

DECLARATION OF ROME

Together in Rome on the occasion of the opening of the Inter - Governmental Conference (IGC) to revise the Treaties, the Heads of State and of Government of Member Countries, of acceding countries and candidates to the European Union, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission:

- reaffirm that the process of European integration is our continent's essential calling as the instrument for a more efficacious international role for the Union in supporting peace, democracy, prosperity and solidarity in all member States;
- highlight the fact that the imminent enlargement constitutes a historical moment which renders the Union richer in terms of identity and culture and extends the possibility of promoting shared values and of conferring weight and authority to Europe's role in world;
- confirm the importance of the commitment to endow the European Union with a constitutional text based on the equality of its States, people and citizens that assures the efficacy, consistency and efficiency of Europe's role in the world and take up the Convention's Draft Treaty as a good basis for starting in the Intergovernmental Conference;

- renew the expectation of a conclusion of the constitutional negotiations in advance of the European Parliament elections in June 2004 in order to allow European citizens to cast their vote in full awareness of the future architecture of the Union;
 - stress that the adoption of a Constitutional Treaty represents a vital step in the process aimed at making Europe more cohesive, more transparent and democratic, more efficient and closer to its citizens, inspired by the will to promote universal values above all through cooperation with international multilateral organisations and confirming a strong and balanced transatlantic relationship;
 - give homage, in the light of this imminent and significant passage, to those who with great foresight, from the end of the Second World War to the present, invested their energy in the process of European integration: from the Founders of the initial Community to the political leaders of the member states who continued and carried forward their work, to the citizens and above all to Europe's youth who are called upon to define the image and identity of tomorrow's Europe.
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