

EU Constitution Newsletter

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Since the Intergovernmental Conference came to an agreement on the EU Constitution the focus of the debate has shifted to the challenge of ratifying this constitution. This monthly newsletter will monitor the debate, events and developments surrounding the ratification process in all 25 member states. It will offer a particular UK perspective of this process and provide a forum for differing views on the debate.

Back issues are available at www.fedtrust.co.uk/constitution_newsletter.

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1. Editorial

By Andrew Duff MEP

On 15 January, the European Parliament endorsed the Constitution by 500 votes to 137 with 40 abstentions. Although a majority of British, Czech and Polish MEPs voted against, it was the first time that the Parliament as a whole approved of an EU Treaty revision without qualifying its assent with a long litany of regrets, objections and demands for further reform. Another good piece of news is that federal Belgium has now ceased to toy with the idea of holding a plebiscite.

Less encouraging stories come from Spain, where the referendum on 20 February will be a mere vote of confidence in the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and from the Netherlands, where there seems to be huge public cynicism about the holding of the referendum in the first place and where, as in Britain, there is no sign of an official yes campaign. In the Czech Republic the head of state is campaigning for a no, and in Poland only a spontaneous pro-European uprising from the people can save the political parties from themselves. Britain, of course, is set to vote no.

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The Federal Trust for Education and Research

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...is a think tank that studies the interactions between regional, national, European and global levels of government.

Founded in 1945 on the initiative of Sir William Beveridge, it has long made a powerful contribution to the study of federalism and federal systems.

