

## Address given by Luís Amado at the opening session of the Intergovernmental Conference (Brussels, 23 July 2007)

**Caption:** On 23 July 2007, in Brussels, at the opening session of the Intergovernmental Conference on the reform of the Treaties, Luís Amado, Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs and President-in-Office of the Council of the European Union, delivers an address on the mandate, timetable and organisation of the work of the Conference.

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## CONFERÊNCIA INTERGOVERNAMENTAL (CIG)

### Notas para a sessão de abertura

- Today we are beginning the Intergovernmental conference which the European Council **agreed** to convene. The requisite legal formalities have been accomplished. The Presidency thanks the European Parliament, the Commission and the Central Bank for their decisive contributions to permitting this IGC to begin its work in July.
- It is also an item of elementary justice to recognise the excellent work done by the German presidency, which has allowed us to progress from a time for reflection to the **present time for action**.
- The European Council was very clear in indicating that the **IGC must conclude its work as quickly as possible**, on the basis of a draft Treaty which will be distributed immediately in this room. We are grateful to the Legal Service of the Council for its assistance to the Presidency in drafting this text.
- The Presidency will guide this IGC in strict compliance with the mandate we received. That mandate is the unique basis and exclusive framework for the work of the IGC. We shall not deviate one millimetre from that mandate. The mandate set out the **explicit will** of **all the Heads of State and Government** which approved it. The general responsibility for the conduct of this IGC falls on them.
- It is also vital that we remain fully alert to the aim of this exercise: to amend the Treaties currently in force with a view to strengthening the efficiency and the democratic legitimacy of the enlarged Union, and the coherence of its external action. The mandate we hold is the **sole** instrument which will allow us to pursue those aims.
- The Union is currently going through a period of evident **economic** growth. The **political climate** is one of **optimism** in the Union's capacities and the scope for understanding between all the Member States. But the international situation in which we find ourselves contains many worrying signs, and it is vital that the Union should not allow itself to be paralysed once again on account of internal, institutional problems, so that it may respond to the real challenges that it must face. Thus, we must conclude this debate on the Treaties, which has already gone on long enough.
- At political level, there is a consensual wish that we organise our work in such a way that we can conclude it as swiftly as possible. **It is essential to respect the undertakings we have all given**. Good faith and the principle of honest cooperation must constantly guide the action of every participant in this Conference.
- **The Presidency has organised the working of this IGC with the aim of concluding negotiations on 18 and 19 October**, in Lisbon.

A note has been sent to everyone regarding the organisation of the Conference, to which I wish to add just one remark: the **essential** work must be done by the group of legal experts who tomorrow will hold its first meeting and who will be given a timetable for their work. But the Presidency will also use every available opportunity to seek progress at political level in this matter.

This is how we interpret the **mandate for action** conferred upon us by the European Council.

- We also wish to ensure the necessary **transparency** for this process. The people this process is aimed at are not the Member States or the Institutions, but the citizens of Europe. For that reason, all the documents from this Conference will be published. Today, even, they will be published on the internet.
- It remains for us to get to work and express our hopes for – or rather, wish **ourselves** – a successful conference. The Presidency will do its utmost to put into practice the agreement reached by our Heads of

State and Government. **Together**, I am sure we shall succeed.