



S201/05

**Summary of the remarks to the press by EU HR Javier Solana  
on the results of the referendum in France**

**Brussels, 30 May 2005**

The people of France have spoken and its majority has decided not to support the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. Of course I respect this choice, but I am equally sorry to learn of this outcome. It will be no surprise that I would have preferred a different result.

I firmly believe that after last year's enlargement, the European Union was ready for a deeper form of engagement which the Constitution would provide. With the "no"-vote in France, we are definitely in a difficult situation. However, as the current President of the Council, Jean-Claude Juncker, has already said, we are going to continue our work and there are still other referenda to be held in the upcoming months and it is important that the ratification process continues.



The decision taken by the French people is an important decision, taken by an important country of the EU. What is of crucial importance now is that we keep on working as we did before and that we do not get into a psychological paralysis. Let me assure you that this will undoubtedly not happen to me!

The European Council in mid-June will give the leaders of Europe the opportunity to discuss the situation collectively and in further detail. The new situation will need to be analysed in a calm and lucid manner. There is no doubt that the European people as well as the European leaders wish the EU to become an increasingly important actor in the international arena.

In the meantime, our work has to continue and we need to explain our partners around the world that the EU will remain an active global player. Our partners need a strong Europe that acts with determination on the international stage. Life continues and the course of the world will not stop. The world's challenges will not change because of yesterday's vote and there are many problems of the world that keep on challenging us. We as the EU have to face these problems and we have to keep on working on their resolution 24 hours a day. This is what we will have to do and this is what I will certainly do. A good example of these necessary efforts is our renewed engagement for an improvement of the situation in Darfur, which we stated at the pledging conference in Addis Ababa last week.

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS:**

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## **Questions and Answers**

- Question: In how far is the French vote a setback for the European Union's ambitions to a strong role on the international stage?

- Answer: I am convinced that the "no"-vote in France is not a setback for the EU as an actor on the world stage. The EU was already an international actor, before we even started talking about the Constitution. The Constitution was certainly designed to improve the visibility of the Union, to make it more effective and to allow more rapid decision-making. However, neither the constitutional text nor the ideas contained in it are dead. Furthermore, we do already have appropriate instruments to act and with these instruments we will face our obligations. We will carry on working and we will keep on acting on the international stage in order to face the numerous challenges. The European Union will definitely continue to be an important actor in international affairs.

Amongst other things, I am about to travel to the Euromed ministerial meeting in Luxembourg right now and I will be travelling to the United States later this week. There is a lot of work to be done, there are various crises and conflicts in the world and Europe will remain engaged. It would be irresponsible to give up our world-wide engagement in the face of an internal setback.

- Question: It is suitable to continue the preparatory work on the European External Action Service after the "no"-vote in France?

- Answer: Even if the Constitution was rejected in France, I think that it is suitable to keep on working on the establishment of an European External Action Service (EEAS). This service will definitely come into existence sooner or later. The more we work on a thorough preparation, the better and more successful it will be when it comes into action. It is not important when this will exactly happen - it is crucial that we get mentally and practically used to the fact that the EEAS will become a reality. I am working with Commission President Barroso on this issue and we will present a report on it to the European Council in June.

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