

# **SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

**The European Humanist Federation,**

CONSIDERING

1. The fundamental importance of a Constitutional Treaty for a more democratic Union, warranting its constituting values and protecting the fundamental rights of the citizens as promulgated in the Charter of same name,
2. The leading position of science in the development of the society, as the powerhouse of the economic and social progress, as well as its key role in the rise of the human condition from both material and intellectual standpoints,
3. The Union's will to build the European Research Area with a view of preserving and developing its research and technological innovation potentialities, and of evolving in the long run towards a genuine Knowledge Society,
4. The increasing use of results from science that are financed by public funds by a limited number of multinational groups, which are more and more powerful, for private and exclusive aims,
5. The enormous stake represented in the future Knowledge Society by learning acquisitions and technical inventions which nobody can imagine belonging tomorrow exclusively to private ownership through specific and restricted rights,
6. The leading part played ever more by information and communication technologies in the automated delivery and consequently in the appropriation and exploitation of scientific and technological results for private purposes,
7. The urgent need to combine the development of science and technology with an information and a diffusion to all citizens in order to foster a democratic debate on the objectives and the means of the research and the technological development, and on the consequences and the risks of all kinds which they entail for society,
8. The prevalence of the principles of transparency, precaution and responsibility in the assessment of scientific and technological options,
9. EHF previous contributions to
  - the Commission White Paper on European Governance, in particular with regard to Science and Society
  - the Convention work on civil society, European citizenship and the essential foundations of the future constitutional Treaty

## INSISTENTLY REQUESTS

A. That, under Title I “Objectives of the Union”, Article 3 “Encouragement to scientific and technologic progress” – provides for

- the prior obligation of an ethical, social and cultural debate on the rationale and the utilisation of the research and the technological development activities financed by the Union and coordinated with the Member States, that is based among others on the principles of transparency, precaution and responsibility;
- the establishment through participative democracy of a permanent poll of citizens’ opinion on the implications and impacts of research results and applications and on the issue of their ownership.

B. That, under the 2<sup>nd</sup> part, section A3.IX “Research and technological research” clearly stipulates

- the set-up at the European level of a body in charge of organising this debate and this participative poll as mentioned under A;
- the legal duty for the European programmes of research, technological development and demonstration to respect at the level of all project evaluations and reviews the principles spelled out in the Charter of the fundamental rights of the European Union;
- the obligation to transfer to the public and to make accessible to everybody the results and the applications of the European scientific research through education and training.