



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPE'S ENVIRONMENT COMMITMENT RESTORED BUT NO PROGRESS ON POLICIES AND CITIZENS RIGHTS

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The eight largest European environmental organisations, the *Green 8* ⁽¹⁾, welcomed the final shape of the European Constitution but cautioned that the work of the Convention is not yet complete.



The *Green 8* congratulated Convention members on reaching agreement on major political issues relevant for the future of the European Union alongside environmental issues. *"We recognised the openness of the Convention, and we would like to acknowledge efforts made by Convention members who spoke out for and supported the EU environmental dimension"*, said a *Green 8* spokesperson. *"However, in the future, we believe transparency could be further improved and dialogue with civil society should be better organised."*



Friends of the Earth Europe

"Although we have fortunately regained the environmental commitments of the current EC Treaty, it must be noted that the Convention has not grasped the opportunity to put the environment any nearer the heart of Europe", continued the spokesperson.

Referring to specific issues, they continued *"The articles on the democratic life of the Union have only marginally changed since the first draft. They remain vague and unclear. Access to justice, an essential element of participatory democracy and accountability of the European Institutions to the Union's citizens has still not been granted."* These are two important areas in which the European Convention was expected to take bolder steps in bringing the Union closer to its citizens according to the Laeken mandate.



The *Green 8* considers it positive that the Convention proposes to increase the role of the Parliament in important policy areas such as agriculture. However, it is disappointed it did not dare to remove the Council's unanimity requirement for environmental fiscal provisions.



A major weakness of the Convention's current proposal is that it leaves the aging EU policies untouched.. Outdated policies, such as agriculture, transport and economic and social cohesion, and the details of new or significantly changed chapters such as energy and common commercial policy, need a thorough discussion, and consultations with civil society. This cannot be done in a few weeks. *"The Summit should, in an extended mandate, invite the Convention explicitly to review all these policy chapters, and allow several months for this"* the *Green 8* Spokesman declared. The short extension the Convention is asking right now is not appropriate for this purpose.



It is also expected that during that extension period the Protocol on the EURATOM treaty will be discussed. The present approach is unacceptable as it retains a preferential financial and institutional framework for nuclear power. *"Linking the EURATOM Treaty unchanged into the Constitution would undermine the work of the Convention. It may also place at risk the ratification of the European Constitution in many Member States, where undoubtedly EURATOM provisions would feature prominently in any proposed public referendum,"* noted the *Green 8* spokesperson.

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Notes to the editor:

(1) The member organisations of the Green-8 are: BirdLife International, Climate Action Network Europe, European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Friends of Nature International, European Federation for Transport and Environment (T & E), Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE), Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).