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TO

Make provision for a referendum on the draft Constitutional Treaty on the Future of Europe.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Referendum on the proposed European Union Constitution

- (1) No treaty adopted by the Inter-Governmental Conference convened to consider the draft treaty establishing a Constitution for the European Union shall be ratified unless the provisions of the treaty have been agreed to in a referendum. 5
- (2) At the same time as the Secretary of State publishes a bill to give effect to the provisions of the treaty referred to in subsection (1), he shall publish a Command Paper which shall include an assessment of the political and financial commitments, and any transitional arrangements, that the United Kingdom has entered into as a result of the treaty. 10
- (3) A referendum shall be held no sooner than three months after the publication of the Command Paper referred to in subsection (2).

2 Referendum question

- (1) The question to be asked in a referendum held in pursuance of section 1 is: 15
“Should the Government ratify the Treaty establishing a Constitution for the European Union?”
- (2) The following statement must precede the question on the ballot paper: 20
“Parliament has decided that the Government should not ratify the Treaty establishing a Constitution for European Union unless the people of the United Kingdom have agreed in a referendum that it should do so.”

3 Arrangements for the referendum

- (1) Those entitled to vote in the referendum shall be persons who, on the date of the referendum, would be entitled to vote as electors in European Parliamentary elections.
- (2) The Secretary of State shall appoint a Chief Counting Officer. 5
- (3) The Chief Counting Officer shall appoint a counting officer for each parliamentary constituency.
- (4) Each counting officer shall –
 - (a) conduct the counting of votes cast in the area for which he is appointed in accordance with regulations, and 10
 - (b) certify the number of votes cast for each proposition.
- (5) The Chief Counting Officer shall certify the total of –
 - (a) the ballot papers counted, and
 - (b) the votes cast for each proposition, 15
 for the whole of the United Kingdom.
- (6) The Electoral Commission shall publish a report setting out when and how the referendum shall be conducted, including what information is to be provided to those entitled to vote.
- (7) The conduct of the referendum shall follow as closely as possible the provisions of the Representation of the People Acts 1983 to 1993. 20
- (8) The Secretary of State shall give effect to the provisions contained in a report of the Electoral Commission under subsection (6) by means of regulations.
- (9) Regulations under this section shall be made by statutory instrument which shall be subject to approval by each House of Parliament.
- (10) The day chosen for holding the referendum shall be a public holiday. 25

4 Expenditure

There shall be paid out of money provided by Parliament –

- (a) *any expenditure of the Secretary of State in consequence of this Act; and*
- (b) *any increase attributable to this Act in the sums which under any other Act are payable out of money so provided.* 30

5 Short title

This Act may be cited as the Draft Constitutional Treaty on the Future of Europe (Referendum) Act 2003.

Draft Constitutional Treaty on the Future of Europe (Referendum) Bill

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To make provision for a referendum on the draft Constitutional Treaty on the
Future of Europe.

*Presented by Mr Frank Field,
supported by
Mr Graham Allen, Tony Wright,
Mr Geoffrey Robinson, Kate Hoey, Alan Howarth,
Mr Graham Stringer, John Cryer,
Mr David Drew, Mr Ian Davidson,
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