



Info

Ratify the Lisbon Treaty this year says the European Parliament

The Lisbon Treaty would enhance the European Union's democratic accountability, better protect citizens' rights and improve the functioning of EU institutions. Member States should ratify it by the end of this year, to pave the way for the June 2009 European elections, said the European Parliament in an own-initiative report adopted with 525 votes in favour, 115 against and 29 abstentions. MEPs also say that they are aware of concerns, notably about exceptions made for some countries.

European Parliament President Hans-Gert **Pöttering** said immediately after the vote: "I welcome this overwhelming majority supporting for the Treaty. The vote represents the free will of the people you represent. This Treaty gives the EU the possibility to function properly and improves democratic structures." Referring to protests in the House, he said: "We in the European Parliament defend European values. We will never let volume and noise prevail over a democratic Europe."

If all Member States ratify the new treaty by the end of this year, citizens could vote in the June 2009 European elections with full knowledge of the new institutional framework, said the MEPs who approved the report by Iñigo **Mendez de Vigo** (EPP-ED, ES) and Richard **Corbett** (PES, UK)

More democratic accountability

The Lisbon Treaty would give the European and national parliaments a bigger role in the decision-making process, and thus raise the EU's democratic profile, says the report.

In fact, with just a few exceptions, it would place the Council and the European Parliament would on an equal footing as lawmakers, notably in the budgetary procedure and in justice and home affairs. National parliaments would gain the right to object to a proposal if they felt the subsidiarity principle had not been respected, noted MEPs.

Moreover, the President of the Commission, proposed by the European Council on the basis of the European election results, would be elected by the European Parliament.

More rights and clarity for citizens

The report also welcomes the fact that the Lisbon Treaty would strengthen citizens' rights. For example, the binding nature of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights offers greater certainty that citizens' rights will be fully respected, because any action taken by the EU institutions would have to pass this test.

Introducing a right of initiative for EU citizens, by enabling them to put proposals to the Commission, would step up their participation in the EU decision-making process.

Finally, the new treaty would also improve clarity and allow citizens better to understand the EU's role and functions. MEPs believe that the Lisbon Treaty provides adequate guarantees that the EU will not become a centralised "superstate" - it points out that new provisions confirm the specificity of the Union, whose powers are conferred by the Member States, and reaffirm the obligation to respect national identities.

Greater effectiveness

Members also welcome the provisions that seek to improve the Union's ability to act, noting that greater use of qualified majority voting, replacing unanimity, would facilitate agreements in the Council, and that the new European Council President and High Representative for foreign policy High Representative should improve the coherence of EU action.

Abolishing the pillar structure and better defining EU aims in the fields of climate change, children's rights, energy, space, tourism, sport, public health and civil protection would also enhance the EU institutions' capacity to deliver and address people's concerns, said the House.

Concerns on national exceptions

Members nonetheless voice some concerns about the new Treaty. First, they regretted that the "constitutional approach" had been abandoned, whilst acknowledging that this had been necessary to secure agreement among Member States. They also criticise the special arrangements made for some Member States in the field of police co-operation and criminal law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Need to inform citizens

MEPs reiterate their appeal to Member States to guarantee maximum political commitment to ensure that the new treaty enters into force well before the EP elections in June 2009.

Finally, the report calls on national authorities and EU institutions to do their best to inform citizens about the Lisbon Treaty's aims and content. To this end, the EP asked that a consolidated version of the treaties be published as soon as possible.

Explanatory statement of the report - New powers for the European Parliament explained

The explanatory statement of the report provides a comprehensive and detailed explanation of the new Treaty - below is the part on the European Parliament

(1) The Treaty of Lisbon substantially enhances the role of the European Parliament, the only European institution directly elected by citizens:

- its role as a co-legislator is fully recognised, thanks to the general application of the existing codecision procedure, which is elevated to the rank of the ordinary legislative procedure, but also thanks to an increase in Parliament's participation in special legislative procedures. In future the public will clearly be able to see that European legislative acts are adopted by the chamber which represents them and by the chamber which represents States; in parallel, in the field of international agreements its approval will also be required as a general rule;
- it acquires a concurrent right of initiative for revision of the Treaties and participates in that procedure through its involvement in the Convention convened to prepare the revision (its approval is required for the Council to decide not to convene the Convention);
- its budgetary powers, which it shares with the Council on an equal footing, now extend to all Union expenditure;
- its powers of political scrutiny are enhanced, particularly by means of the election of the President of the Commission;

