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Letter to the Editor

Constitution has not buried hopes of closer union

From Mr Anthony Cowgill

Sir, In John Kerr's review of Peter Norman's book *The Accidental Constitution* ("Europe's treaty and the art of the possible", November 26), he states that "the old goal of 'ever closer union' has been displaced and further development blocked by insistence on a requirement for unanimity".

This is not so. The wording may have been changed in Part I of the draft constitution but certainly the phrase "creating an ever closer union" appears in the first sentence of the preamble to Part II.

In addition, it can hardly be said that further development is being blocked when it is proposed that considerable new areas (including, *inter alia*, energy and territorial cohesion) may be moved to "shared competence" (Article 13 of Part I). The term "shared" is of course grossly misleading, as the power has been shifted fully to the Union. Member States can only exercise their competence when the Union does not want to.

There is also the so-called "passerelle" or "escalator" clause in Article I-24, which enables areas to be changed from unanimity to qualified majority voting without the matter passing through national parliaments or the normal ratification process.

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