

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



**SPECIAL EDITION**

*DIRECTORATE FOR THE PLANNING  
OF PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS*

## **EUROPEAN COUNCIL 13 and 14 October 2000 BIARRITZ**

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT NICOLE FONTAINE**



**03/S-2000**

*Directorate-General for the  
Presidency*

**EN**

**EN**

**This bulletin is also available on the EPADES database,  
under PUBLIC\SOMMET\BIARRITZ\speech03S2000\_EN.doc  
and Internet « <http://www.europarl.eu.int> »**

# **SPEECH**

**by the President of the European Parliament,**

**Mrs Nicole FONTAINE**

**to the Heads of State and Government**

**of the European Union,**

**at the European Council in Biarritz**

**13 October 2000**

**As delivered**



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's meeting of the European Union's Heads of State and Government takes place against an extraordinary background. History is being made before our very eyes.

For that reason, before I turn to the Intergovernmental Conference issues which will form the core of your discussions as you prepare for the decisive European Council meeting in Nice, I should like to set out the European Parliament's reaction to the very different events in Yugoslavia and the Middle East.

## **YUGOSLAVIA**

Now that democracy has been restored and sanctions lifted, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can once again take its full place in the European family. We can only rejoice at this.

There are of course problems, particularly in Montenegro and Kosovo, which the triumph of democracy cannot resolve overnight. But the way is now clear to finally extinguish the volcano which has wreaked such havoc in the last 150 years of European history, and bring peace to the Balkans.

The European Parliament supports all the initiatives taken by the Council in the last few days.

Last Thursday at Strasbourg, Parliament expressed its support for the bravery of a people which had just taken control of its own destiny.

Parliament had called for sanctions to be lifted: you lifted them on Monday in Luxembourg, taking great pains to ensure that the Serbian nation could regain confidence in the Union.

Tomorrow at the invitation of the President of the Union, Jacques Chirac, you will be welcoming Mr Vojislav Kostunica to Biarritz - the man who, with the support of his entire nation, has put a peaceful end to the last surviving dictatorship on the European continent, and wiped out the last remaining trace of Yalta.

Rest assured that Parliament will continue to do everything within its remit, both political and budgetary, to support the effort which is now called for to rebuild this crucial region, help its various ethnic communities, still torn apart by hatred, to learn how to live together in harmony, and – why not? – one day prepare its accession to the Union.

With regard to war crimes and crimes against humanity, while the European Parliament is fully aware that the most urgent need of the new and vulnerable Serbia of today is to consolidate a fragile democracy which requires domestic peace and consensus, tomorrow it will still be essential to bring Mr Milosevic and those who helped him to plan and carry out these crimes to book.

## **MIDDLE EAST**

In view of the tragic events occurring even as I speak in the Middle East, I must tell you that Parliament urgently wants to see the European Union make a decisive contribution to halting the escalating violence, relaunching the peace talks and reestablishing a climate of trust between the opposing sides.

In both camps, those prepared to talk are still struggling to combat hatred and bring peace to the region. Avraham Burg, the President of the Knesset, and Ahmed Qurie (Abu Ala), President of the Palestinian Legislative Council, gave proof of this when they addressed the European Parliament in plenary sitting from the same platform on 5 September in Strasbourg.

This was a great moment in the history of Parliament, and the courageous overtures made on both sides, particularly with regard to the status of the Holy Places of Jerusalem, the key issue in the negotiations, showed that peace was only a hand's breadth away.

I would pay particular tribute to the major efforts made by the French Presidency, both in Paris in the last few days, or in the region itself, when Mr Solana and Mr Moratinos visited it.

The sooner the Union equips itself with a genuine common foreign policy, and sets up a common defence and intervention force, the sooner it will have real credibility and be able to exert its proper influence on the future of the region.

Peace, in the Balkans no less than the Middle East, will demand truly massive solidarity of an altogether special kind.

We appreciate the undertakings given by Mr Prodi and I can assure the Council that Parliament, as budgetary co-authority, will play its part in this process.

But it will not be enough to shuffle aid around like dominoes, chopping a little bit here to add a little bit there. What is needed is a more wholehearted commitment to revising the financial perspective in the field of external action. However, in order to be effective, the European Union's contribution has to be tailored to meet the real needs of the situation. I would point out that exceptional circumstances demand exceptional decisions, and I urge you to take those decisions.

**SPAIN**

And finally, to conclude these opening remarks, I would observe that this Council is being held virtually on the Spanish border and that I can assure Mr Aznar, once again, of Parliament's complete solidarity with all those Spanish citizens who reject and condemn the mindless violence which is seeking to impose a reign of terror on democracy.