2. Overview of 25

Austria	Will seek ratification through parliament. Chancellor Schüssel says he would only support a referendum on an EU-wide basis.
Belgium	Belgium will not hold a referendum and will seek ratification through parliaments (national and regional). On 23 January, the social-liberal coalition partner in Verhofstadt's government, surprisingly decided to change its position and favour parliamentary ratification instead of a referendum. This is due to fears that Vlaams Blok would turn the referendum into one on Turkish entry into the EU.
Cyprus	Will seek ratification through parliament. There was no referendum on EU accession.
Czech Republic	Will hold a referendum, which is most likely to coincide with the general election in June 2006. The country could be the last member state to seek ratification. This delay is due to the time it will take to pass a general bill on referendums.
Denmark	Will hold a referendum after the parliamentary elections on 8 February 2005. The most likely dates are summer 2005 or spring 2006. No decision has been taken, but leading Danish MEPs have recently argued for a quick vote. All main parties, including the usually eurosceptic Socialist People's Party, will support ratification. Opinion polls are currently favourable and suggest that more than 50 per cent of voters would support the Constitution, while the 'no' vote varies from 18 to 30 per cent, with 15 to 30 per cent undecided.
Estonia	Will seek ratification through parliament.
Finland	Likely to seek ratification through parliament.
France	Will hold a referendum, most likely on one of the first three Sundays in June. On 1 February, the Assemblée Nationale passed the necessary constitutional amendments with 450 votes for, 34 votes against and 64 abstaining, easily reaching the required three-fifths majority. Deliberations will take place in the Senate from 15 to 17 February. The reforms are expected to clear fully by early April. In order to defuse the issue of Turkish accession, the parliamentary bill includes an amendment that requires further referendums for all future EU enlargements after Croatia. According to various surveys, around 60 per cent of those who have an opinion on the Constitution would vote 'yes' and around 40 per cent 'no'. However, a majority are still undecided.
Germany	The SPD parliamentary group has announced that the EU Constitution will be ratified in May/June 2005. It does not seem that reaching the necessary two-thirds majority will pose significant problems as only a few CSU parliamentarians have announced a 'no' vote so far. A bill to change the German constitution to allow for nation-wide referendums will only be introduced into parliament after ratification and has little chance of passing.
Greece	Will seek ratification through parliament.
Hungary	Ratified the EU Constitution on 20 December 2004 by a parliamentary vote with 322 to 12 in favour and eight abstentions, easily achieving the necessary two-thirds majority. Hungary is the second member state to ratify the EU Constitution.
Ireland	Will hold a referendum, the timing of which is still unclear. It will possibly take place in late 2005/ early 2006.
Italy	On 25 January, the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament ratified the EU Constitution by a majority of 436 in favour, 28 against and five abstentions. The votes against were cast by members of the Communist Party and the right-wing Northern League. Ratification now moves to the upper house, the Senate, where little opposition is expected.
Latvia	Will seek ratification through parliament.
Lithuania	Ratified the EU Constitution on 11 November 2004 by a parliamentary vote with 84 to four in favour, with three abstentions. This made Lithuania the first country to ratify the text.
Luxembourg	The date for the referendum has been set as 10 July 2005, immediately after Luxembourg's EU Presidency ends. The Chamber of Deputies will first vote on draft legislation on the ratification of the EU Constitution, which will then need to be approved by the binding referendum. No referendum has been held since 1937 and there was overwhelming support in the Chamber of Deputies for holding a referendum.
Malta	Will seek ratification through parliament.
Netherlands	Will hold a referendum, most likely in May or June 2005. On 25 January, the Senate gave its authorisation to organise the poll. It will be the first national referendum in the country's history.
Poland	Will hold a referendum, though the date is uncertain. Translation mistakes in the document will delay the ratification process, as they need three to four months to correct. Currently, it seems that the referendum will be held in conjunction with parliamentary elections, now expected to take place in the autumn 2005. This would make the fifty per cent turnout required for ratification a virtual certainty. Current polling indicates that opponents of the Treaty will be better represented in parliament after the elections, thus providing another reason for the proposed timetable. A predominantly eurosceptic new Polish Parliament might wish not to hold a referendum, but reject the Constitution through a parliamentary vote.
Portugal	Will probably hold a referendum, though the date is uncertain. On 17 December, the Portuguese constitutional court rejected the controversial wording of the proposed referendum question. A new wording will only be decided by the new parliament after the early elections on 20 February. The earlier planned date for the poll, 10 April 2005, has had to be abandoned due to the decision of the Portuguese President to dissolve Parliament and call for early elections.
Slovakia	Will seek ratification through parliament.
Slovenia	Ratified the EU Constitution on 1 February 2005 by a parliamentary vote with 79 to 4 in favour and 7 abstentions, easily reaching the necessary two-thirds majority. Slovenia is the third member state to ratify the EU Constitution.
Spain	Will hold a referendum on 20 February 2005, the first in the EU. The Congress of Representatives voted unanimously on 11 January for a referendum to ratify the Constitution. The question that will be asked is: 'Do you approve of the treaty that establishes a Constitution for Europe?' Recent opinion polls suggest a large majority will vote in favour of the text, although turnout may be low.
Sweden	Will seek ratification through parliament. The bill will be brought to Parliament in May 2005 and is expected to be passed in December 2005. No referendum will be held after an agreement between Social-Democrat PM Göran Persson and four right-wing opposition parties that parliamentary ratification will suffice. Ratification is almost certain as pro-Europeans currently hold a majority of seats in parliament, with new elections due only in 2006.
United Kingdom	Will hold a referendum in 2006, after the country's Presidency of the EU. No date has been set as yet. On 26 January, the British government published the wording of the question: 'Should the United Kingdom approve the Treaty establishing a Constitution for the European Union?' The relevant bill will not be passed until after the general election expected in May 2005.

So scenarios are being developed in Brussels to cater for the impending constitutional crisis. The assumption is that if a lot of countries say no, especially larger ones by big majorities, everyone's in trouble. The Union will have to stagger on under the Treaty of Nice. Enlargement, even to Bulgaria and Romania will be rather pointless. 'Enhanced co-operation' among a core group of states will lead to the fractionalisation of the Union and imperil the *acquis communautaire*.

If only the UK says no, it's the UK that's in trouble. Although it will have a legal right to veto the constitutional progress for the rest of Europe it will have little moral authority and less political credibility. Chancellor Schüssel of Austria will have to chair the crisis meeting of the European Council in June 2006. He is no Metternich. The options are limited. Prime Minister Brown will surely refuse to have a second referendum on the same question in the hope of getting the answer right. His new EU colleagues will refuse, quite rightly, to renegotiate the Constitution to placate British nationalists when most EU leaders already resent the concessions they made to the UK in the Convention and at the IGC.

