

SEMDOC

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NON-PAPER

for the General Affairs Council
on 31 May 1999

Re: How and when to tackle institutional issues not resolved at Amsterdam
Ad: Elements for a discussion

At its meeting in Vienna on 11 and 12 December 1998, the European Council agreed that it would decide at its meeting in Cologne "on how and when to tackle the institutional issues not resolved by the Amsterdam Treaty which have to be resolved before enlargement".

Any amendments to the Treaty which may be necessary if these issues are to be resolved must be agreed in accordance with Article 48(2) of the EU Treaty in the context of a Conference of Representatives of Member States' Governments.

1. Mandate of the Intergovernmental Conference

In accordance with the Protocol to the Amsterdam Treaty and accompanying statements, the mandate of the Intergovernmental Conference covers the following:

- size and composition of the European Commission,
- weighting of the votes in the Council (new formula for the weighting, introduction of a dual majority, threshold for qualified majority decisions),
- extension of qualified majority voting in the Council.

Any further necessary Treaty amendments relating to the European Institutions in connection with the aforementioned questions and in the context of the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty could also be dealt with.

2. Preparation for the Intergovernmental Conference

The task for the Presidency is, on its own responsibility, to draw up for the European Council meeting in Helsinki a comprehensive report making clear and reviewing the options for resolving the issues which need to be cleared up. In the process, the Presidency will take account of the proposals put forward by the Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament. It may also call in outside experts.

3. Timetable for the Intergovernmental Conference

- Until the end of 1999: preparation, drafting of possible options for solutions; report to the European Council in Helsinki, as the basis for Conference negotiations,
- First half of 2000: convening of the Intergovernmental Conference,
- Second half of 2000: conclusion of the Conference and agreement on the necessary Treaty amendments.
