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March 25, 2004

Democracy and EU constitution

FROM MR RICHARD LAMING

Sir, William Rees-Mogg's suggestion (Comment, March 22) that the proposed European constitution is in contradiction to liberal democracy leaves me thinking that his definition of liberal democracy is not very liberal.

The current text of the draft constitution would extend the rights of the directly elected European Parliament by giving it greater powers in approving EU legislation and the budget. It would also increase the voice of the voters by taking into account the results of the European elections when choosing the president of the European Commission, and increase the rights of the citizens by requiring the institutions to observe the Charter of Fundamental Rights. All of those are advances for liberal democracy.

William Rees-Mogg complains that the EU would acquire "exclusive competences" and that European law would become superior to British law. Both of these are true now. They are the inevitable consequence of membership of the European Union, or indeed any international body that is going to have the power to decide anything.

In an interdependent world, decisions taken by international organisations are going to acquire increasing influence over our lives. At present, these decisions are too often in the hands of bureaucrats. Liberal democracy would extend the rights of citizens and their elected representatives over those bureaucrats. The European constitution represents progress in this direction.

Yours faithfully,
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(Director, Federal Union),
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March 22.



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