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France rejects European constitution

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31 May, 2005

THE ARTICLE

France rejects European constitution

BNE: French voters have decided not to accept the European Union constitution. This decision has shocked and confused the rest of Europe. The French people voted with a clear "non". Over 55 per cent of voters rejected the constitution. This sent a strong message to French President Jacques Chirac that his people do not share his vision of a more united Europe. French voters said they wanted France to make its own decisions. Many were afraid the constitution would make France too weak in Europe.

President Jacques Chirac was trying to put on a brave face after the heavy defeat. He was clearly disappointed by the fact that his country becomes the first to turn down European integration. All 25 European Union countries must accept the constitution for it to become established. The 72-year-old Mr. Chirac displayed his famous positive thinking in spite of the loss. He promised he would press ahead with the constitution and said it would be accepted one day. He ignored calls for his resignation.

WARM-UPS

1. YES / NO: One student sits in the "yes/no chair". His/her partner(s) fire(s) questions at him/her. The student in the chair must try to answer as many questions as they can without saying "yes" or "no". The winner is the person who can answer the most questions without saying "yes" or "no".

2. NO: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "no". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Europe / European Union / being shocked / Jacques Chirac / defeat /
disappointment / positive thinking / making promises*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. INFO SEARCH: Talk to different partners and find out all you know about France. Get information on French people, history, culture and France's role in Europe. After you have finished gathering information, sit with your partner / group. Tell each other what you found out. Was this activity difficult? Did you learn new things about the world?

5. "NON" OPINIONS: In pairs/ groups, talk about how far you agree with these opinions.

- a. France always says no to good plans - first the invasion of Iraq and now the European Union constitution.
- b. It's wonderful. The French always make brave decisions.
- c. French voters saying "no" to European integration is a big step backwards.
- d. French voters were right to say "no". The EU could never work.
- e. One day all European voters will say "yes" to a European constitution.
- f. France is a small country in the world. Who cares what they say?
- g. A United States of Europe would be stronger than the United States of America.
- h. French people want to remain French and not be European. There's nothing wrong with that.
- i. How about a European Union without France?
- j. English should become the official language of Europe.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. France's government decided not to join the European Union. | T / F |
| b. Europe is both confused and shocked. | T / F |
| c. French people wanted more control of their country. | T / F |
| d. Most French thought the constitution would make France stronger. | T / F |
| e. Jacques Chirac was trying to put on a brave face after the defeat. | T / F |
| f. France is the second country to reject the EU constitution. | T / F |
| g. Jacques Chirac is famous for his negative thinking. | T / F |
| h. Jacques Chirac will resign soon. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| a. decided | image |
| b. clear | continue |
| c. vision | integrated |
| d. united | definite |
| e. afraid | reject |
| f. put on a brave face | approve |
| g. turn down | voted |
| h. accept | requests |
| i. press ahead | concerned |
| j. calls | keep his chin up |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. the European Union | down European integration |
| b. the rest | for his resignation |
| c. Over 55 per cent of | constitution |
| d. people do not share | thinking |
| e. they wanted France to make | his vision |
| f. put on | its own decisions |
| g. turn | a brave face |
| h. positive | ahead |
| i. press | of Europe |
| j. He ignored calls | voters rejected the constitution |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WORD ORDER: Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

France rejects European constitution

BNE: French voters not to decided have accept the European Union constitution. This decision has shocked and confused the rest of Europe. The French people clear with a voted "non". Over 55 per cent of voters rejected the constitution. This sent a strong message to French President Jacques Chirac that his people do share not vision his of a more united Europe. French voters said they wanted France to own its make decisions. Many were afraid the constitution would make France too weak in Europe.

President Jacques Chirac was trying to face a brave on put after the heavy defeat. He was clearly disappointed by the fact that his country becomes the turn to down first European integration. All 25 European Union countries must accept the constitution for it to become established. The 72-year-old Mr. Chirac displayed thinking his famous positive in spite of the loss. He promised he would press ahead with the constitution and said it would day one be accepted. He ignored calls for his resignation.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**strong**' and '**message**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WORD ORDER: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT EUROPE SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about Europe and the European Union.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- decided
- confused
- strong message
- vision
- own decisions
- weak
- brave
- turn down
- established
- famous
- press ahead
- resignation