The way forward is this. There is a short, sharp IGC whose only function is to amend Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union to allow the Constitution to come into force before all member states have ratified it. This will cause no problem for the member states who have already said yes. It will surely lead to another referendum in the UK where the political choice on offer could not be more stark. If the UK again votes no, it would be under huge pressure to withdraw from full membership and seek refuge in a neighbourly privileged partnership.

Should the UK refuse even to negotiate secession, the majority that has accepted the Constitution will nevertheless agree to use it routinely. The Treaty of Nice will not be renounced - keeping things legal - but the old European Union will be allowed to wither on the vine, and Britain with it.

Andrew Duff MEP, a Liberal Democrat, was a Member of the Convention.

3. News from the institutions

On 12 January, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of the European Constitution, with 500 MEPs casting a 'yes' vote, 137 saying 'no' and 40 abstaining. The President of the European Parliament Josep Borrell later argued that, since this means that 74 per cent of all MEPs voted for the Constitution, outright opposition to it - at a mere 20 per cent - could not be termed significant. 'It would be exaggerated to say that it is a large group', he argued in a press conference after the vote, which followed a six-hour debate the day before.

Taken separately, however, 'no' votes were in the majority for three member states. Thus, over two thirds of Czech MEPs cast their vote against the Constitution, with most of the 'no' votes coming from the Civic Democrats (ODS), the party of the current President Vaclav Klaus. 19 of the 54 Polish MEPs voted 'no' as well, with another 19 abstaining. Finally, almost 60 per cent of UK MEPs decided to cast a 'no' vote.

Meanwhile, the MEPs for Slovenia and Latvia all voted 'yes', as did all except three of Spain's representatives in the EP. All of the German CSU delegation voted in favour as well, even though the parties' parliamentary group in the *Bundestag* is split on the issue.

After the endorsement of the Constitution, the EP has now begun its publicity campaign to increase popular support for the document, including a new banner on the EP building in Strasbourg, with the word 'yes' being added in the respective languages as the ratification process progresses.

The EP has also set up a 'rapid-reaction force' of eight MEPs from the Constitutional Affairs Committee who will try to 'dispel myths' told about the EU Constitution. With the help of national offices of the EP, the MEPs - who include Josep Borrell, Richard Corbett and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo - will monitor the debate around Europe and put the record straight by issuing press releases and writing letters to newspapers. Jens Peter Bonde, a Danish Eurosceptic MEP, sees this 'force' as problematic: 'It is a

good idea to have a rapid reaction force, but you must have both sides to clear up real misunderstandings. You can't have a rapid reaction force with taxpayers' money and represent only one view - it's a totalitarian tendency.'

José Manuel Barroso has suggested that the Constitution may need to be revised again in the not-so-distant future. In an interview with *Le Figaro* on 12 January, the European Commission President argued the admission of Turkey may require an eventual change in voting rules. It appears that the issue of Turkey's entry into the EU will make selling the Constitution more difficult, a task that is also one of Peter Mandelson's new responsibilities: apart from the competitiveness, external relations and economic strategy committees, he has also been appointed to the communications committee. Mandelson thus sits on four out of the five key decision-making committees, more than any other Commissioner.

January also saw the beginning of Luxembourg's Presidency of the EU. Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of a state whose population makes up just one-thousandth of the EU's total, is keen to show that his country can still punch above its weight in European affairs. On January 10, he warned of the danger that the EU could get 'bogged down' until June 2006 as the ratification process continues. Sensitive decisions, he argued, may be avoided because of their feared effect on difficult national referendums.

