

LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

In the last few years there has been an intense discussion on the voting procedure in the Council of Ministers of the European Union. With 25 member states (and two more in the near future) it is not a simple task to make reliable judgements on the implications of the various voting systems that have been suggested.

We the undersigned wish to draw the attention of EU Governments to the fact that scientific methods can be used and need to be used to analyse, understand and design complex voting systems. In particular:

- 1) From a scientific point of view there are obvious drawbacks to the systems of voting in the European Council discussed so far. The experts on voting theory agree that the Treaty of Nice gives too much power to a number of countries while others obtain less power than appropriate. On the other hand, **the draft European Constitution assigns too much power to the biggest and the smallest states in a systematic way**, while the middle size countries do not get their due share of influence (see the tables attached). Moreover, the Nice system will be extremely ineffective due to its high quotas.
- 2) The 'compromises' proposed recently to change the quota in the draft Constitution either to 65% of the population and 55% of the states or to 55% of the population and 55% of the states make the situation for several countries even worse than in the draft Constitution. As can be shown by mathematical analysis, it is not the quotas that are mainly at fault, but rather the system of proposed weights.
- 3) The basic democratic principle that **the vote of any citizen of a Member State ought to be worth as much as for any other Member State** is strongly violated both in the voting system of the Treaty of Nice and in the rules given in the draft Constitution. It can be proved rigorously that this principle is fulfilled if the influence of each country in the Council is proportional to the **square root** of its population. This is known as 'Penrose's Square Root Law'. Such a system may be complemented by a simple majority of states.
- 4) A voting system that obeys the Square Root Law, i.e., which gives equal power to all citizens, is easily implemented. It is representative, objective, transparent, and effective. Such a system was proposed by Swedish diplomats already in 2000, and recently endorsed in a number of scientific articles.

We urge our politicians to take into consideration the contribution of the scientific community to this issue. We are highly concerned that any system implemented without due regard to the scientific analysis of voting power may become a major drawback to a democratic development in the European Union.

TABLES

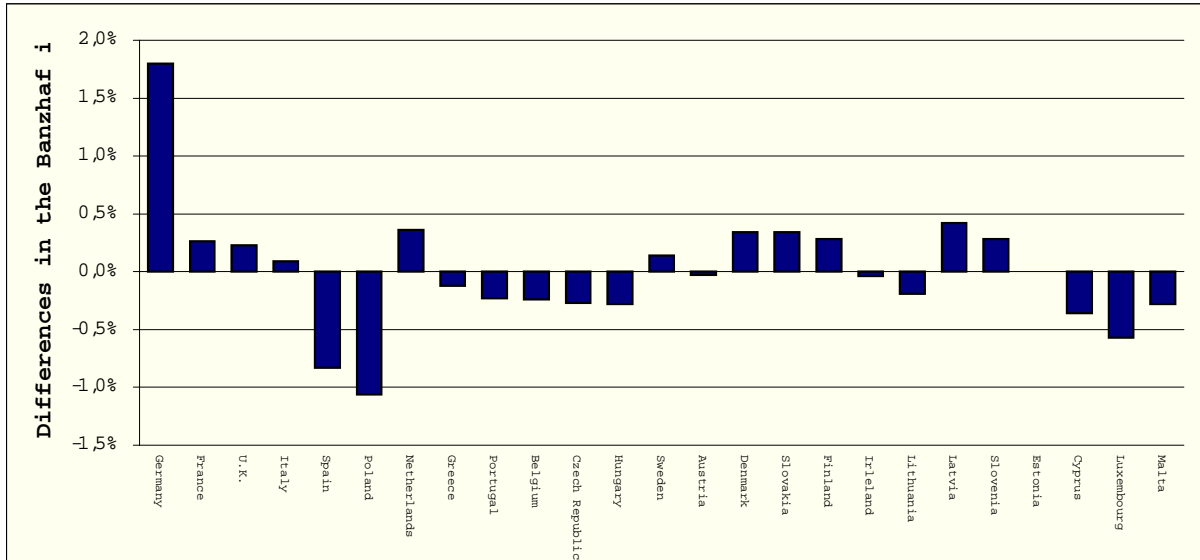


Diagram 1. Differences in voting power in the EU Council between the square root law and the procedure of the Treaty of Nice

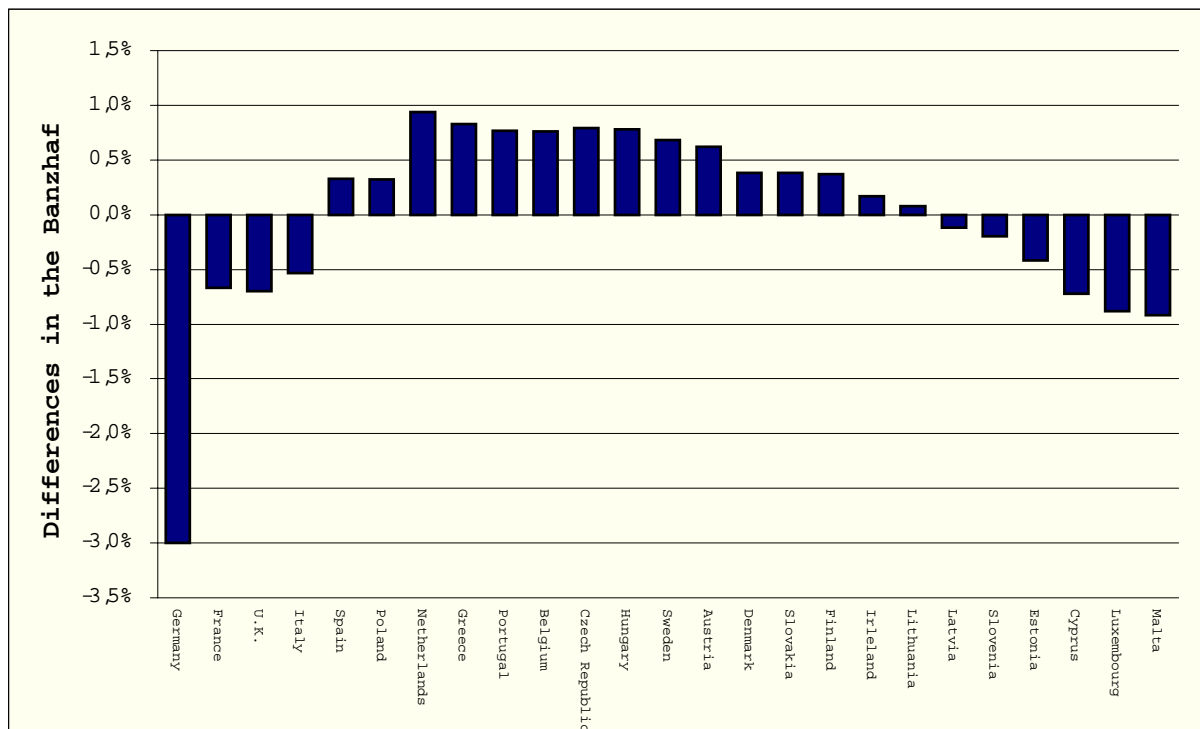


Diagram 2. Differences in voting power in the EU Council between the square root law and the proposal of the Draft Constitution

Signed by Scientists for a democratic Europe

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