

Interview with Hans-August Lücker: disappointment at the new role of the European Parliament (Bonn, 15 May 2006)

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[François Klein] What has changed since the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament by universal suffrage in 1979?

[Hans-August Lücker] That was a key decision for Europe. As a result of that decision we acquired in practice the role we had always said belonged to us in a representative democracy. But what has changed since then? Unfortunately, not what we had intended. We still have no government, not even that proposed by France. There is no economic government. Either we get a government or we do not.

And the second issue: as a result of this general election of the European Parliament we are, still today, stuck halfway along the road to where we should be. And Parliament has woefully failed to do what it should have done, or had a duty to do, in order to overcome this situation.

As long ago as 1984 we had put forward a treaty for the establishment of a European Union, which emanated essentially from Altiero Spinelli and myself. When Spinelli and I left Parliament in 1985, it no longer had the courage to return to that treaty.

It then allowed itself to be locked into this Convention formula, which should not have happened. In this way Parliament, the directly elected European Parliament, relinquished its birthright. Who else but the European Parliament had the legitimate authority to mark out the way to European Union? The Spinelli-Lücker treaty would have offered a suitable basis, even today. Now we have the result, a remarkable result from the Convention, but no one feels obliged to pay attention to it. The Convention is an intellectual forum, not a political one. And that is what I deplore. If, after Nice, Parliament had given preference to this treaty from 1984, perhaps making one or two changes, but insisting that the elected Parliament is the correct authority ... Well, Parliament did not see itself as — competent, yes — but not as the proper authority to take on the task.