As John HUME, one of the fathers of the Northern Ireland peace process, said to Parliament during our recent debate on terrorism: 'All that violence does is deepen divisions. Those who claim to be acting to achieve human rights and kill are undermining the most fundamental human right of all, the right to life. Only when there is an absolute and total end to violence, can there be dialogue'.

Our solidarity with the people of Spain in their belief in the strength of peace and democracy is absolute.

**CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

Coming now to the items at the heart of your agenda, I would first address the issue of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. I know that you will be discussing it at length with Professor BRAIBANT, Mr Iñigo MENDEZ DE VIGO and Mr JANNSON on Saturday.

Today, I will only say just how much Parliament is delighted by the large measure of consensus which the Charter's contents appear to enjoy. The Convention's participative method of working proved to be extremely efficient and effective and could serve as a point of reference in the future when drawing up a European Constitution, and even for revising the Treaties.

But the hard fact is that this Charter will be fully effective only if it is integrated into the Treaty in some way. Recent positions adopted on this issue show that the message has got through. If the Charter cannot be incorporated into the Treaty immediately, referring to it in Article 6 could, I think, reconcile the opposing points of view which I know exist.

I can assure you that any other solution, on the lines of a mere declaration, would not impress the citizens of Europe, and would tarnish the image of the Union as the guardian of the fundamental rights acknowledged and respected as legally binding throughout our Union.

I would add that the revision of Articles 6 and 7 should reflect these same concerns and, as the Wise Men suggested in their report, facilitate preventive watchfulness when this is called for. Here, the recent proposal from the Commission strikes me as promising.

## **CLOSER COOPERATION**

With regard to closer cooperation, Parliament is open to making it more flexible and extending it, given that 'closer integration' is in the natural order of things. But we have always said that we want to avoid any risk of closer cooperation fragmenting Community powers, causing legal confusion and blurring the Union's image when what is actually needed is a far more high profile and intelligible Union, both domestically and internationally, so that the Union can finally start playing its proper role on the world scene.

The experience of the euro, the experience of the Schengen area and the current splitting of roles between the Commission and the Higher representative for the common foreign and security policy, all make it abundantly clear that a chaotic proliferation of criss-cross cooperation between Member States, sidelining the Community institutions – especially the Commission and Parliament - would involve the very risks I have just spoken about and would end up in an unacknowledged return to the intergovernmental method.

A step backwards on this scale would be rejected by Parliament. The proposal currently on the negotiating table would allow these risks to be circumvented, providing Parliament's role is strengthened.

## **THE AMSTERDAM 'LEFTOVERS'**

With regard to the three major issues left hanging by the Amsterdam Treaty, which are the priorities of the Intergovernmental Conference, Parliament would simply be unable to accept that they be put off yet again. What is at stake is the long term survival and credibility of the Union's institutions.

The first priority is of course extending qualified-majority voting, with its natural corollary, codecision. I know that, yes, progress has been made in some forty areas. This is hardly negligible, what counts is not the number forty. What counts is how we envisage the enlarged European Union of tomorrow. What are its long-term prospects?

In this connection, the combined effect of the two fundamental principles which govern the single market, namely freedom of movement and fair competition, mean that sooner or later all issues linked to economic activity will, in one way or another, become essential to the smooth operation of the internal market. This includes issues which currently appear to be blocked, such as social and cohesion policy, taxation, external trade, justice and home affairs. Let us not kid ourselves. These four areas are essential.

Parliament believes that the time has come to take this decisive step. By doing so you will not only show courage and ambition, but also display your sense of realism. It is what Europe's citizens are waiting for. This is what people want, and they will judge the IGC on this basis.

In conclusion, I would underline the historic importance of this reform which as you, Mr President, have stated several times, must not be limited to an agreement on lowest common denominators.

However great - or grave - the events shaking international politics in the Middle East or Yugoslavia, they should not divert the European Council here in Biarritz from its essential objectives, which are to adapt the European Institutions to the needs of an enlarged Union.

'By their works, ye shall know them'. Believe me, the eyes of Europe and its Parliament are on you here in Biarritz. What is needed is a political quantum leap, and I urge you here today to give the green light for that leap to be made.

Thank you.

**ooOOoo**

# New .eu Domain

## Changed Web and E-Mail Addresses

The introduction of the .eu domain also required the web and e-mail addresses of the European institutions to be adapted. Below please find a list of addresses found in the document at hand which have been changed after the document was created. The list shows the old and new address, a reference to the page where the address was found and the type of address: http: and https: for web addresses, mailto: for e-mail addresses etc.

**Page:** 2            **Old:** <http://www.europarl.eu.int>  
**Type:** *http:*    **New:** <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>

---