- various decisions which are of great importance in the life of the Union and which hitherto have rested solely with the Council are now also subject to approval by Parliament: the decision to initiate enhanced co-operation; the use of the flexibility clause enabling the Union to take measures not provided for in the Treaties in order to attain ends for which they do provide; decisions on the use of the general 'bridging clauses' ('passerelles') substituting qualified majority voting for unanimous voting or replacing special legislative procedures with the ordinary legislative procedure; certain decisions making it possible to extend the scope of legal bases provided for in the Treaties, such as those concerning the European Public Prosecutor's Office or judicial cooperation in criminal matters;

- even in the field of the common foreign and security policy, where it has no decision-making powers, the European Parliament acquires a general right to be informed and consulted.

(2) In conclusion it may be said that, although it might have been possible to go further in certain areas, the European Parliament acquires powers of codecision in virtually all areas of Union policy. Basically, this is a matter of putting into practice the twofold legitimacy of the EU as a Union of States and of citizens, which, despite the lack of any explicit recognition of its importance in the new Treaties, is the basis for the European integration process. The Treaty of Lisbon thus undeniably represents a significant enhancement of the democratic dimension of the Union.

(3) The number of Members of the European Parliament is limited to 751. The amended TEU does not state how the seats are to be distributed among Member States, but instructs the European Council, acting on the initiative of the European Parliament and with its assent, to decide, before the 2009 elections, what its composition should be, on the basis of the principle of 'degressively proportional' representation, with a minimum of six and a maximum of 96 seats per Member State.

Debate preceding the vote

MEPs debated the Lisbon Treaty ahead of a key vote on the report prepared by Richard CORBETT (PES, UK) and Íñigo MÉNDEZ DE VIGO (EPP-ED, ES). The larger political groups spoke in favour of the Treaty and the report as a great improvement on the current Treaties while the smaller groups called for more referenda and spoke out against the new powers for the EU and a lack of democratic accountability. The House will vote on the report at midday.

Co-rapporteurs

Opening Wednesday's debate on the Treaty of Lisbon, Richard **CORBETT** (PES, UK), the first of the two joint rapporteurs, stressed that the new treaty would improve the current treaty by making the European Union more effective and more democratic.

Firstly, it would be "increase democratic accountability". EU legislation will in future be subject to prior scrutiny of national parliaments before coming before the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. "This is a level of scrutiny that exists in no other international structure", said Mr Corbett. The EP's powers would be enhanced in other areas too, enabling it to elect the president of the European Commission and giving it full power over the budget and agriculture. "This treaty, if nothing else, is a massive increase in democracy in Europe", Mr Corbett argued.

Secondly, the new treaty enshrines the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which will ensure "that EU law does not violate basic standards of human rights". Thirdly, the treaty will make the EU more effective, for example by extending the use of qualified majority voting and rationalising the size of the Commission.

Concluding, Mr Corbett reiterated his main point, that the new treaty would make the European Union "more democratic, more effective and more friendly to citizens".

The second joint rapporteur, Íñigo **MÉNDEZ DE VIGO** (EPP-ED, ES) acknowledged that the loss of the Constitutional Treaty had been a disappointment to some, saying "some of us were more ambitious than the Lisbon Treaty" but he saw the new treaty as "a political solution" to achieving ratification by all the Member States.

Endorsing Mr Corbett's description of the new treaty, Mr Méndez de Vigo, said it had preserved "the essential points" of the Constitution, in that it was "more democratic, more effective and gives added value for citizens".

Turning to the broader purpose of the EU, he argued that the situation in Kosovo showed that "Europe must provide an outlet for the aspirations of other peoples". And other issues, such as climate change, immigration and nuclear proliferation, could be better tackled thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, which "gives us the instruments to do these things". We still need the political will but at least with this treaty we will have the tools", he stressed.

European Council

"We agree with the rapporteurs' positive assessment of many elements of the treaty, and that improving effectiveness and democratic accountability is the right response long-standing challenges within Member States and on the international scene", said Slovenia's State Secretary for European Affairs Janez **LENARČIČ** for the Council.

