

Voice of the People

Manuscript
EU and the future
With answers from politicians at the Parliament
TVSYD, Brussels

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Music

Translation

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0'01 Søren Laursen, Chief of staff, Denmark

“I think, the process is too long, when you are talking about the European Union. Too many people are going to be heard. I would like to know, what plans the politicians have to stop that kind of egoism and nationalism. I think we use too much energy and don't have the kind of enterprise”

0'21 SIGN:

Today every single member is in some cases allowed to impose one's veto against suggestions for new laws, which are supposed to be implemented in all member states

0'29 Graham Watson, Member of the Parliament, UK

I can understand those sentiments. I think, many people are frustrated by the fact, that we still do have a lot of national egoism within the Union. It's not the fault of only one country, we are all guilty of it. What we need to recognize, is that government at European level is fundamentally no different from government at national or local level. It's sadly no better, but it's normally no worse either. And once we start to recognize, that we need to do certain things together at European level, things national states can no longer do at their own, then we might all become a little more relaxed about European government

1'23 Giorgos Katifioris, Member of the Parliament, Greece

This is not easy to get rid of, because you must enclose people even more, as the treaty says. This cannot happen from one day to the next, it's a question of social and historical change. When we get that, when we get one European people side by side instead of a number of national states, then we shall be able to make the democratic institution to function more effectively as they do in the United States, there are no problems there

2'09

“Of course I think it's important, that you reach consensus, but still too many people have been heard, and they are discussing too unimportant things. It was much better, if they concentrated about big things”

2'18 SIGN:

For the moment the politicians within the Union are working on a new kind of constitution. This constitution will among other things include new voting rights for the countries

2'29 Giorgos Katifioris, Member of the Parliament, Greece

, it's not a big lead forward, but it's a step forward. Especially in the question of decision-making there will be more things decided by majority and not by veto. And the majority, which the new constitution defines, is simpler majority than we have at the moment. The end result of all this is, that while now we have certainty to decide only 5% of the cases by majority, in the new constitution this certainty rises to 20%. This means while now it's possible – I don't say it happens – but it's possible to block 95% of the decisions taken by the majority, and with the new constitution it will be possible to block 20%

3'47 Graham Watson, Member of the Parliament, UK

The constitution does three things. It lays down much more clearly, which power can be placed in Brussels, and which power should be matters for the nation states. It gives us for the first time a bill of rights for the European citizens. And it also gives us – and this is important – a legal way by which a country can decide to pull out of the European Union if it wants to. And do that without ruining the whole enterprise for everybody else. So I think, there are a number of important steps forward in this constitution

4'26 Lars Funder, Managing director, Denmark

“One of the biggest problems about the Union is, that the politicians wish to beware the status of the national states. You have to find a balance, you have to unite your powers, and you have to become unit, instead of still having your own identity”