



## **Resolution on Youth Forum Policy in relation to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)**

**Adopted by the Executive Committee  
Geneva, (Switzerland), 26-28 November 1999**

## **Introduction**

**The Extraordinary European Council in Tampere (15-16 October) decided on the rapid start of the drawing up of a Charter of fundamental rights of the EU. Tampere Summit agreed on the composition, method of work and practical arrangements for the inter-institutional body entrusted with drawing up a draft Charter.**

**On the mandate given at the Cologne European Council, Finnish Presidency will direct preparations to convene an Inter-Governmental Conference. Presidency will draw up a report for the Helsinki European Council reviewing and assessing the various options, taking into account suggestions put forward by the Member States, the Commission and the Parliament.**

**The prospect of enlargement asks for institutional changes which combine the desire for more efficient and effective decision-making with the need to ensure that the institutions are visibly democratic and firmly rooted in public acceptance. Extending the voting by a qualified majority in Council, as well as the changes in the composition of the Commission and the weighting of votes in the Council, are preconditions for a smooth functioning of the institutions in the larger Union. In addition, the Conference could also discuss other necessary amendments to the Treaties, if they are relevant to the institutions of the Union in connection with the implementation of the Treaty of Amsterdam.**

**The Commission invited group of experts chaired by Mr. Dehaene to draft a report on next IGC, which proposed - among others things - the possibility of dividing the Treaties into fundamental and implementing parts. In addition, Mr. Barnier (Member of the Commission) has stated that the drawing up of a Charter would be seen as an integral part of the constitutionalisation of the Union.**

**The Parliament voted on its resolution on the preparation of the reform of the Treaties and the next Intergovernmental Conference on 18 November. The European Parliament set several objectives for the method to be employed in the next reform of the Union, i.e.:**

- a broad public debate and total transparency,**
- an ongoing dialogue with applicant countries,**
- the establishment of a procedure for greater democratic control over the process of drafting and adopting changes to the Treaties.**

**On the substance of the reforms, the European Parliament declared that the agenda for the next reform must include several points i.e.:**

- the constitutionalisation of the Union: bringing Europe closer to citizens,**
- sufficiently ambitious institutional reforms.**

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**At the moment, Presidency will hear the views of member states during Prime Ministers' round in the capitals. On the basis of Finland's report, European Council in Helsinki (10-11 December) will decide on the agenda and the procedure for next IGC.**

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The youth organisations in the Executive Committee of the European Youth Forum confirm their commitment to a Europe of citizens accessible to all, including young people. Therefore, the European Youth Forum supports the European Union in its effort to reform its institutions for its enlargement by strengthening participatory democracy in Europe, protecting and exercising the fundamental rights of European citizens, including young people.

**The European Youth Forum welcomes:**

- that the European Council in Helsinki will establish a new Intergovernmental Conference to reform the institutions of the Union in view of the enlargement;
- that the European Commission and the European Parliament have suggested as a goal of the IGC to make the Treaties more understandable for the citizens and more effective by dividing them into a "basic treaty" and implementing parts; and
- that a Charter of Fundamental Rights will be drafted in a transparent manner by an inter-institutional body, including the representatives of European and national parliaments, and hearing the representatives of European civil society.

**The European Youth Forum believes that:**

- young people in Europe have great expectations towards the IGC, and therefore the IGC should consider the questions of enhancing transparency, credibility, effectiveness and democratic accountability of the European institutions as crucial topics;
- in the process on a Charter of Fundamental Rights (parallel to IGC), the rights of the young people should be included, and for this to be really implemented, the Charter should become a legally binding document as part of the Treaties;
- the enlargement to all countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which is the greatest historical challenge the EU has ever faced, can be tackled seriously only through radical reforms of the institutions; and
- that the above points, as suggested by the recent reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament, can only be achieved through a radical and comprehensive reform of the institutions that leads to a "basic treaty of the European Union" that "constitutionalises" the current treaties.

**The European Youth Forum demands that:**

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- the methods of the IGC follow the principle of transparency and democracy. An "inter-institutional process" will be established, involving the European Parliament and national Parliaments, as the representatives of citizens, to elaborate the text which will serve as the basis of the next institutional reform;
- a public debate will be launched in all EU countries to raise public awareness of the reforms discussed, by holding the hearings by European institutions and Member States;
- the European Youth Forum and other European-wide youth NGOs will have the possibility to be heard in the process of IGC and to be invited to possible hearings held by the European institutions and Member States; and
- the European Youth Forum and other European-wide youth NGOs will be invited also to the hearings held by the inter-institutional body elaborating the draft Charter.

As a priority issue of the Member States of the EU, more attention should be paid to the fact that the IGC would be concluded successfully and in time, as a prerequisite of the continuation of the enlargement process.

**The European Youth Forum commits itself to:**

- lobby in order to achieve the points above and to guarantee the youth NGOs a possibility to be heard on the issue of IGC;
- inform its member organisations on the IGC and the reform of the Treaties, especially following up the strengthening of democracy in European institutions and of protection of fundamental rights of European citizens, including young people.
- Involve its member organisations from both the EU and the applicant countries in the formulation of its position which will be represented at the IGC.