

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

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*Subject : IGC 2000: Weighting of votes in the Council*

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Further to the Representatives' informal meeting on 4 November 2000, delegations will find attached an illustration of each of the five main approaches so far suggested for the weighting of votes in the Council.

These five approaches are:

- (i) a **"simple" dual majority system** as proposed by the Commission (see Annex I). This involves fixing a threshold in terms of both the percentage of the population and the number of Member States. Were the Conference to opt for this system, application of the population criterion would, for practical reasons, probably require the drawing up of a weighting table in which votes would be in direct proportion to the population of each Member State, so that the population of the Union represented by a given vote could be checked at a glance;
- (ii) a **"weighted" dual majority system** (see Annex II). This would be based on two weighting scales which would be applied simultaneously: one weighting table would show the current weighting of votes and one would show the number of votes in direct proportion to population, as in (i) above (population safety net). By definition, a dual threshold would have to be laid down in the Treaty for this system.
- (iii) a **"limited" reweighting (with population safety net)** (see Annex III). This variant would also be based on two weighting scales, with limited reweighting of the current weighting combined with a "population safety net";
- (iv) **"substantial" reweighting** (see Annex IV). This solution involves establishing a new weighting scale, using a method and criteria which the Conference would decide; the reweighting would need to be extensive enough to obviate use of the population safety net. The figures proposed by the Italian delegation have been used to illustrate this alternative;
- (v) a **"generalised reweighting" system** (see Annex V) proposed by the Swedish delegation.

**"SIMPLE" DUAL MAJORITY****1. WEIGHTING TABLES**

<b>MEMBERS OF COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEIGHTING A</b>	<b>WEIGHTING B</b>
Germany	1	170
United Kingdom	1	123
France	1	122
Italy	1	120
Spain	1	82
Poland	1	80
Romania	1	47
Netherlands	1	33
Greece	1	22
Czech Republic	1	21
Belgium	1	21
Hungary	1	21
Portugal	1	21
Sweden	1	18
Bulgaria	1	17
Austria	1	17
Slovakia	1	11
Denmark	1	11
Finland	1	11
Ireland	1	8
Lithuania	1	8
Latvia	1	5
Slovenia	1	4
Estonia	1	3
Cyprus	1	2
Luxembourg	1	1
Malta	1	1
<b>TOTAL EU 27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1000</b>

**2. DETERMINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY**

*For their adoption, acts of the Council shall require at least **501 votes** (weighting B) in favour, cast by at least **the majority of the members** (weighting A).*

	<b>Minimum number (and %) of Member States</b>		<b>Weighting B</b>	<b>Minimum % of population</b>
Qualified majority	<b>14 (51,85%)</b>	<b><i>AND</i></b>	<b>501</b>	50,10%
Blocking minority	<b>14 (51,85%)</b>	<b><i>OR</i></b>	<b>500</b>	11,62%

### 3. COMMENTS

- *In the above table (reproduced from the Feira report) the weighting for each Member State matches its share of the Union's total population, rounded off to the nearest tenth of a percentage point and multiplied by ten. A scale of this type would have to be adjusted periodically to reflect population changes in each Member State.*
- *The adoption of such a system presupposes that the Conference agrees on the criteria for defining the population to be taken into consideration (counting non-nationals, etc.).*
- *Moreover, since the each Council member's weighting matches its share of the total population of the Union, the figures in this table will need to be revised with each new accession to reflect the variations in the relevant percentages.*
- *The threshold of 501, which is that proposed by the Commission, would remain constant whatever the Union's configuration. It could be set higher (e.g. at 580 or 600) if the aim were to maintain the status quo in terms of the minimum threshold of the Union's population represented by a qualified majority.*
- *The simplicity of this model and the fact that it is readily comprehensible to the general public have been repeatedly stressed by some Member States; its critics point out that it would allow a small percentage of the population (weighting A) to block decisions and that it differentiates between Member States much more than do the current groupings (weighting B).*

**"WEIGHTED" DUAL MAJORITY (population safety net)****1. WEIGHTING TABLES**

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL	WEIGHTING A	WEIGHTING B
Germany	10	170
United Kingdom	10	123
France	10	122
Italy	10	120
Spain	8	82
Poland	8	80
Romania	6	47
Netherlands	5	33
Greece	5	22
Czech Republic	5	21
Belgium	5	21
Hungary	5	21
Portugal	5	21
Sweden	4	18
Bulgaria	4	17
Austria	4	17
Slovakia	3	11
Denmark	3	11
Finland	3	11
Ireland	3	8
Lithuania	3	8
Latvia	3	5
Slovenia	3	4
Estonia	3	3
Cyprus	2	2
Luxembourg	2	1
Malta	2	1
<b>TOTAL EU 27</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>1000</b>

**2. DETERMINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY**

*For their adoption, acts of the Council shall require at least **96 votes** (which corresponds to the current threshold) under weighting A and **580 votes** under weighting B.*

	Weighting A		Weighting B	% votes Weighting A	Minimum number (and %) of Member States	Minimum % of population
Qualified majority	<b>96</b>	<b><u>AND</u></b>	<b>580</b>	71,64%	14 (51,85%)	58,0%
Blocking minority	<b>39</b>	<b><u>OR</u></b>	<b>421</b>	29,10%	4 (14,81%)	10,50%

### 3. COMMENTS

- *Weighting A:*
  - *the figures are a straight extrapolation from the current weighting as presented in the report to the Feira European Council;*
  - *the threshold in terms of number of votes would have to be adapted with each accession.*
  
