

Brussels, 4 December 2003

Dear Minister,

The Intergovernmental Conference of the European Union is now addressing a number of important issues concerning the draft Constitutional Treaty. Among them is the question of how to develop the European Security and Defence Policy further, how to increase solidarity within the Union and in particular how to make our work on military and civilian capabilities more effective. The Italian Presidency has been instrumental in the efforts to take forward this agenda.

The Governments of Austria, Ireland, Finland and Sweden express their full support for the efforts of the Italian Presidency to finalise the Constitutional Treaty and to strengthen European Security and Defence Policy. We look forward to a successful outcome on these and other issues at the IGC sessions next week.

We would also like to stress the importance to enhance mutual solidarity among EU Member States. We fully support the proposal to add in the Constitutional Treaty a solidarity clause which would take into account terrorism and natural and man-made disasters. Moreover, we are prepared to underline the principle of EU solidarity more widely in the field of security, including in situations referred in Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, provisions containing formal binding security guarantees would be inconsistent with our security policy or with our constitutional requirements.

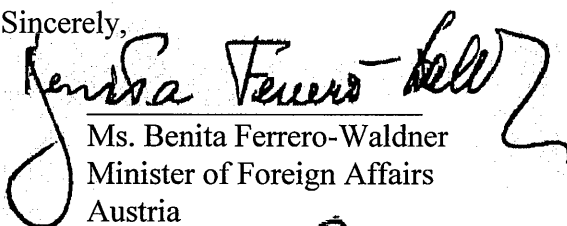
We therefore propose the following text for the first paragraph of Article 40(7) of the Constitutional Treaty:

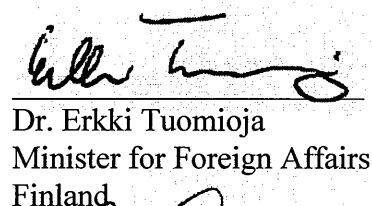
**If a Member State is victim of armed aggression, it may request that the other Member States give it aid and assistance by all the means in their power, military or other, in accordance with art 51 of the UN Charter.**

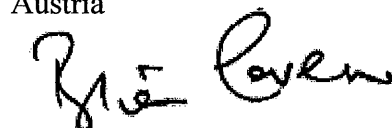
Such an article would in our view substantially enhance solidarity among EU Members in the field of security, and contribute to the further strengthening of the European Security and Defence Policy.


We are copying this letter to the Foreign Ministers of other member states and acceding states and Javier Solana.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Austria

  
Dr. Erkki Tuomioja  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Finland

  
Mr. Brian Cowen T.D.  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Ireland

  
Ms. Laila Freivalds  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Sweden

His Excellency  
Mr. Franco Frattini  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy  
Rome