



STATEMENT BY M. JACQUES CHIRAC, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, ON THE AGREEMENT ON A CONSTITUTION FOR EUROPE

(Paris, 19 June 2004)

Yesterday in Brussels, an agreement was found on a Constitution for Europe between the 25 member countries of the European Union.

I thought it was important to report to French women and men about this event which can genuinely be described as historic. For the first time in Europe's history, 25 countries are expressing together their will to strengthen peace and democracy on our continent and give it new opportunities for prosperity and solidarity.

What does this draft Constitution bring us?

First of all, a European Union which will be able to function more efficiently and address more effectively the challenges of today. Europe will see its institutions strengthened with a stable European Council president and an EU foreign minister who will amplify the role of each of our nations. The role of the European Parliament will be broadened. So as to represent clearly the European general interest, the Commission will be remodelled. A new voting system [in the Council] will enable better account to be taken of what Europe actually is, i.e. not only a union of States, but also a union of peoples and citizens.

Secondly, the Constitution will at last say who does what in Europe. The distribution of powers between the EU and its member States will now be clarified. And national Parliaments will be tasked with ensuring this.

Finally, this European Union, a federation of nation-States will pursue its progress above all respecting the identity and originality of each of its member countries.

To protect Europeans more effectively and promote their interests, cooperation will be strengthened in such essential spheres as justice, security and defence.

We would have liked - admittedly - also to have increased harmonization in the social and fiscal spheres, but account had, of course, to be taken of everyone's opinion. However, we have ensured the establishment of mechanisms which will allow States who so wish to make headway faster without being blocked by those who need more time.

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## PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

This Constitution is good for Europe. It is good for France. It will allow Europe to take its decisions faster, more efficiently, more clearly, and make itself better heard in today and tomorrow's world. It will also enable France to carry more weight in Europe and French women and men to make their voices more widely heard.

This is why this agreement is very important and why I describe it as historic.

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