

# BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN (ERC)

- since 1999      Establishing "NDDIE - Network for Direct Democracy in Europe" as a Europe-wide network of grassroots movements in favour of *direct democracy*. Participants from more than 23 countries attended the NDDIE conferences in Munich (2000) and Prague (2001). - The main impulses for establishing such a network came from Mehr Demokratie e.V., Germany - WIT, Belgium and Referendum Platform, Netherlands.
- Dec 01      Declaration of Laeken: A Convention on the Future of Europe is established. First public discussion about a possible EU Constitution.
- Feb 02      After a series of meetings to involve a wide range of political movements and actors the decision is drawn: We will launch a campaign to make sure that the people will have a say about their future in Europe.
- Mar 02      The Convention on the Future of Europe starts its work. - The campaigning idea is presented on several events throughout Europe. Goal: to get the broadest possible coalition - especially between pro- and EU-critical organisations.
- Apr 02      Agreed upon by a broad coalition the demands of the ERC are put into an appeal.
- since Apr 02      ERC activists are visiting the convention meetings in Brussels regularly.
- May 02      A first ERC folder and the ERC homepage ([www.european-referendum.org](http://www.european-referendum.org)) are created.
- Jun 02      Participating at the Civil Society hearing of the Convention. First spreading of the ERC folders at convention and EP; the idea of referenda on the European Constitution is presented. Several face-to-face meetings with convention members.
- Oct 02      The ERC project-office is opened in Frankfurt/Main (Germany).
- Nov 02      Official launch of the ERC at the 3rd NDDIE conference in Bratislava with participants from 22 countries. As an umbrella organisation *democracy international* is founded.
- since Jan 03      A working group of convention members draft a resolution text, very close to the ERC appeal. This process was initiated by ERC activists and IRI Europe; ERC-campaigners cooperate with convention members to get as many supporters in the convention as possible.
- since March 03      Increasing level of ERC activities in nine countries; there are organisations who take the responsibility for the campaign in their countries.
- April 03      The resolution of the working group is presented at a press conference in Brussels; so far 38 members of the convention have declared their support.
- May 03      It gets more and more clear, that there will be referenda about the EU constitution in: Denmark, Irland, France and Spain... that there is a good chance in Austria, Italy and Portugal... and there are serious debates and statements of leading politicians in Germany, Finland, Netherlands and Belgium. In several new members states there must be referenda by law.
- June 03      At the last plenary session of the Convention on the Future of Europe ERC activists hand over the resolution to the presidium of the Convention of Europe: 96 convention members and more than 120 NGOs from 26 countries are demanding referenda on the European Constitution in all countries concerned. The resolution shall be passed by the presidium and be forwarded to the IGC. On a media event in Brussels a 7 m high EU constitution is presented.
- upcoming      The ERC will now enter into the third phase: the campaigning groups in the countries will lobby their national parliaments. Simultaneously an event for the IGC in Rome is planned and there will be more and more NGOs and VIPs supporting the resolution.



On a media event in Brussels at June 13, a 7 m high EU constitution was presented in front of the European Parliament. Shortly before that event, the resolution was handed over to Giuliano Amato by ERC activists.