Finally, the European Commission has published the results of a recent Eurobarometer survey on the Constitution. The main result of the poll, carried out in November 2004, is that the treaty has a generally positive image among Europeans, even though public ignorance of the document is very high. One-third of respondents had never heard of the Constitution, 56 per cent claimed to have little knowledge of the document, while only 11 per cent stated that they knew basic contents of the Constitution. In countries that are holding referendums, the level of knowledge was actually lower than in countries with parliamentary ratification.

The UK and Cyprus were the two countries with the lowest level of knowledge of the document, with 50 and 35 per cent of respondents, respectively, stating they had never heard of the Constitution before.

Throughout the EU, 49 per cent were in favour and only 16 per cent opposed to the text, with 35 per cent still undecided. Of the EU 25, only the UK had a negative balance of opinions on the Constitution: 30 per cent were against and 20 per cent in favour of ratification, with 50 per cent answering 'don't know'. Only Sweden also came close to a majority of respondents opposing the Constitution. Fear of loss of national sovereignty, general euroscepticism and lack of information were given as the main reasons for opposing the treaty.

In a hopeful message to 'yes' campaigners, the survey argued that there was a correlation between the self-assessed level of information on the Treaty and a positive opinion on the document. Thus, 75 per cent of those who claimed to know about the Constitution in detail were in favour of it, and 60 per cent of those who thought they had only limited knowledge of it felt the same. However, only 22 per cent of those who had not heard of it supported the Constitution.

Markus Wagner
The Federal Trust

[Results of the January 2005 Eurobarometer survey](#)

[Eurobarometer: Accompanying tables](#)

[The Times, January 21: They don't like the EU constitution? Quick, send in the force](#)

[The EP's ratification website](#)

4. The UK debate

What's in a name?

The British government has now published the text of the question which will be put to the British electorate in the referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty. The question,

which is very similar to that used in the Spanish referendum, will ask whether the United Kingdom should 'ratify.' All the major political parties have accepted that this is a fair and neutral formulation of the issue to be decided.

This welcoming reaction of the political parties is at first sight surprising. The proposed text of the referendum question was widely expected to be a matter of some controversy. In the event, the government has proposed language for the ballot paper which combines the favoured rhetoric of both the government and its opponents. On the whole, the government prefers to depict the referendum as the ratification of a 'treaty,' while its opponents lose no opportunity to speak disparagingly of the European 'Constitution.' Opinion polls and qualitative research strongly suggest that British public opinion reacts much less negatively to the concept of a new European 'treaty' than to the concept of a European 'Constitution.'

The potential importance of the referendum question's wording was shown by an opinion poll conducted soon after the government's announcement of its proposed text. This poll showed that when the respondents were presented with the proposed question to be used in the referendum, opinion was approximately equally divided. This is a result, from the government's point of view, much more encouraging than any recent opinion polls, which have consistently shown substantial majorities in the United Kingdom against the European Constitution. It has always been the government's view that opposition to the Constitutional Treaty was admittedly widespread in the United Kingdom, but essentially superficial and capable of reversal within a relatively short space of time. This analysis is often presented by government representatives in response to criticism that it should already have done more active campaigning if it hopes to win a referendum next year.

The likely date of the referendum remains uncertain. Mr. Blair refused to say more in a recent interview than that it would take place in 2006, with many

commentators expecting it to occur in the first half of the year. This prediction is based on a remark of the Foreign Secretary at the time of the Constitutional Treaty's signing, when he suggested 'spring of 2006' as an appropriate date. But if the government have less success than they expect over the coming months in changing public opinion and the poll described above is not confirmed by further, more substantial research, it may well be that the government decides to wait until the autumn of next year. By that stage most, if not all other member states will have completed their ratification procedures. If all of them have ratified the European Constitution, then that will act as a powerful reinforcement to the government's campaigning.

