

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Committee on Development*

PROVISIONAL  
2004/2129(INI)

30.9.2004

## DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

on the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe  
(2004/2129(INI))

Draftsman: Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the adoption, by the Brussels European Council of June 2004, of the final text of the Constitutional Treaty resulting from the difficult and complex work carried out by the European Convention on the Future of Europe and the Intergovernmental Conference;
2. Considers the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty a historical step forward in the process of European integration, as it recognises, for the first time, development and humanitarian aid as a principle and a responsibility identifying the nature and the actions of the European Union;
3. Welcomes the fact that, on the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty, the European Union will gain a legal personality, long-awaited, which will give it a stronger voice on the international stage, in particular in relations with the United Nations and its various agencies; emphasises that the EU will therefore enjoy greater representation, responsibility, and effectiveness, as well as greater potential in its relations with developing countries; stresses, further, that the legal personality of the European Union will improve the status of the current European Commission delegations around the world, especially those that operate in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and, more generally, throughout the developing world;
4. Recalls that, thanks to the Constitutional Treaty, the principle of solidarity with the developing world is one of the fundamental values of the European Union, which define its identity and direct its actions;
5. Recalls that, from the beginning of the process of European integration, intra-European solidarity - one of the fundamental values - has proved to be a guarantee of stability and peace in Europe; stresses, further, that, in accordance with that background of European solidarity, the EU has now made a significant step forward in recognising in its Constitutional Treaty that solidarity cannot be confined to its own territories and peoples, but should also be projected beyond its borders;
6. Welcomes the recognition of global solidarity as a guiding principle for the various EU policies, and also welcomes the fact that, with the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty, global solidarity will inspire EU action in the field of development and humanitarian aid; believes that treating solidarity as a global matter will contribute to ensuring world-wide peace and stability;
7. Observes that its previous opinion was based on the basic text drafted by the European Convention on the Future of Europe and is gratified that the final text of the Constitution retains most of its achievements in the areas of development policy, international cooperation and humanitarian aid; Reiterates, therefore, what was stated in its previous

opinion, presented by Anders Wijkman<sup>1</sup>, and the conclusions thereof, adopted by the committee in July 2003;

8. Greatly approves the fact, which it considers of the highest importance, that the eradication of poverty has been included in the Constitutional Treaty as a primary objective of EU development policy;
9. Expresses satisfaction that numerous of its recommendations have been incorporated in the final text of the Constitution, essentially those relating to the field of humanitarian aid, where the principle of neutrality has become one of the Constitution's basic guidelines in this respect;
10. Regrets nevertheless that the Intergovernmental Conference has not taken up other suggestions that are important for development policy, such as the inclusion of a specific title 'Common Development Cooperation Policy', or explicit reference to some fundamental principles of EU development cooperation policy, namely equality between partners, ownership of development strategies by the countries and populations concerned, and involvement of all sections of society, including civil society;
11. Emphasises the importance of development policy continuing to be an area of competence shared between the EU and the Member States and notes that this means that the development policies of the EU and the Member States must complement and reinforce each other and that implementation procedures must be harmonised with regard to specific countries or regions; welcomes the fact that the Constitutional Treaty promotes the principle of complementarity; stresses that EU programmes and resource allocation should be designed and managed according to a long-term, strategic approach based on development objectives;
12. Observes that the Constitutional Treaty has given a clear signal in favour of including the European Development Fund in the EU general budget, a long-standing demand of the European Parliament; welcomes the Commission's intention to effect this change and stresses the importance, in this regard, of guaranteeing that current EDF funds will not be diverted to other regions or purposes;
13. Welcomes the provision, included in the Constitutional Treaty, to set up a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, which is a clear signal of concern on the part of the European Union in a field of our concern; emphasises, nevertheless, the challenge facing the EU, which must pay special care and attention to establishing the way the corps will operate, allowing only experienced volunteers to participate in it;
14. Recalls its special concern about the situation of children in developing countries, as young people are the first victims of disease, illiteracy, hunger, trafficking and sexual exploitation and are even forced to become soldiers in a number of armed conflicts;

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<sup>1</sup> Opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs on the 'Draft Treaty on the European Constitution and European Parliament opinion on the convocation of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)', adopted on 10 July 2003. (2003/0902(CNS)) - PE 326.747

15. Welcomes, therefore, the fact that the Constitutional Treaty gives high priority to children's rights, recognising that EU policies and actions in this area will be guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
16. Reiterates also its great concern over the situation of women in developing countries and its interest in their decisive role in the development process; welcomes therefore all the clauses in the Constitutional text aimed at promoting women's rights and gender equality, which will be of particular relevance for the advancement of the developing world in general, as envisaged in the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>1</sup>;
17. Expresses its view that, from the perspective of development policy and humanitarian responsibilities, the letter and spirit of the Constitutional Treaty may be viewed very positively;
18. Expresses its determination to support the Constitutional Treaty and commit itself fully to whatever steps it can take to support its approval and ratification by all Member States and its entry into force in the shortest time possible.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Report on the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Beijing, 4-15 September 1995. (A/CONF.177/20).  
<http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/off/a--20.en>