Among the treaty's advantages, Mr Lenarčič listed safeguarding efficient functioning, simplifying decision-taking, enhancing transparency and democracy and bringing the Union closer to citizens. He acknowledged that the treaty's ratification is the sovereign preserve of Member States, but hoped that it would proceed smoothly, so that the treaty can take effect at the start of 2009.

He looked forward to the simplified decision-taking arrangements that the treaty would bring, and to co-operating with the EU's future presidencies. Many elements of the treaty will need to be worked on with Parliament and the Commission, which must assume their respective responsibilities, he concluded.

European Commission

"It's important to do the right things, but also to do things right", said Commission Vice-President Margot **WALLSTRÖM**, citing policies in areas such as climate change, energy and agriculture.

She welcomed the treaty as a "positive step towards making the Union more effective, transparent and democratic", noting that it would not only enhance the European Parliament's role in budgetary and other matters, but also step up the involvement of national parliaments in policy making.

The loss of constitutional symbols, and the extension of national "opt-ins", was "the price we had to pay for agreement", said Ms Wallström, who nonetheless warned that although the ratification is under way, there is "no inevitability" about it.

During the ratification period, communication with citizens would be vital, she said, stressing that the Commission will work closely with national authorities and the European Parliament's national offices to inform citizens about the treaty and EU policies in areas that they care about, such as climate change, growth and jobs, and the EU's global role.

At the same time, the Commission is preparing proposals on how to help the EU to "connect with citizens", she said.

Committee speaker

Speaking for the Foreign Affairs Committee, Andrew **DUFF** (ALDE, UK) said that one of the strongest features of the Lisbon Treaty will be the coming of age of the Common Foreign Security and Defence Policy. The radical change will be the upgrading of the High Representative for Foreign Policy to Vice-President of the Commission and Chair of the Council. It was paramount, he said, that these new arrangements come into force immediately following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, otherwise it would lead to cynicism amongst public opinion and confusion from third countries.

Political group speakers

Speaking on behalf of the EPP-ED group, Joseph **DAUL** (FR) first pointed out that five Member States had already ratified the Lisbon Treaty and that Poland had announced it was starting the process. He believed the new treaty was "very important for relaunching Europe's momentum" and providing "more democracy, more visibility and greater influence at home and abroad". He listed in more detail the benefits of the treaty - highlighting among other things the right of Europe's citizens, if a million people sign a petition, to ask the Commission to take action - before calling for speedy completion of the ratification process so that it can enter into force by 2009.

For the Socialists, Martin **SCHULZ** (DE) believed the key question was "What is the purpose of this exercise?" or "Why do we need the treaty?". After comparing the situation in Europe and the world today with that obtaining at various points over the last 100 years, he then asked "where will be in 25, in 50, in 100 years from now?". The rise of India and China and the fact that "the world is now a global village" raised the question "How can we contribute?" but above all it was clear that "we cannot go it alone". It was thus on the basis that "unity is strength" that his group gave its backing to the treaty.

Speaking for ALDE group Andrew **DUFF** (UK) said the world waits for the EU with a stronger capacity to act on the world stage. Mr Duff said that, given the work completed at the Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference, quarrels over institutional wrangling should have been settled "for a substantial amount of time". He looked forward to an improved quality of legislation flowing from Brussels and Strasbourg. Mr Duff said that there were those that wanted to turn the clock back to the 19th century including the British Conservative Party. The UK government, he said, was "too frightened" to stand up for the full Treaty as the UK opt-outs had demonstrated.

For the UEN group Brian **CROWLEY** (IE) (speaking in Irish) said, that the Lisbon Treaty represented progress for the European Union. It will lead to a stronger economic performance and improve the lives of the citizens of the EU. The Irish people, he said, would have the opportunity to vote on this very soon. (Speaking in English) Mr Crowley said that the single market had been extremely important for the economy over the last 30 years. Any organisation that started with six members and has grown to 27 would need to change its rules. Ireland, he said, had seen huge development from infrastructure to peace and those that criticised the EU were ignoring the reality on the ground.

