

## **ELECTORAL REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Andrew Duff is rapporteur (draftsman) for the electoral reform of the European Parliament.

His chief proposals, designed to come into force in time for the next elections in 2014, are as follows:

- creating an EU wide constituency from which 25 extra MEPs will be elected: each elector to have two votes;
- establishing regional constituencies within the larger EU states;
- allowing electors to vote either for a party list or for an individual candidate from a list (semi-open);
- establishing an EU electoral authority to set rules and oversee the elections;
- finding a mathematical formula to settle the distribution of the 751 national seats by degressive proportionality;
- restricting polling days to Saturdays and Sundays;
- bringing forward the election from June to May;
- recommending harmonisation of minimum ages to vote and to stand as a candidate;
- establishing a supranational regime for MEPs' privileges and immunities;
- widening electoral participation, especially for EU citizens living in states other than their own.

The European Parliament enjoys the right of initiative over this whole agenda, the right to insist on a Convention to prepare the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) which will have to agree the relevant treaty changes, as well as the right of consent to the decisions on the electoral procedure and the new composition of Parliament.

The timetable foreseen is as follows:

- European Parliament decision on the Duff Report, July-September 2010;
- European Council decision to accept Parliament's proposals as the basis of negotiation, December 2010;
- Convention on parliamentary reform involving European Council, Commission, European and national parliaments, Spring 2011;
- IGC Summer 2011;
- National parliaments' ratification and European Parliament's consents by July 2012;
- Implementing legislation by July 2013 in time for the May 2014 elections.

Mr Duff invites comments on his proposals from all interested parties, and would welcome further dissemination of the draft report. Other language versions will be available in due course.

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