Brendan Donnelly
The Federal Trust

[Tony Blair's interview with Timothy Garton Ash](#)

[The text of the European Union Bill](#)

5. Countries of the Month

Spain before the referendum

On 20 February Spaniards are invited to vote on the European Constitution. The question put to the electorate is 'Do you approve the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe?'¹

The campaign launched by the Interior Ministry in January 2005 has been rather 'folkloric' even though ultimately low key. Indeed, as the opposition also supports a 'yes' in the referendum, the Government's main fears have been two: abstention and opposition from some regions. Spaniards remain in the majority tacitly pro-European, almost European 'by default'. On the one hand, a general disengagement from EU issues, as from politics in general, may result in low-turn out. But on the other hand, Europe remains un-politicised, a matter of consensus. As the Referendum campaign puts it, the EU is 'a state commitment which transcends the difference among political parties'; 'the Constitution is a 'transcendental' step

forward in the process of European integration, a process which has brought many benefits to Spain in the last 18 years'.

To overcome abstention and in addition to the traditional circulation of pamphlets and the resort to the media, a free hotline and a purpose website², the government has made an imaginative effort of dissemination involving rock stars, football players and celebrities of all sorts and getting down to football pitches to seek participation. However, only weeks away from referendum day the population declares itself uninformed and polls show that the majority of the population does not know the content of the Constitution and is not intending to know it!

The no camp in Spain is composed of eurosceptics, sectoral opposition and unsatisfied pro-European nationalists. Eurosceptics on the extreme right and left argue against the obscurity and unclarity of the Treaty, the dissolution of the nation-state, or the overwhelmingly 'liberal' nature of the European project. The farming sector too has over the years become less committed to common organisation of agricultural markets, but their influence is not as large as in other neighbouring countries. For the disenchanted Europeanists the main problem of the Constitution is that it is not a Constitution, but another Treaty. Rather than a little step forward, they fear the Constitution will 'freeze up' the EU into a union of nation-states, instead of a more plural European structure.

Despite the Government's efforts at communicating Europe, the press has read the referendum in a national key and has preferred to report on the alignments and posturing of political parties in relation to the government and in relation to other dossiers occupying the national political scene. Within the larger scheme of political timing, for the Socialist government the ratification referendum has coincided with the ongoing process of reform of the Spanish Constitution and in particular with the reform of regional statutes. But so far the referendum has strengthened the government, as the opposition,

which defends the 'yes' vote too, has found no room in the debate and become almost invisible.

As regards the opposition from regional parties, the Government has gone out of its way to buy their backing to the yes camp. As reported in a previous issue (see Newsletter of October 2004) traditionally pro-European nationalist parties had threatened in September 2004 to join the 'no' campaign unless reforms were made to address shortcomings in the regional dimension of the EU Constitution. While the Basque executive and the Basque Parliament were immersed in the adoption of the Plan Ibarretxe (a plan for radical reform of the regional statute), the government negotiated the swing to the 'yes' camp from other nationalist parties. In October 2004 the Government prepared plans for the participation of regions in EU institutions and drew proposals for the recognition of regional languages as 'official' languages in the EU. On the first issue, reforms concerning the representation of the autonomous communities within the Spanish delegations in the EU institutions have been introduced, namely allowing regional ministerial representation in the Council of Ministers (a possibility which has been available since the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty but which never was used in the Spanish case), the presence of regional representatives in the Permanent Representation to the EU, and access of regions to the European Court of Justice to defend unlawful extension of powers into areas of regional competence.

The recognition of regional languages in the EU unleashed a saga of poisoned philological, inter-regional and party-political disputes on linguistic varieties and language denominations. Eventually in December 2004 the Spanish Government submitted a memorandum requesting the status of official languages for the co-official languages in Spain, specifically the reform of linguistic regulations in the context of Article III.128 - (as opposed to the 'official language' status covered under Article IV-448). The

memorandum had a very symbolic feel, for it was the first ever defence by a Spanish government of a plurinational state, but the reforms requested will be subject to the unanimous approval of the Council of Ministers. In addition, the dossier is in the hands of the Luxembourg Presidency, which has not scheduled any action until the ratification referendum has taken place.

Finally, there had been concerns about a possible clash between the Spanish and the EU Constitution regarding the clause on primacy of EU law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, a ruling by the Spanish Constitutional Court in December 2004 cleared the way for integration of the Constitutional Treaty into the Spanish legal order through the normal route (Article 93 of the Spanish Constitution).