Johannes **VOGGENHUBER** (Greens/EFA, AT) said the Treaty "is the foundation of the first supranational democracy in history". We are "building a European social union with its own legal personality." This means that it would have to become a responsible actor. However, the treaty was "below our aspirations". The aim had been to "devise new solutions, we wanted to be able to have a new start every day, a new dawn every day, and that has been much weakened by the reactionary position of the chancelleries - they did not want to see this brave new voice." "As we look to the future, we have to fulfil the spirit of the treaty and make a union of people and not of states", he concluded. One should "assert a strong new identity based on citizens."

Mary Lou **MCDONALD** (GUE/NGL, IE) spoke of a "fear of referendums" in all Member States except Ireland. "The Lisbon Treaty commits us to more military spending and increased support of armaments.... Why do we keep on emulating the USA?" she asked. "This treaty is not about reform or efficiency, it is a carte blanche for further eroding democracy." She called it a "charter for further privatization." There is "nothing new on the protection of workers rights and nothing new on the environment. Would people of Europe support such a treaty?" she asked. "I believe not! That's why they are not being asked." "The Lisbon treaty is a bad deal for Ireland, a bad deal for Europe, and a bad deal for the wider world."

"What the EP is engaged in here in today's debate is nothing less than a massive exercise of deceit" said Nigel **FARAGE** (IND/DEM, UK). Compared to the failed Constitution, the Lisbon Treaty "is virtually identical in every regard, and it is constitutional because it gives the EU a full legal personality and the ability to amend itself" without having to call an intergovernmental conference. "The truth is that you are too chicken to have a referendum. Now you resort to totalitarian means to get this treaty through." The Lisbon Treaty "gives the EU the ability to legislate over every aspect of our lives." "I hope that the people of Ireland send a large resounding NO. You may be complacent today, but you are increasingly being held in contempt."

"I reject this report and the treaty it supports", said Jim **ALLISTER** (NI, UK). "Before the Dutch and French referendums we heard much talk in this house about the will of the people." In their arrogance, the EU political elite had thought that the people would be persuaded with their propaganda, he said. That is why the "key focus of the last 3 years was on hatching an intergovernmental conspiracy to foist this treaty on Europeans without having to ask them." This constitution was all about transferring more and more national power to Brussels.

British and Irish speakers

Ian **HUDGHTON** (Greens/EFA, UK) stated that much is made of the new right of national parliaments to intervene, but this of course does not apply to the devolved, national Parliament of Scotland or indeed to other stateless nations.. Secondly, he said, "the treaty process failed to address the issue of a single seat for the European Parliament, leaving us with the indefensible situation of trekking between Brussels and Strasbourg." Thirdly, Mr Hudghton said that he could not support the inclusion of the common fisheries policy (CFP) as one of only four exclusive competences of the Union listed in the Treaty. He feared that this could seriously impede progress towards radical reform and change in fisheries management, by preserving the over-centralised failure which the CFP has become.

Stating that his party favoured a referendum on the Constitution, Mr Hudghton said that while this Treaty may be different in legal status, in substance it is the same. Therefore, he said, the SNP is simply being consistent by supporting a referendum on this Treaty. "We are not afraid of a public debate on Europe. On the contrary, forging a new relationship between Scotland and the EU is central to our vision." Mr Hudghton said he wanted to see Scotland joining the family of European nations and playing a constructive part in decision-making as a Member State, not as an observer from the sidelines.

Timothy **KIRKHOPE** (EPP-ED, UK) stated that from the start, he has made it clear that this Treaty or Constitution is not the best way forward for Europe at this time. Conservatives, he said, support a Europe of independent states working closely together to meet the challenges of globalisation, global poverty and global warming, as has already been stated by others. These are the priorities, and it must be done in a cooperative fashion. I do not believe that what we have before us will help us particularly in that great challenge. "

Concluding, Mr Kirkhope said that while "our eloquent rapporteurs who quote Shakespeare in their advocacy of haste, should, I think, also note King John, Act V, Scene II, where a supplicant said, 'According to the fair play of the world, let me have audience'. Well, perhaps, in the UK, the Prime Minister should note that, and he should then allow his citizens to have their say on this undoubtedly vital matter."

Kathy **SINNOTT** (IND/DEM, IE) objected to a report on the Lisbon Treaty being rushed through the House before Members are given the Treaty in a readable, contextual form. Coming from Ireland, where a referendum is taking place, and as news of this spreads, she said she is receiving requests for the Treaty every day. "When I have to tell people there is no readable version, they are incredulous. But when I tell them that this is by decree of the Intergovernmental Conference, they are angry."

