

## **Working Group on European Integration**

### **The European Union needs an efficient and effective Commission**

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The work of the European Commission involves an increasing number of spheres which directly affect the citizens of the Member States. An efficient and transparent European administration is therefore urgently needed; this represents an opportunity and a challenge for the new Prodi Commission. Organisational reform is crucial if the Commission is to become more efficient and effective.

We have a few proposals in this regard:

#### 1. Limit the Commission to 15 Members

One Commissioner per Member State. The Amsterdam Treaty already makes it possible to dispense with a second Commissioner for the larger Member States.

This restriction to 15 Members should continue to apply even after enlargement.

#### 2. No „Junior“ Commissioners

„Junior“ Commissioners without portfolio but with full voting rights conflict with the objectives of a more tightly-run Commission and more efficient decision-making.

#### 3. Greater responsibility of Commissioners for their portfolios

Each Commissioner should be personally responsible for taking decisions in his own area of competence. However, each Commissioner must receive regular information in good time to be able to contribute to decisions of the College.

Groups consisting of a number of Commissioners should not become decision-making bodies.

#### 4. Stronger political leadership by the Commission President

Political leadership and co-ordination is a matter for the Commission President. For this purpose he relies on the General Secretariat of the Commission, which must be expanded into a central policy co-ordination unit (akin to the authorities assigned to heads of government in the Member States).

## 5. Commission and Directorate General under one roof

The offices of Commissioners and Directors General should be located on the premises of the Directorate General for which they are responsible.

This will strengthen the Commissioner's leadership role, facilitate co-ordination with the Director General and contact with staff, and prevent counter-productive friction between the Cabinet and the Directorate General.

## 6. A more limited role for Cabinets

Commissioners' Cabinets should concentrate on assisting their Commissioner to carry out his responsibilities within the College. Under no circumstances should members of Cabinets intervene directly in the activities of a Directorate General.

The composition of Cabinets should be multinational.

## 7. Decentralised, less bureaucratic administration of the Commission

The Commission's work is notable for its excessive range of individual measures of a purely administrative nature. This makes it difficult to oversee and control such activities and to ensure transparency. It is unreasonable for the College of Commissioners to have to bear political responsibility for any ensuing shortcomings. The only possible solution is to decentralise and debureaucratise decision-making and responsibility, in other words to devolve them to the most appropriate level. This would enable the Commission to carry out its political duties more effectively.

The following measures should therefore be taken:

7.1 The already existing European Agencies should be examined to see whether their workload is sufficient and whether they are efficiently linked into the Commission. They should be organised as subordinate bodies which are subject to instructions.

7.2 The Commission's spheres of activity should be investigated to see

- to what extent further work could be devolved to subordinate bodies;
- whether the administrations of Member States could be more involved than in the past in carrying out Community tasks. The organisation of tasks between the federal, regional („Länder“) and municipal levels, as practised in Germany, could serve as a model here. The Commissioner responsible should exercise legal and technical control in such cases.

7.3 The number of Commission management committees, composed of representatives from the Member States, should be reduced. They generate considerable costs and delays. Where the Council and Parliament confer administrative tasks on the Commission, they should also trust it to perform these tasks properly and should restrict themselves to the existing *ex-post* checks.

7.4 The administration of financial co-operation with third countries (PHARE, TACIS, MEDA, EDF, etc.) should be facilitated by delegating decision-making and responsibility to the Commission services located *in situ*. The procedures for disbursing funds must be simplified.

## 8. Fewer dealings with consultants

The Commission must have the necessary staff to carry out the tasks expected of it. This can be done at no extra cost by cutting down on contracts with firms of consultants and at the same time

increasing the Commission's in-house staff.