

European Union

The Congress of the European Liberals and Democrats,

- Expresses its satisfaction that the European Parliament has now started to do what the liberal-democrat Election Manifesto in 1979 proclaimed to be one of its tasks, namely to work out specific proposals for reforming the present Community and setting it firmly on the road to European Union, proposals which should be ready in time to become a central issue in the 1984 elections;
- Urges political forces everywhere to participate in this process of creative thought;

Calls for:

1. A new Treaty to establish the European Union, which must be short and flexible, setting out the aims of the Union and the machinery through which those aims will be pursued.
2. The new Union to be developed through the existing Communities: one of the Union's aims must be to stimulate the continued and full implementation of the existing Treaties through the Community institutions. We are also thinking of industrial renewal and job creation; of energy, of economic convergence and regional recovery, of transport, of the untrammelled movement of people, goods and capital throughout the Community and of the protection of our common European environment.
3. In addition to the policies covered by the existing Treaties, the Union should aim at coordinating and eventually unifying other policies of vital common concern, notably foreign policy, including security policy, whilst safeguarding existing forms of cooperation within the Atlantic Alliance
4. In addition to existing Councils, a council for cultural cooperation between the Ministers responsible in each of the Member States should be convened regularly
5. The Institutions of the Union to be those of the existing Communities. In addition, the European Council will have to be given its proper place within the institutional framework.
6. A new equilibrium between the Institutions will have to be worked out. None will be all-powerful, but all must have their proper place. The Court of Justice shall retain its central position in a Community system based on the rule of law and the separation of powers. Council and Parliament shall jointly legislate on their own initiative or on the basis of proposals by the Commission. Treaties between the Union and Third Countries shall be ratified by the Union's Parliament. The appointment of Commissioners

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shall be subject to Parliament's "advice and consent". Within the framework of the full application of the Treaties, the principle laid down in the Treaties of majority decision-making in the Council of Ministers should be applied, to allow the latter to take decisions. Moreover, we assert that the European Council be incorporated into the institutional framework of the Community to ensure control by the European Parliament.

7. The Council and the European Parliament are the budgetary authorities of the European Union. The European budget should be brought into balance by the development of new community policies. The budgetary mechanism should take the resources of poorer countries into account, without, in any way, putting prejudice to the financial solidarity.

8. Only by means of enlarging the own resources will the European Union be effectively and seriously able to solve the present economic, social and regional problems. In the short term it is therefore necessary to raise the limit of 1 % VAT revenue as well as to intensify the new financial instruments of the Community.

Further considers:

1. The negotiation and ratification of such a Treaty will be a long and difficult task. For that very reason, it is important to start the campaign for it at once. But at the same time, urgent improvements of the existing, creaking, machinery of the Community must be undertaken. In a number of cases, interinstitutional agreements can anticipate reforms which will find their formal enactments through the new Treaty.

2. Liberals and Democrats must remain in the forefront of the campaign for a fully proportional electoral system throughout the Community for the next European elections.

3. We must continue to insist on the completion of the negotiations for the entry of Portugal and Spain, and at the same time the necessary reforms of the internal structure of the European Community should be made in order to create a sufficient financial strength for the entry of the new members in 1984.

4. The European Monetary System must be further consolidated and strengthened so that our economic recovery can be fostered by conditions of monetary stability.

Fully recognizes that the aim of this campaign will only be realised when it reaches beyond the new Treaty and major reforms to the European Institutions to inspire the people themselves to accept unity of the free Europe as the only effective way to meet the challenge and opportunities of their common destiny.

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