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SPEECH BY COMMISSIONER ANITA GRADIN AT THE "SOCIETE BELGO-SUEDOISE" IN BRUSSELS, 8 JUNE 1995

-Majority voting must not become the power monopoly of the big countries, said Commissioner Anita Gradin in speech on Thursday evening in Brussels.

Mrs Gradin speaking to the Societe Belgo-Suedoise discussed the IGC 1996. She noted that the Union would have to consider a revision of its present decision making system to be able to accommodate more Members.

-Already the Maastricht Treaty provides for more qualified majority voting in many areas. We might imagine that development continues, with due respect to various national sensitivities, she said.

Mrs Gradin noted that the heavier votes for smaller member states has been important during the history of the Community. The system ought to be left intact in the new treaty.

-The small countries must feel that they are heard and that their opinions carry weight - also by way of votes, she said.

Mrs Gradin reaffirmed that IGC 1996 must be carried through with openness and based on a general and broad debate. It has to respond to the citizens concerns. The Governments and negotiators have to answer convincingly at least three questions:

- Why do we have this Union?
- Why can we not really live without it?
- How does the Union address fundamental concerns of the citizen?

The Union is a peace project. As a peace project it will only succeed if the former Communist countries of East and Central Europe also become members. That in its turn requires more democracy, more efficiency and more solidarity.

- I believe that the triangle of institutional reform, enlargement and agro/structural/financial reform hang together, said Mrs Gradin. The institutional reform belongs to the IGC 96. The rest will be handled later on.

When speaking on the foreign and security policy of the Union, she noted that the Member States now have a possibility to better coordinate their views.

-But the Union today has no real budget, no logistics and no common analysis capacity in the area of foreign policy.

-This might be something to envisage in the IGC 1996.

Concerning her own responsibility area, Justice and Home Affairs, the Commissioner said that she had witnessed a lot of brave efforts in combatting fraud, in eliminating narcotics smuggling and in controlling borders. This is a common challenge, that cannot be dealt with by nation states alone.

-In the third pillar we unfortunately work with a lot of bureaucracy and decisions are cumbersome. Everybody has to agree on everything. And even if you agree, the decisions only take effect after a very long time. In the council we work with five or six layers of Committees and working groups. 28 in total said Mrs Gradin.

She pointed out the Commission has suggested a hard look at all these aspects in the IGC.

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