Concluding she said "Our citizens are intelligent, thoughtful and well capable of playing their democratic role in their own governance. And what we are doing here today, and throughout this Lisbon process, is a betrayal of our citizens, the very citizens whose cooperation and hard work we will need to further the European project.. I warn you: do not be surprised if, some day, these same long-suffering citizens refuse that cooperation."

Ashley **MOTE** (NI, UK) asked if the Lisbon Treaty is such a good thing, why is it so inaccessible. Like the last Treaty, he said, this one gives the EU a permanent right to seize more powers without any future agreements – "an outrageous power grab." Such undemocratic powers, he said, are illegal in the United Kingdom, because no British Parliament can bind its successors. "Mrs Wallström said the word 'constitution' was being dropped to avoid trouble with the Brits – too right! We should leave, taking our EUR 2 million an hour with us, and we would all be better off."

Supporting the Treaty, Marian **HARKIN** (ALDE, IE) said that, while it is not perfect, it is, as Commissioner

Wallström has said, a compromise, but it is going in the right direction.

In Ireland, Mrs Harkin said, one of the arguments used by supporters of a 'no' vote is to suggest that Lisbon is a self-amending Treaty, yet Article 48(4) states quite clearly that any amendments to the Treaty will enter into force only after being ratified by all Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. That is the very essence of subsidiarity, she said.

The Lisbon Treaty, she said, upholds the sovereign right of Member States and that is just one of the very many reasons why she is supporting it.

Later in the debate "catch the eye" Mrs Harkin noted that she did not hear anybody comment on Article 49, which states that, if Lisbon is ratified, any Member State can decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. That means, she said, that all of those who believe that they should not be in Europe can advise their citizens to withdraw from the Union after we ratify the Lisbon Treaty. Therefore, they have no excuse not to wish to see this Treaty passed.

Roger **HELMER** (NI, UK).stated that in his country, opinion polls show that some 75% of the British people want a referendum and two thirds of them would vote 'no'. Today, Mr Helmer said, the European project is abandoning any claim to democratic legitimacy. "Today, we will vote through the renamed Constitution in an act that shows monstrous contempt for European citizens and democratic values. In 2005, the voters of France and Holland decisively rejected the constitution."

Mr Helmer expressed astonishment at the bare-faced effrontery of European leaders, who have changed the packaging but are now bringing back the substance in defiance of public opinion. Most French and Dutch MEPs will support this report, he said. " I do not know how they will face their voters. I do not know how they will sleep at night."

In the UK, he said, the Labour Government has broken its solemn promise of a referendum, yet in postal polls conducted by campaign groups, more than 80% of voters vote 'yes' to a referendum. "By forcing this measure through in the teeth of public opposition, you are hacking at the very foundations of the Europe you are seeking to build." We must listen to the people. They demand a referendum, he concluded.

Proinsias **DE ROSSA** (PES, IE) said that the weapons of those who pedal fear is the big lie, "eloquently demonstrated here today by Ms McDonald and Ms Sinnott". They, he said, wearily turn truth on its head to claim that elected representatives of more than 80% of the people of Europe are about to crush democracy, are about to deny people ever again having a say in the construction of Europe. Before polling day in Ireland, all these big lies will have been shown up for what they are: the nightmares of parties which have learned nothing from their history and are bent on condemning the people of Europe to repeating it. Mr De Rossa was confident that Ireland's decision will be to stay at the heart of Europe.

Avril **DOYLE** (EPP-ED, IE) stated that all the Irish parties, including her own (Fine Gael), with the exception of Sinn Féin, will be supporting the Irish Government and working hard to ratify this Treaty and to get the message across. However, Mrs Doyle warned that "while your goodwill and support is most welcome, a gentle word of warning – please do not be tempted in your eagerness for a positive outcome of our referendum, to tell the Irish electorate how to vote." In conclusion, addressing the Commission, she stated " please stop picking rows with Ireland on administrative and other issues such as the REPS, which can be misrepresented, deliberately or otherwise, by the Treaty naysayers."

