

HOUSE OF LORDS

SESSION 2002–03
15th REPORT

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE EUROPEAN UNION

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE—
CONVENTION WORKING GROUP
REPORTS ON DEFENCE AND
EXTERNAL ACTION

WITH EVIDENCE

Ordered to be printed 25 March 2003

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON – THE STATIONERY OFFICE LIMITED

£9.00

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
REPORT	5
Appendix 1: Sub-Committee C (Common Foreign and Security Policy)	7
Appendix 2: List of Witnesses	8
Box 1: Abstract.....	5
ORAL EVIDENCE	<i>Page</i>
<i>Mr Peter Ricketts, Political Director, Mr Tim Barrow, Head of Common Foreign and Security Policy Department, Mr Paul Johnston, Head of SecPol, and Ms Jill Parkinson, Head of Crisis Management/ESDP and Convention Section Common Foreign and Security Policy Department Foreign and Commonwealth Office</i>	
Oral evidence, 16 January 2003	1
<i>Ms Gisela Stuart MP</i>	
Oral evidence, 23 January 2003	11
<i>Sir Stephen Wall, Head of European Secretariat, Mr John Bourne and Mr Joe Griffin Cabinet Office</i>	
Oral evidence, 13 February 2003	18
WRITTEN EVIDENCE	
BOND	25

NOTE: Pages of the Report are numbered in bold type, pages of evidence are numbered in ordinary type. References in the text of the Report are as follows:

- (Q) refers to a question in oral evidence.
- (p) refers to a page of written evidence.

FIFTEENTH REPORT

25 MARCH 2003

By the Select Committee appointed to consider European Union documents and other matters relating to the European Union.

ORDERED TO REPORT

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE—CONVENTION WORKING GROUP REPORTS ON DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL ACTION¹

Box 1

Abstract

The Convention on the Future of Europe was set up on 28 February 2002 and is chaired by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. It has been charged with paving the way for the next intergovernmental conference planned to take place in Berlin in 2004.²

At the Convention plenary of 11–12 July 2002 two working groups were created to deal with EU external relations and defence policies. Having met regularly during the autumn of 2002 both working groups reported their conclusions on 20 December 2002. The Convention is expected to conclude by summer 2003.

The results of the Working Group on defence were broadly welcomed. The external action debate, however, proved highly divisive.

1. The Committee notes the advances made by the Working Group Report on Defence and concurs with the Group's findings.³

2. We endorse the findings of the Working Group Report on External Action on the creation of a European External Action Service, a joint diplomatic service and giving the European Representative autonomy over funding to allow financing crisis management on an urgent basis.⁴

3. We are, however, concerned that the Working Group has not been able to reach a conclusion on whether there should be Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) on Foreign Policy issues. As the Working Group failed to reach any conclusion it is difficult to see any way forward on this regard.⁵ The Committee is particularly concerned that extended QMV on foreign policy would in effect mean QMV on defence issues.⁶

4. In addition, we do not believe that joint membership of relevant institutions is necessary.⁷

¹ Our Committee invited Sub-Committee C (Common Foreign and Security Policy, International Development and External Relations) to consider the relevant reports from the working groups of the Convention for the Future of Europe. The Sub-Committee, whose members are listed in Appendix 1 took evidence from the witnesses listed in Appendix 2. This evidence is printed with this report.

² Laeken Declaration; 15 December 2001, section III.

³ Q47–Q78.

⁴ Q25–Q27; Q32–Q37; Q44; Q107.

⁵ Q5–Q9; Q11–Q14; Q23–Q24; Q88–Q89.

⁶ Q15; Q86; Q91–Q93.

⁷ Q43; Q108–Q110.

5. We are open-minded on the recommendation that a single representative be appointed to carry out both the functions of the High Representative and the External Commissioner. We consider that if the roles are to be exercised by one person the High Representative role must remain firmly based in the Council.⁸

6. We make this short report to the House for information.

⁸ Q18–Q22; Q41–Q42; Q106; Q111–Q113.

APPENDIX 1

Sub-Committee C (Common Foreign and Security Policy)**Members of the Sub-Committee**

Lord Bowness

Lord Harrison

Baroness Hilton of Eggardon

Lord Inge

Lord Jopling (Chairman)

Lord Maclennan of Rogart

Lord Morris of Aberavon

Baroness Park of Monmouth

Lord Powell of Bayswater

Lord Watson of Richmond

Lord Williams of Elvel

Lord Williamson of Horton

APPENDIX 2

List of Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Those marked * gave oral evidence:

BOND Networking for International Development

* Foreign and Commonwealth Office

* Ms Gisela Stuart MP

* Sir Stephen Wall, Head of the European Secretariat, Cabinet Office