

Say 'yes' to the draft Constitutional Treaty For a Metamorphosis of the Union

The Europe being built is the fruit of a "European Dream"; in this respect, civil society should be proud of the role it has played for the past fifty years to help the European Dream and the EU Treaties evolve. Today's Europe is a source of pride and renewed enthusiasm for us. It is envied by the other regions of the world. It marks a new stage in the history of mankind, since it is the Europe of peace-building between countries that used to repeatedly take up arms against each other, a Europe promoting the collective well-being of its peoples, a Europe of values in a society that has succeeded in establishing connections between local and global levels and between the past, the present and the future, fostering unity in diversity. US author Jeremy Rifkin (1) has developed the idea that the European Dream is far better suited than the American Dream to this new stage in the human journey, a stage that "promises to have mankind adopt a new global consciousness in keeping with an increasingly interconnected and globalized society. The European dream is based on inclusivity, cultural diversity, quality of life, sustainable development, social rights and universal human rights".

The draft Constitutional Treaty provides the means to further transform the European project at the service of the peoples. Until now, some only regarded the Union as a large free trade area. With the Constitutional Treaty, the cornerstone of the EU will no longer be the market but the fundamental rights that have become the "heart and soul" of the Treaty. With the draft Constitutional Treaty, we shall have increased means to turn the project of a super-state at the service of the market (which is how some people view the Union) into that of a Network Europe with multi-level partnerships that are no longer established between the State and the Market but between the three elements of a triangle "Government-Market-Civil Society" at the service of the Common Good.

According to Rifkin, if American citizens were asked to ratify the draft Constitutional Treaty today, a majority of them would vote against the Treaty, particularly because the Charter of Fundamental Rights goes too far on certain points, such as the abolition of the death penalty. They would also vote against the draft Treaty since a social market economy, sustainable development, free and fair trade and the eradication of poverty are substituted for free market. This is precisely because the draft Constitutional Treaty enables Europe to become the indisputable leader in the area of human rights that we are calling for a 'yes' vote on the Treaty.

The inclusion of a section on participatory democracy is another new significant lever, as it will help develop a complementary engine in the 'Europe' rocket: *the participatory route*. With the integration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a cornerstone of the Treaty and the new objectives of the Union described above, European policies will have to change. The very text of the draft Treaty can therefore be the starting point for a real "metamorphosis" of Europe – to take up Edgar Morin's phrase – and give it a new face. This is another reason why we are calling for a 'yes' vote on the draft Constitutional Treaty as a new, important stage which will enable Europe to build a new social contract and contribute to human security and world peace.

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(1) The European Dream. Jeremy Rifkin. Polity Press. 2004.