

PRESS RELEASE

SOTEU: No, President von der Leyen, the European Union can enlarge only if it deepens first

The UEF calls on EU leaders to rapidly open the process for Treaty Change, the best investment for peace, sovereignty, and prosperity in Europe

Brussels, 13 September 2023

Just a few hours after the State of the European Union address by the President of the European Commission, a group of European parliamentarians led by Guy Verhofstadt, board member of the Spinelli Group, [presented in a press conference](#) a draft report calling for Treaty Change.

Although the text will need the approval of the European Parliament's Institutional Affairs Committee (AFCO), the political consensus of the report makes it a great proposal to initiate a Convention that will draft the new European treaties.

During her SOTEU address, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen endorsed the need for Treaty Change through a Convention. Yet, she failed to encourage the European Council to rise to the challenge. She also claimed that the enlargement of the Union to the Western Balkans and Ukraine should not wait for Treaty reform.

The Federalists disagree with this approach. We believe that enlargement calls for deep institutional reforms. The European Union cannot work with more than 30 members with the institutions it has today.

In a [live stream](#) organised by the UEF on Wednesday, **Domènec Ruiz Devesa** MEP, President of the UEF, said "*There is a double message from Ursula von der Leyen. On one hand enlargement and deepening go hand in hand, and on the other she puts conditions on deepening—for us federalists, there can be no 'if'.*"

Sandro Gozi MEP, Chair of the Spinelli Group, added "*Europe should not put conditions on our common future with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. But we cannot disappoint them either. And we will disappoint if we cannot reform.*"

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Context

Every year, the President of the European Commission gives the State of the European Union (SOTEU) address, where she underlines the upcoming priorities for the European executive. This year's SOTEU, on Wednesday 13 September, was the last one before the European elections of 2024. Later that day, a group of Members of the European Parliament led by Guy Verhofstadt presented a draft report calling for Treaty Change. This report will be put to a vote at the European Parliament's Institutional Committee in September, then to the Plenary in November 2023.

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