- *Weighting B:*
  - *the same considerations apply to this weighting as to the table in Annex I (in particular that it differentiates between Member States much more than do the current groupings);*
  - *the threshold of 580 for weighting B corresponds to the current threshold for a qualified majority. The Conference could choose to adopt a different threshold. The threshold that is adopted would remain constant whatever the Union's configuration.*

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**"LIMITED" REWEIGHTING**  
(with population safety net)

**1. WEIGHTING TABLES**

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL	WEIGHTING A	WEIGHTING B
Germany	25	170
United Kingdom	25	123
France	25	122
Italy	25	120
Spain	21	82
Poland	21	80
Romania	12	47
Netherlands	10	33
Greece	10	22
Czech Republic	10	21
Belgium	10	21
Hungary	10	21
Portugal	10	21
Sweden	8	18
Bulgaria	8	17
Austria	8	17
Slovakia	6	11
Denmark	6	11
Finland	6	11
Ireland	6	8
Lithuania	6	8
Latvia	6	5
Slovenia	6	4
Estonia	6	3
Cyprus	4	2
Luxembourg	4	1
Malta	4	1
<b>TOTAL EU 27</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>1000</b>

**2. DETERMINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY**

*For their adoption, acts of the Council shall require at least **214 votes** (which corresponds to the current threshold) under weighting A and **[580] [600] votes** under weighting B.*

	Weighting A		Weighting B	% votes Weighting A	Minimum number (and %) of Member States	Minimum % of population
Qualified majority	<b>214</b>	<b><u>AND</u></b>	<b>580 600</b>	71,81%	14 (51,85%)	58,0% 60,0%
Blocking minority	<b>85</b>	<b><u>OR</u></b>	<b>421 401</b>	28,52%	4 (14,81%)	11,85%

### 3. COMMENTS

- *The figures in Table A were presented by the Portuguese Presidency in its report to the Feira European Council as an illustration of a modest reweighting (doubling of the number of votes across the board and addition of 5 votes for Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain and Poland); in response to criticisms by some delegations that the reweighting was insignificant, the Presidency has coupled this approach with a population safety net.*
- *This variant does not depart radically from the system described in Annex II. For a number of delegations the reweighting in Table A continues to be insufficient, and the weighting in Table B (population safety net) qualifies for the same comments and criticisms as it does in Annex I. Moreover, this system is regarded by some as unacceptable on the grounds that it would tend to introduce a double reweighting factor.*

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**"SUBSTANTIAL" REWEIGHTING****1. WEIGHTING TABLE (Italian proposal)**

<b>MEMBERS OF COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEIGHTED VOTES</b>
Germany	33
United Kingdom	33
France	33
Italy	33
Spain	26
Poland	26
Romania	14
Netherlands	10
Greece	10
Czech Republic	10
Belgium	10
Hungary	10
Portugal	10
Sweden	8
Bulgaria	8
Austria	8
Slovakia	6
Denmark	6
Finland	6
Ireland	6
Lithuania	6
Latvia	3
Slovenia	3
Estonia	3
Cyprus	3
Luxembourg	3
Malta	3
<b>TOTAL EU 27</b>	<b>330</b>

**2. DETERMINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY**

*For their adoption, acts of the Council shall require at least 234 votes.*

<b>Total votes = 330</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>% votes</b>	<b>Minimum number (and %) of States</b>	<b>Minimum % of population</b>
Qualified majority	234	70,91%	12 (44,44%)	61,27%
Blocking minority	97	29,39%	3 (11,11%)	17,40%



### 3. COMMENTS

- *This example of "substantial" reweighting was proposed by the Italian delegation and is provided as an illustration of the scale of "simple" reweighting of votes which some Member States wish to see..*
  - *If reweighting exceeds a certain point, the qualified majority ceases to comprise automatically half the number of Member States. Many delegations find this unacceptable and regard the number of Member States as an indispensable criterion for any solution. The question of the homogeneity of the clusters of Member States has also been raised.*
  - *The threshold for a qualified majority in terms of number of votes will have to be adapted with each accession.*
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**"GENERALISED" REWEIGHTING**  
(Swedish model)

**1. WEIGHTING TABLE**

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL	WEIGHTED VOTES
Germany	18
United Kingdom	15
France	15
Italy	15
Spain	13
Poland	12
Romania	9
Netherlands	8
Greece	6
Czech Republic	6
Belgium	6
Hungary	6
Portugal	6
Sweden	6
Bulgaria	6
Austria	6
Slovakia	5
Denmark	5
Finland	5
Ireland	4
Lithuania	4
Latvia	3
Slovenia	3
Estonia	2
Cyprus	2
Luxembourg	1
Malta	1
<b>TOTAL EU 27</b>	<b>188</b>

**2. DETERMINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY**

*For their adoption, acts of the Council shall require at least 134 votes.*

Total votes = 188	Votes	% votes	Minimum number (and %) of States	Minimum % of population
Qualified majority	134	71,28%	14 (51,85%)	56,19%
Blocking minority	55	29,26%	4 (14,81%)	12,91%

### 3. COMMENTS

- *This example of generalised reweighting was proposed by the Swedish delegation; it illustrates a purely arithmetical approach giving each Member State a number of votes equal to double the square root of its population expressed in millions of inhabitants, rounded off to the nearest figure.*
- *For several delegations this weighting remains insufficient. One solution could be to combine it with a population safety net, however, in the view of some Member States this would give rise to the same difficulties as outlined in Annex III.*
- *This reweighting model substantially alters the current groupings of Member States.*
- *The threshold for a qualified majority in terms of number of votes will have to be adapted with each accession.*

