

MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE IGC (CONCLAVE)

Ministers heard an introduction by Minister Spring of the general outline for a draft revision of the Treaties, presented by the Irish Presidency, as requested by the Florence European Council for the meeting in Dublin on 13/14 December.

The President underlined, in particular, that making the Union more relevant and comprehensible to its citizens is a major aim which permeates the work throughout the Conference and is reflected in all chapters of the outline draft Treaty. He also briefly sketched out the methods followed during the preparatory work and gave an outline of the structure of the document.

In the debate that followed, Ministers expressed their appreciation for the work carried out by the Irish Presidency and gave their preliminary reactions to the outline draft Treaty.

Summing up, the President noted that there was a widespread view that the outline draft Treaty represented a valid basis for the further work of the Conference and expressed the hope that, if it was endorsed as such by the European Council, this would certainly constitute the "decisive progress" requested in Florence.

The European Council in Dublin should lend further momentum to the work of the Conference by confirming the timetable set for completing the Conference under the Netherlands Presidency in Amsterdam, to which full support should be given in this difficult task.

In conclusion, the President stressed that if the IGC is to equip the Union to address the challenges ahead, notably with a view to enlargement, and respond imaginatively to the aspirations of its citizens, significant progress will have to be achieved in all the main areas under consideration at the Conference. That progress must measure up to the ambitious aims set for the Conference, as well as to the daunting challenges facing the European Union in the years ahead.

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The Ministerial Conclave was preceded by a meeting with Mr Elmar Brok, Member of the European Parliament, who gave, on behalf of his Institution, an initial reaction to the outline draft Treaty.

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SEAT OF THE COMMUNITY PLANT VARIETY OFFICE

The Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States agreed that the seat of the Community Plant Variety Office will be in Angers, France.