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¹ 'Aprueba usted el Tratado por el que se establece una Constitución para Europa?'

² <http://www.constitucioneuropea.es>

Denmark may cause a surprise...

Having held six referendums on EU-related issues since 1972, Denmark has the utmost experience in this perilous democratic exercise.

There never was any doubt that Danish ratification of the Constitutional Treaty would require a binding referendum. In the case of transfer of sovereignty to the EU, the Danish Constitution requires a five-sixths majority in Parliament or a referendum. Laws notwithstanding, it has become customary to hold a referendum in Denmark on all major treaty changes in the EU, the Nice Treaty being an exception. At least one separate referendum also needs to be held before letting go of one or more of the Danish opt-outs.

A schedule for the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty will only be set up after the parliamentary elections on February 8. With local elections in November 2005, there seem to be two options for the date of the referendum:

summer 2005 or spring 2006. No decision has yet been taken. Leading Danish MEPs have recently argued for an early vote because momentum is positive at present and could be lost if the referendum takes place after the one in the UK. Former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, a Social Democrat, has pleaded thus: 'Denmark should not remain in the slipstream of others but make its own decisions. In my opinion this draws greater respect from voters.'

In November 2004 the Conservative-Liberal coalition government secured an agreement with the main opposition parties (Social Democrats, Social Liberals and Socialist People's Party) that they will support the Constitutional Treaty. In light of previous referendums in Denmark, this is seen as crucial to ratification.

This agreement, called 'Denmark in the enlarged European Union', outlines 'a new, proactive Danish European Policy' and defines Danish priorities for the EU agenda in the years to come. Each of the contracting parties is allowed to oppose any future extension of qualified majority voting in the Council on specific issues, e.g. social and labour market policies as well as certain aspects of taxation.

The Socialist People's Party, which has tipped the balance in previous referenda, was usually split on EU issues, but in December 2004 a party referendum gave clear support for the Treaty and the national agreement, thus raising considerably the chances of a Danish ratification. With this historical shift in the attitude of the Socialist People's Party, the parliamentary opposition to the Constitutional Treaty is left in the hands of the Unity List, a small far-left party, the Danish People's Party on the far right and the Christian Democrats, a small centre party. The latter is far from certain to be represented in Parliament after the February 8 elections.

As before, the eurosceptic movements are expected to play a major role in the campaign, although the June Movement's delegation went down to one seat in the latest elections for the European Parliament, while the

The People's Movement against the EU retained its single seat.

Opinion polls are currently favourable. According to the most recent Eurobarometer survey (carried out in November 2004), 44 per cent are in favour of the draft European Constitution, 30 per cent against and 26 per cent undecided. Traditionally eurosceptic Denmark now is close to the EU average. Several national polls reveal an even stauncher support, suggesting that a majority would support the Constitution, while the opposition varies from 18 to 30 per cent and 15 to 30 per cent remain undecided.

There is no single explanation for these figures. Enlargement has certainly helped considerably, as Danes all along have supported the admission of the former Soviet block countries. Equally, there is a growing understanding of the fact that membership in the EU is advantageous in order to face common challenges in a globalised world.

These positive opinion polls may also be a first sign of a more fundamental change of attitude towards the EU in Denmark in recent years. Today few Danes would prefer to quit the EU, although many still find the EU not democratic enough and distant from everyday life.

Overall, the pro-EU side will start out from a good position when the campaign gains momentum. However, experience tells us that this advance can easily be lost, particularly if the campaign is long and takes place during a summer. A Danish 'yes' can therefore not be taken for granted. One of the main problems is that voters do not necessarily limit their answer to the question on the ballot and that the outcome can be influenced by any kind of more or less relevant concerns. Bearing in mind the outcome of the Maastricht referendum, part of the electorate will be confident that a 'no' vote will not have negative consequences. These voters remain convinced that by the end of the day the 'political establishment' will change a 'no' vote into a 'yes'.

No certainty is possible before the last vote has been cast, but this time the Danes could well take Europe by surprise, as it currently seems far easier to obtain a 'yes' in Denmark than in a number of other EU member states.

