

# France

You represent the French government at the negotiations on the Treaty of Lisbon. On the agenda for today are the discussions on the implementation of the Qualified Majority Voting and the extension of a combined foreign and security policy.

## Qualified Majority Voting

A system of voting based on the qualified majority, which is the number of votes required in the Council. The Lisbon Treaty introduced a new system known as “double majority”. This abolishes the weighting of votes. Qualified majority is now achieved if it covers at least 55% of the member states representing at least 65% of the population. Blocking minority: At least four member states representing at least 35% of the population.

### Your position

As the second most populated country in the European Union, the French government is particularly optimistic about this proposed voting system. Since France’s EU policy is traditionally centred on national interest, QMV aligns perfectly with the State’s objective to maximise its bargaining power. It would work in favour of France in its “pursuit of hard-nosed deals with other member states”. In other words, France is not going to give in easily to any compromise on this proposal!

## CFSP – Common Defense and Security Policy

The Lisbon Treaty outlines many opportunities that allow for closer cooperation in Foreign and Security Policy. These measures reach from mechanisms for easier decision-making processes, over rapid access to appropriations in the budget to the possibility of a European Army.

### Your position

Unlike other states, France is not necessarily concerned about any threat to state sovereignty with the proposed plan of a common defence army. In fact, it harks in with the centre-far right party, UMP, goals. Former president and party member, Jacques Chirac stated that European Union “should endow itself with the all the instruments of true power” and distance. However France wants the decision making power, regarding the development of the CDSP, to be held strictly amongst member states leaders. France will not accept other member states refusing to join the CFSP

## Background

### Public Opinion – The Eurobarometer

#### QA16.7 Trust in the European Union.

“I tend to trust it.”

France: 51% vs. EU27: 57%

#### QA15.2 Trust in the European Commission.

“I tend to trust it.”

France: 47% vs. EU27: 52%

QA22a Information level in the own Country.

"The people in my country are well informed about European political affairs."

France: 16% vs. EU27: 22%

QA19 To which extent do you agree with the statement: "Every European decision is the subject of negotiations in which the opinions of the national government of all member states are taken into account."?

"I agree."

France: 62% vs. EU27: 63%

QA27.3: Opinion on a common defence policy among the EU Member States.

"I am for it."

France: 82% vs. EU27: 77%

The French Parliament

While the Constitution for Europe had been rejected in a referendum in 2005, the Treaty of Lisbon only needs to be ratified by the National Assembly and the Senate.