

Report on the BPA Debriefing of Monday December 18, 2006-12-18

I. Dr. Weningers debriefing on the EU summit in December

Michael Weninger spoke about four issues: the constitutional treaty, enlargement of the EU, Turkey and Kosovo.

1. The constitutional treaty

The problem remains that 18 countries have ratified the European constitution but seven have not. The summit talked about proposals to solve the problem. Several solutions before and behind closed curtains are being proposed:

- the 18 approving countries meet in Madrid in late winter, early spring to form a strategy to convince the others
- diplomatic actions are being undertaken by the Finnish and German presidents
- shorten the text of the constitution or change it – but the problem is 18 countries already approved it
- add a social charter to the constitution

There is no danger for article 1.47 and 1.52 in the constitution, even if changes are made. On the contrary, there is a renewed attempt to have a referral to the Christian roots of Europe in the text again.

2. The enlargement strategy of the three C's

To join the EU there are three key elements:

- Consolidation (common principles and requests such as democracy, respect for human rights, liberty, market economy,...)
- Conditionality (be able to fulfil the obligations that go with EU membership)
- Capacity to integrate (the EU must be able to integrate a new member)

The weak elements here are: 1. that the enlargement strategy has not been linked in practice to the constitution, which is the instrument for all further enlargement. 2. that there is no mention of the socio-ecological dimension of market economy.

3. Turkey

Negotiations stopped. The UK and Sweden advocated to continue negotiations, others advocated to stop (like Greece). All members agreed on monitoring Turkey. The country must open harbours and airports for Cyprus first.

The discussion about Croatia happens separately from Turkey.

4. Kosovo

The EU is watching the UN as they will advise on the political status of Kosovo in the future. It is possible that Russia will veto the outcome. The question of the status of Kosovo is an important and delicate one for the EU.

II. Mr. Frédéric Lerais on investing in youth in the EU

Dr Weninger invited mr Lerais to talk about a preliminary paper which is an advice to the Bureau of European Policy Advisers on youth. The paper can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/policy_advisers/publications/index_en.htm
reactions: Frederic.lerais@ec.europa.eu

The study wants to change situations for young people (discontentment, young adult unemployment, school leavers,..), to modernize the social model (dealing with new social realities), to invest in the future and to safeguard an interracial balance. Education seems the centre piece of the paper.

After the presentation different partners in dialogue of Dr Weninger reacted on the economical approach of the problem and on the absence of the crucial role of the family.

III. Mr. Maurizio Salvi on the European Group on Ethics

The EGC exists because the EC is not only an economical community but also a community of values. Integration and respect of human rights and ethics is an integral component of governance in the EU. Open debate, mutual respect and tolerance are three axes on which the EU is focusing efforts, actions and initiatives. The European Charter of fundamental values shows that, while Europe is being multicultural, a humus of shared values exists which is ultimately linked to the identity of the EU.

The EGC is an independent, pluralistic and multidisciplinary body which advises the European Community on ethical aspects of science and new technologies. The group consists of 14 members who are specialists in law, ethics, philosophy, theology, sciences, medicines. The EGC works together with international institutions such as WHO, UN, UNESCO etc. Their methodology is a horizontal approach (ethical reviews and policy actions) and a vertical approach (research programmes and activities). The EGC hosts a Forum of National Ethics Councils to create opportunities for exchanging good practices, experiences and information.

Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/european_group_ethics/index_en.htm