Anne Mette
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Danish Institute for
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Update...

Slovenia

On 1 February 2005, Slovenia became the third member state to ratify the Constitution after Lithuania and Hungary. The Slovenian Parliament voted with an overwhelming majority (79 to 4 with 7 abstentions) in favour of the Constitution, easily reaching the necessary two-thirds majority.

Italy

On 25 January 2005, the lower house of the Italian Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, ratified the EU Constitution by a majority of 436 in favour, 28 against and five abstentions. The votes against were cast by members of the Communist Party and the right-wing Northern League. The vote now moves to the upper house, the Senate, where easy ratification is expected.

France

On 1 February 2005, the lower house of the French Parliament, the Assemblée Nationale, passed the necessary amendments to the French Constitution to allow ratification with 450 votes for, 34 votes against and 64 abstaining, easily reaching the necessary three-fifths majority. All 22 Communist deputies and 7 deputies of the governing UMP party voted against the Treaty, while 56 of the 64 abstentions were cast by Socialist deputies, with 90 Socialists voting for the Constitution.

6. And finally...

The final decision by the Dutch Parliament to hold a referendum on the EU Constitution has given the green light for the referendum campaign to begin. The project described below will form a part of this campaign.

Eurocracy - the EU President Game

The Game

Eurocracy is a board game about the European Union. The aim of the game is to explain the Constitution for Europe to the citizens of the Union and to stimulate the turn-out in those member states where a referendum will be held.

During the course of the game players compete in 'European elections' in cities across the 25 member states. They receive MEPs for each election won, and ministers for winning all cities of one members state. The ultimate goal is to receive enough ministers to form a 'European government', which will enable the player to become 'President of the European Union' if he has sufficient MEPs at the same time.

The YOU4UROPE Constitution Campaign

The inventor of the game, Jacob Hoeksma, will organise the YOU4UROPE Constitution Campaign, which is to be held in spring 2005. The campaign consists of 40 playing and debating events. During a YOU4UROPE event the participants start by playing the board game *Eurocracy* and engage in a discussion about Europe, the Constitution and the desirability of a referendum afterwards. Per event 6 players qualify for participation in the Grande Finale which is to be held in The Hague in the week prior to the Dutch referendum. The finals will culminate in a joyful '*Celebration of the Constitution*'.

For further information please contact Jacob Hoeksma j.hoeksma@chello.nl or visit www.EU-President.com

7. News from the Federal Trust

Forthcoming events

'Lessons from the Spanish Referendum?', 23 February 2005, 6pm.

This panel discussion is organised in association with Chatham House (formerly the Royal Institute of International Affairs). To register please contact Iwona Newton at newton@chathamhouse.org.uk

'The UK Presidency of the European Union', 20-21 June 2005.

This conference is organised in association with Chatham House (formerly the Royal Institute of International Affairs) and the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA). Further information will be available shortly at www.fedtrust.co.uk/presidency.

Forthcoming publications

'The EU and Turkey: A glittering prize or a millstone?', edited by Michael Lake.

'This book is a honest and multi-disciplinary attempt to illuminate the dimensions of the challenge from different perspectives. I admire its breadth, depth and relevance and believe it will be a useful reference, not only for policy-makers and practitioners but for any citizen who reads it.'

From the Preface by Pat Cox, former President of the European Parliament

Available in March 2005. To pre-order copies please contact Brian Howlett at brian@fedtrust.co.uk.

Other events

'The Impact on EU Member States of the Ratification of the Constitutional Treaty', London, 24 February 2005

Diégo Colas, First Secretary at the French Embassy, and Hellmut Hoffmann, Political Counsellor at the German Embassy, will debate the constitutional implications of the referendum process. The event is organised by the Central London Europe Group and will take place at 6 p.m. at the National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1. The cost for the meeting is £6. To register, please contact: Richard Wassell, CLEG, 10a Tubs Hill Parade, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1DH, Tel: 01732-452684, Fax: 01732-740446, E-mail: rcw@netcomuk.co.uk

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