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The future of the European Constitution

Report of the discussion on the European Constitution in Vienna

All the participants gathered at the Green Parliamentary Forum in Vienna agree on the need to improve the European Constitution. "We should not underestimate people, but rather take their doubts and anxieties seriously" said the German MP Claudia Roth. There was also a tendency towards unanimity in the various suggestions from some State and Regional leaders who envisage only structural (removal of Part 1 and 2 of the Constitution) or cosmetic changes (Declarations and Protocols).

Now an intense and truly European debate must move forward with the cooperation of the European and national parliaments. In this sense, sharp criticism can be made of the letter from the Austrian, German and Finnish Presidents of Parliament, in which they reject the offer of the European Parliament to organise a range of Parliamentary Forums and refused to be considered as associated with the European Parliament. Apart from the fact that this letter was obviously not agreed upon, what should be most criticised is that the national Parliaments, as the extended arm of the executive, are undermining the indispensable parliamentary aspect of the Constitutional process.

There was a large consensus on the six questions which are outlined in the Duff/Voggenhuber report. The aim of European integration, the role of Europe in the world, globalisation and the future of the European social model, the borders of the European Union, the reinforcement of Freedom, Justice and Security and the financing of the European Union have become taboo questions for most people, according the Richard Wouters from Groenlinks in the Netherlands. The Greens must provide answers to these questions and concrete suggestions for the improvement of the constitution.

In any case, the revised constitution should be put to a European-wide referendum, most likely in 2009.

Petra Prossliner

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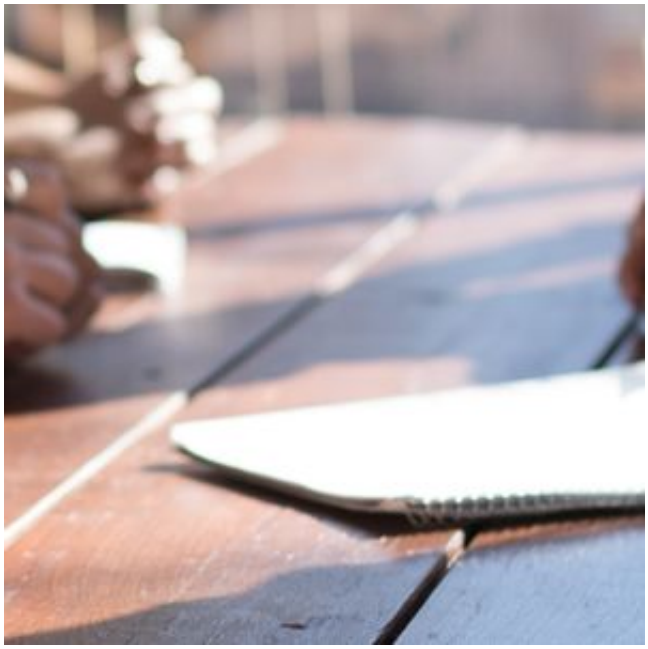
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