Andrew **DUFF** (ALDE, UK) questioned those colleagues who oppose the Treaty to explain precisely what is it they mean when they speak about a 'self-amending' treaty. Having not seen in the Treaty himself, he asked could they bring him the clause that provides for this sort of protean development? Mr Duff said that the fact is that a single change requires the unanimous agreement of all the prime ministers and national parliaments of all the Member States, and important changes that confer fresh competences upon us in the EU require the procedure of a convention, an intergovernmental conference and formal ratification in all Member States.

On the role of national parliaments, Mairead **MCGUINNESS** (EPP-ED, IE) said " let national parliaments

take the power this Treaty will give them and let the ordinary decent citizens of the countries force them to use that power effectively." Responding to Mr Duff, she said, "there is falsehood being peddled in Ireland on the 'self-amending' Treaty: it is the invention of a negative mind. It is not true and it is not so."

Concluding, Ms McGuinness said that, contrary to the naysayers, this Treaty is a good deal for Ireland, a good deal for the EU, a good deal for Europe, and she urged citizens in Ireland to vote 'yes'!

Colm **BURKE** (EPP-ED, IE) said that a 'yes' for the Lisbon Treaty is a 'yes' for the Charter of Fundamental Rights. While the Charter, he said, does not establish any new powers for the EU, it does make it easier for citizens to find out what their rights and responsibilities are under European law.

The Charter, Mr Burke said, was only a political declaration when it was initially agreed in 2000. If the people of Ireland vote 'yes' to the Lisbon Treaty, they will also be conferring legally-binding treaty status on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, to the benefit of all Irish and EU citizens.

Gay **MITCHELL** (EPP-ED, IE) questioned what sort of referendum do those who argue for a referendum want? "Do they want a referendum in which 50% or more of people across the European Union make this decision for them, in which case it will be the big states, or a mixture of small and big states, which will decide for everybody? Or do they mean that it must be over 50% in each Member State, in which case each Member State gives up its right to make the decision to every other Member State! Where is the rationality in that?"

Winston Churchill used the phrase 'terminological inexactitudes'. I will say nothing more than that in respect of the yellow-bellies on my right, but they certainly are disingenuous at best!"

Bairbre **DE BRÚN** (GUE/NGL, UK) (speaking in Irish) stated that Article 10(a) of the Treaty provides for "the removal of restrictions on international trade bit by bit" and it is, she said, a guiding principle that it will interact with states which are not EU Member States. Since October 2006, she said, the EU has been trying to remove obstacles to developing countries, obstacles such as environmental regulations, regulations for consumer protection and health regulations, regardless of the implications of these actions. Putting those two elements together, she concluded, this gives us a significant sign about the step backwards in the EU approach to combat world poverty and inequality.

Responses to the debate

Summing up for the Council, Mr **Lenarčič** stressed that patience and determination would be required to deal with who represents the Council, with the operation of foreign policy, and with justice and home affairs issues. On ratification, he stressed that things must be done in the right order, and that in any event, Member States have the final say. "There is nothing wrong with parliamentary ratification", he said, noting that all Member States are parliamentary democracies, and that the European Parliament is the "embodiment of European parliamentary democracy".

Ms **Wallström** also stressed that it is for Member States to decide what ratification procedure to use, but she urged them, whatever method they use, to communicate with citizens. She said that Lisbon treaty texts are already available in a dozen language versions and that substantive information and Q&As are available on the Commission's web pages. She also asked MEPs to refer citizens to the "Debate Europe" website, and stressed the importance of engaging young people and women in the debate.

In his concluding remarks, co-rapporteur **Richard Corbett (PES, UK)** said the debate had shown that "in this parliament the elected representatives of the people approve this treaty by a large majority". He said he found it "quite amusing that those who oppose the European Parliament having powers, that are against the European Union being able to tell Member States what to do, come here and say that we should tell sovereign Member States what their internal procedures should be to ratify an international treaty. That is hypocrisy in the extreme!"

Closing the debate, the other co-rapporteur, **Íñigo Méndez de Vigo (EPP-ED, ES)**, stressed that the aim was to "build a Europe based on respect for one's neighbours". Concluding, he quoted Cervantes, who had

said "there are times when one has to decide whether to stay still or move forward". Mr Méndez de Vigo hoped that MEPs would opt to move forward by voting Yes to the Lisbon Treaty.

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