



## **Press conference given by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, following the European Council - excerpts -**

Brussels, 16 June 2006

THE PRESIDENT (●●●) I'll begin by stressing the importance the Council attaches to the process set in train at the Hampton Court Summit, under British presidency, with the priority given, on France's proposal, to the project-based Europe, to giving a strong boost to a Europe driven by ambitions, the desire for achievements, i.e. to finding solutions to concrete problems confronting our citizens.

### **CRISIS RESPONSE**

With this in mind, we've made substantial progress towards a goal, our goal, which France had very strongly emphasized: [to enhance] Europe's capacity to respond to international crises. This is what we proposed in the wake of the tsunami, and of the tornados and earthquakes which, sadly, have punctuated the past two years. It was essential for the European Union, which was undoubtedly making efforts to help financially, to organize itself better to respond to these situations. (●●●)

### **IMMIGRATION/DEVELOPMENT/INNOVATIVE FINANCING**

Secondly, we had, particularly at yesterday evening's dinner, an important discussion on immigration so as to get fully to grips with the problems and the solutions which have to be found to them. Here, I in particular but also others emphasized that fundamentalism, immigration and terrorism mustn't be conflated, that's a first point. (●●●) Second point, that it had to be clearly understood that immigration, and especially immigration from Africa, stemmed from an inability of the countries of origin to address the needs of their young people (●●●). Consequently, for there to be a solution there must first be development. Then we'll be able to tackle immigration problems seriously and effectively.

This solution to the problems of development I made a point of emphasizing this can be found only through innovative financing for which we've set an example with the medicines for the three major pandemics. But this is only on a trial basis. In reality we need to find at least double the official development assistance and this can be done only through innovative financing if we want, at least, to honour the Millennium commitments. It's an essential issue if we want to deal with the problems of immigration.



(...)

## ENERGY

With the same goal of achieving a project-based Europe, one delivering results, we stressed the importance of the energy policy decided on by the last Council which is progressing normally particularly in order to guarantee our supplies. This is, of course, of prime importance for defending our competitiveness and fighting what is today regarded as a major problem, at any rate by Europeans: the consequences of climate warming.

(...)

## INSTITUTIONS

We also talked at length about the institutional problems, from two angles. The first is what to do next given the situation we know about: two countries have rejected the treaty, 15 or 16 have ratified it and 7 or 8 have halted their ratification procedures. How do we modernize our institutions, which is absolutely necessary particularly because of enlargement, and do so on new bases acceptable to everyone?

We took the view that this needed in-depth and necessarily lengthy reflection, requiring an extension of the pause for reflection we talked about a few months ago, which will allow a series of steps with which everyone agreed in principle: after preparation by the Finnish presidency, this will start with the drawing-up of proposals at the beginning or as early as possible thereafter of the German presidency and end under the French presidency in the second half of 2008.

This should make it possible to develop a consensual solution for the problems relating to the institutions. In the meantime, as you know, France urged and this was agreed in principle that a number of reforms be made, initiatives taken in the framework of the existing treaties to improve the operation of the institutions, i.e. without changing anything in the treaty. (...)

## NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS/EXTERNAL ACTION/SECURITY AND JUSTICE

We would also like to see this done with respect to the increased involvement of national parliaments, implementation of the subsidiary principle and systematic taking on board by the Commission and the Council of the social impact of their decisions and proposals.

Finally, we'd like to see more done on the external action front and in the security and justice sphere, for which we also made proposals which were deemed very positive.



## ENLARGEMENT/ABSORPTION CAPACITY

Finally, we had a debate, which I took the liberty of initiating, on the enlargement problem, i.e. Europe's absorption capacity, basing ourselves on the principle that Europe is a necessity for establishing, entrenching peace, democracy, development and stability over the largest possible area of Europe, but that, similarly, Europeans have to have an absorption capacity.

That presupposes assessment, on the one hand, of the political absorption capacity (•••) i.e. by the peoples (•••) and then a financial capacity, since everyone knows that when you enlarge you increase spending. (•••)

## JAVIER SOLANA

Finally, I made a point of paying special tribute – echoed, I have to say, by most, not to say all our colleagues – to the action of the High Representative, the Secretary-General, Mr Javier Solana, for the important, crucial work which, for some years, he has done because of his foreign policy portfolio (•••) in the Middle East, the Balkans and Africa, especially in Darfur and then, just recently, as the spokesman of Europe together with the United States, Russia and China in the negotiations, discussions on the problem of relations with Iran in the nuclear sphere. For Europe, this action (•••) has indisputably been positive and solid, enabling it to play its full role on the foreign policy front. I wanted to stress this and I was, I must say, backed by everyone. (•••)

## STRASBOURG/EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Q. Don't you agree with the argument that it isn't practical to have two different seats for the European Parliament? On what conditions will France agree to moving everything to Brussels for good? And what do you think about the fact that the Dutch Prime Minister is publicly supporting the petition in favour of the Brussels seat?

THE PRESIDENT Firstly, the two questions are linked. Let me remind you that the ground rules have to be respected. The decision on the Parliament's seat in Strasbourg isn't for the Parliament, Dutch Prime Minister or anyone else, it's in the Treaty, it stems from the Treaty. Consequently, if there's a desire to change the Parliament's seat, then the Treaty has to be changed, with all the procedure that involves. The rest is idle chitchat, by and large biased, and so personally I take no notice of it.

(•••) The question wasn't considered and it wasn't considered for a simple reason: it isn't for us to consider it. It's not for the Parliament, States or people to decide on this, it's a Treaty matter.

(•••)



## MIDDLE EAST

Q. Has a mechanism for helping the Palestinians been found, five weeks from the referendum, particularly for paying the salaries of the 165,000 Palestinian civil servants?

THE PRESIDENT Firstly, you won't be surprised if I tell you that this is what I want. You know France's position: in our view it would be absolutely intolerable, immoral and politically very questionable to make the Palestinians pay for the consequences of their political, democratic choices. Consequently, France supports the principle of continuing the aid to the Palestinians in every sphere, including full payment of the civil servants' salaries on which depend the lives or survival of, all in all, a million people, which is a huge number and the civil servants haven't been paid for three or four months. Think about what this can create in the way of frustration, possibly anger and, in any case, injustice.

From what the Quartet has said, especially the relevant commissioner, Mrs Walner, the European Union has made a lot of progress particularly in the past two days and at this Council. I think, without yet being able to say so definitively, since it hasn't yet been definitively decided, that important progress, along the lines of what the Quartet proposed, has been made thanks particularly to the Commission's action. It's going to be possible to take positive decisions on the aid in general and particularly on that for the civil servants, particularly when it comes to matters to do with health. (●●●)/.

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