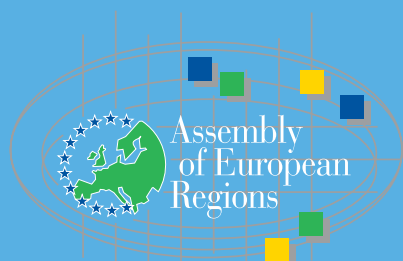


The Assembly  
of European Regions  
(AER) supports  
the ratification of  
the EU Constitutional  
Treaty because:

- The Constitution replaces the plethora of treaties that have been developed since the creation of the European Economic Community with one simplified text that gives the EU a clearer sense of purpose.
- The EU now consists of 25 countries that have chosen to work together in a wide range of areas. In order for such a large number of countries to co-operate successfully, clear rules and guidelines are needed. The Constitution sets out these guidelines, which have been jointly agreed by all those concerned.
- The process of developing the Constitution was a long and careful one in which not only all national governments participated, but also representatives of businesses, interest groups and non-governmental organisations. The Treaty has been developed in such a way as to create a careful balance between all of these interests.

# The Constitutional Treaty

## Ten Good Reasons to Vote 'Yes'



**The Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the political organisation of the regions of Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and international level. It represents 250 regions and 12 interregional associations. The AER played an active role in the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty and was successful in ensuring that many of its demands were taken into account in the final text.

- The Constitution protects the rights of the citizen by including the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- The Constitution gives citizens a greater say in European decision-making by allowing citizens to petition the European institutions to take decisions on issues of concern to them.
- The Constitution gives more power to the European Parliament, the body that is directly elected by the citizens. It therefore increases the democratic accountability of the European Union and further increases the ability of the citizens to influence the EU's decisions.
- The Constitutional Treaty does not take away the powers of national governments or increase the power of the European institutions. It simply sets out what is to be done at European level and what is to be done at national level. National governments still have the decision-making powers in key areas such as defence, foreign policy and tax.
- The Constitution says that decisions in the European Union are to be taken as closely as possible to its citizens, with the European Union acting only when the desired results cannot be achieved through action at the local, regional or national level.
- The Constitution will give national Parliaments more of a say in European issues. They will be able to vote on whether to try to block specific pieces of European legislation.
- The Constitution will make European decision-making more transparent, as people will know how their governments voted on particular decisions.

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) believes that regional and local authorities should actively support the ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty because:

- The Treaty recognises the key role that regional and local authorities play in Europe, by explicitly extending the principle of subsidiarity to these levels for the first time.
- The Treaty includes 'territorial cohesion', together with economic and social cohesion, as a key EU objective, defining it as the third pillar of European integration.
- It makes explicit reference to respect for local and regional self-government as part of national identities, thereby emphasising the important place that cultural diversity has within the European Union.
- It increases the consultation of regions in the legislative drafting phase, by obliging the European Commission to consult all the players who may be affected by each legislative act that is being planned or drafted.

# The Constitutional Treaty and the Regions



**The Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the political organisation of the regions of Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and international level. It represents 250 regions and 12 interregional associations. The AER played an active role in the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty and was successful in ensuring that many of its demands were taken into account in the final text.

- It gives regions the right - through the Committee of the Regions - to take cases to the European Court of Justice when they believe that the principle of subsidiarity has been breached.
- It obliges the European Commission, when drafting legislation, to consider whether the decisions it is taking would be better made at the national, regional or local level and to produce an 'explanatory memorandum' to accompany every new proposal, demonstrating that it is not breaching the principle of subsidiarity.
- It introduces an 'early warning system' in which the European Commission must refer all new legislation to National Parliaments for consultation. The AER welcomes the additional possibility that this gives to regions with legislative powers to influence the content of legislative proposals.