The President and Vice-Presidents do not receive salaries, but are reimbursed on a flat-rate basis for expenditure they have to incur in performing their duties on behalf of the Convention.

Lastly, the Council, in common with the European Parliament and the Commission, periodically receives a report on the implementation of the budget of the Convention, in accordance with the rules for the management of the budget.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-0403/02
by Cristiana Muscardini (UEN), Roberta Angelilli (UEN), Sergio Berlato (UEN), Roberto Bigliardo (UEN), Sebastiano Musumeci (UEN), Antonio Mussa (UEN), Mauro Nobilia (UEN), Adriana Poli Bortone (UEN), Franz Turchi (UEN) and Mariotto Segni (UEN) to the Commission
(20 February 2002)

Subject: Residence permits

Despite the much celebrated article in the Treaty of Maastricht providing for the creation of European citizenship, and despite the much heralded arrival of the single currency, Italian citizens in Europe, and in Belgium in particular, still suffer blatant discrimination.

Belgian legislation, like that of many other European Union countries (Germany, Netherlands, etc), does not allow the issue of a national identity card but still provides merely for a residence permit as the valid identity document for all Italian citizens resident in Belgium and Europe.

Will the Commission:
− remove the residence permit requirement for Italian citizens in Belgium and in all other Union countries;
− make representations to the authorities of all European Union countries to ensure that Member State citizens are issued with a national document and that such documents are recognised as being valid throughout Union territory;
− introduce practical measures to make the principle of Union citizenship a reality?

Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission
(8 March 2002)

First, it should be remembered that the Community rules currently in force provide that a document known as a ‘residence permit for a Member State of the European Union’ will be issued to EU citizens as proof of their right to reside in a Member State other than the one of which they are nationals.

The Commission has put forward a proposal for a Parliament and Council Directive on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (1), currently being discussed by Parliament and the Council, which proposes to abolish the residence permit during the first four years of residence and, after four years of residence, the issue of a permanent residence permit.

The proposed Directive is intended, as the Honourable Members have hoped, to give a more specific content to citizenship of the Union by making it easier to enjoy the right to freedom of movement and residence. The introduction of a permanent residence permit together with a right to social benefits and protection against expulsion is an example of this aim.

The residence permit is a very different document from the national identity card, which is issued by a Member State to its nationals. It is for each Member State to issue an identity card or passport to its nationals and there are Member States that do not issue identity cards at all.