

The Union of European Federalists

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*Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
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Dear Mr. Prime Minister Mark Rutte,

In Europe, in front of the great common challenges our states have to face, we have long experienced the need to act together, especially where, as individual states, we do not have the adequate means and resources. Indeed, if national governments' aims are those to guarantee citizens with the possibility of living in a just, free, safe and peaceful society, to stop wars and external threats, to fight against global warming to safeguard the future of next generations, European unity is the only solution.

In other words, what we are experiencing is that, in order to guarantee the full sovereignty of our citizens, we need a partial sharing of this sovereignty at the supranational (European) level in some specific areas. This does not mean diminishing the prerogatives of national sovereignties - both because the member states collectively exercise the portion of sovereignty shared at the European level, and because national state powers remain unchanged in all other matters -; on the contrary, it means more power to the citizens and a stronger democracy that benefits political institutions at all levels.

The time has therefore come to adapt the decision-making mechanisms of the European Union, its competences and its capacities for action to the new tasks that are so clear before the eyes of the citizens. We need to overcome unanimity in the Council, especially in foreign policy, social policy, and taxation. We need to extend the ordinary legislative procedure to all the policy areas and to strengthen the Parliament's prerogatives with a direct right of legislative initiative—among others.

This institutional upgrade – which is all the more urgent with the relaunch of the question of enlargement (in particular to the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia) - necessarily entails a reform of the Treaties. It should go hand in hand with deepening to manage a Union of - potentially - 36 Member States.

As you might know, The European Parliament voted on 22 November 2023 a Report on the proposals for the amendment of the Treaties. These proposals reflect the conclusions expressed by

Citizens in the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union transmitted the Report to the President of the European Council, and now it is of the utmost importance that you, Head of States and Governments, have the possibility to start to discuss this request of opening a Convention under art. 48 TEU, as asked by the European Parliament, already in your meeting scheduled in 21-22 March 2024 in Brussels.

On behalf of our organisations, which have always fought for a political Europe that is closer to the citizens, we would like to emphasise the importance of this opportunity that the European Parliament offers the Member States to open a debate on what kind of Europe to build in the new political phase that we are currently experiencing. We are convinced that it is in the interest of national governments to insist on President Charles Michel to include this item in the agenda for the said meeting.

We are also convinced that, because of the dimension of the problems to be tackled, the only possibility to realize the necessary changes in the EU requires the opening of a Convention, as foreseen by the Treaties, as the ordinary procedure, with the participation of representatives of the European and national parliaments, the European Commission and national governments. On the contrary, alternative reform procedures that only allow to touch on marginal points of our system or that take place through non-public diplomatic negotiations cannot be the answer.

Attached is a detailed memorandum that we hope will help to understand this issue, so crucial at such an important time, when Europe has a chance to relaunch itself, empowering its member states and its citizens.

We are confident, Mr. Prime Minister Mark Rutte, that your government will be at the forefront in supporting this process in reforming the European Union.

Yours faithfully,

Domènec Ruiz Devesa
President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF)
Member of the European Parliament

Sandro Gozi
Chair of the Spinelli Group
Member of the European Parliament

Guy Verhofstadt
Executive Rapporteur on proposals of the European Parliament for the amendment of the Treaties
President of European Movement International (EMI)
Member of the European Parliament

Christelle Savall
President of Young of European Federalists (JEF Europe)