The starting point was unanimous decision-making. In practical terms, it was the rule. However, this was not entirely the case, there was ... the vast majority of decisions were taken unanimously.

[Étienne Deschamps] Since the Luxembourg Agreement? Since the famous Luxembourg Compromise?

[Catherine Lalumière] Yes, that's right; in any case, it was the interpretation which was given at the time, and the Treaty of Rome did not protect us against that. So, it was clear that the more work the Community carried out, the more it would encounter problems — even without changing the Treaty of Rome, merely because there was a mechanism which was implemented — and the more we would have difficulties in taking decisions. So, henceforth, the decision-making procedure was a major concern. We are experiencing the same problem now. But, step by step, each of the Treaties, starting with the Single Act, enabled us to make progress in this area. There were also concerns regarding the sphere of competence. Fairly quickly, we came up against the issue of the sphere of competence of the Member States which, unprepared, instinctively did not want to cede their powers to the Community. We also saw the beginnings of this problem of the democratisation of the institutions. Already, at this time — it was the period of the Adonnino working party which I mentioned — more and more of us were becoming concerned about this gulf between citizens and the European authorities. So, a procedure centred on unanimity — and we could see that that did not work well — secondly, a sphere of competence that was too narrow, and a Community which was bursting apart at the seams, and, thirdly, a clear and increasing gulf between the European authorities and citizens ... So, overall, rather a lot of things. Solutions had to be found for these things, all the more so because the Community, at the instigation of the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, had set itself a number of ambitious objectives, including the single market — the internal market, the establishment of the internal market — the lifting of barriers and borders, the abolition of borders within the European Union. It was absolutely essential to provide the necessary support. So this IGC was very important. It was very important, and it was very important to have an initial reform of the Treaty of Rome.