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you read the headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you interested in the European Union?
- d. What do you know about the EU constitution?
- e. Do you like French President Jacques Chirac?
- f. Do you think Jacques Chirac should resign?
- g. Does the French vote mean the end for the EU constitution?
- h. Do you think France is a major world power?
- i. Are you interested in French culture?
- j. What do you think of French people?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. What did you think of this news?
- c. What do you know about Jacques Chirac?
- d. Do you think the French people were right to reject the constitution?
- e. Is the idea of a European constitution a good one?
- f. Could a future "United States of Europe" overtake the United States of America as the world's superpower?
- g. What do you think will happen to EU plans now?
- h. Should English become the official language for Europe?
- i. What do you think of the idea of Europe becoming a single country?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ONE WORLD: Imagine it is the year 2050. Many changes have happened in international relations. Everyone in the world will soon vote on whether to make the world one giant nation, with no separate countries.

Pair(s) / Group(s) A - Discuss and write down ideas in support of world integration.

Pair(s) / Group(s) B - Discuss and write down ideas against world integration.

A single world passport	
One world language	
No borders	
Freedom to live and work anywhere	
A world army	
A world currency (not the US dollar)	
No time zones – the same time all over the world.	
Other (think of a secret argument)	

After you have finished working with your pair / team partner(s) about having just a giant world country, discuss the issue with students from “the other side”.

LANGUAGE

NO

Match the meanings and phrases on the left with the "no" words on the right.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. More people voted "no" than "yes". | a. a no-no |
| 2. A person who does not arrive for an appointment, English lesson, etc. | b. a no-go area |
| 3. Something that you definitely mustn't do. | c. no can do |
| 4. Anything that requires very little thought. | d. a no-hoper |
| 5. An area between two armies or countries in which no one can enter. | e. the noes have it |
| 6. You must be joking... that can't be true. | f. I won't take no for an answer |
| 7. An area that certain people or groups cannot enter, like a military area or a teenager's bedroom. | g. a no-brainer |
| 8. You can only say yes to my request. | h. no-man's land |
| 9. A useless person. Someone who has no chance of success. | i. a no-show |
| 10. I'm sorry but I cannot do what you are asking. | j. no-nonsense |
| 11. Very direct and practical; ignores unnecessary things. | k. no-frills |
| 12. Something that is very basic, with no unnecessary features. | l. no way |

Try to use the "no" words to make questions. Share your questions with other students and ask them to your partner (s).

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

France rejects European constitution

BNE: French voters have decided _____ the European Union constitution. This decision has shocked and confused _____ Europe. The French people voted with a clear "non". Over 55 per cent of voters rejected the constitution. This _____ to French President Jacques Chirac that his people do not _____ of a more united Europe. French voters said they wanted France to _____ decisions. Many were afraid the constitution would make France too weak in Europe.

President Jacques Chirac was trying to _____ after the heavy defeat. He was clearly disappointed by the fact that his country becomes the _____ European integration. All 25 European Union countries must accept the constitution for it to become established. The 72-year-old Mr. Chirac _____ positive thinking in spite of the loss. He promised he would _____ the constitution and said it would be accepted one day. He _____ his resignation.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the French and Dutch votes on the EU constitution. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. WORLD: Write your thoughts on how the world might become more integrated in the future. How would greater cooperation and closer ties affect your country? Show what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Compare your ideas.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to French President Jacques Chirac telling him what you think of the way his people voted. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did your classmates have similar thoughts?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. T d. F e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. decided	voted
b. clear	definite
c. vision	image
d. united	integrated
e. afraid	concerned
f. put on a brave face	keep his chin up
g. turn down	reject
h. accept	approve
i. press ahead	continue
j. calls	requests

PHRASE MATCH:

a. the European Union	constitution
b. the rest	of Europe
c. Over 55 per cent of	voters rejected the constitution
d. people do not share	his vision
e. they wanted France to make	its own decisions
f. put on	a brave face
g. turn	down European integration
h. positive	thinking
i. press	ahead
j. He ignored calls	for his resignation

WORD ORDER:

France rejects European constitution

BNE: French voters have decided not to accept the European Union constitution. This decision has shocked and confused the rest of Europe. The French people voted with a clear "non". Over 55 per cent of voters rejected the constitution. This sent a strong message to French President Jacques Chirac that his people do not share his vision of a more united Europe. French voters said they wanted France to make its own decisions. Many were afraid the constitution would make France too weak in Europe.

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LANGUAGE - NO:

1. e 2. i 3. a 4. g 5. h 6. l 7. b 8. f 9. d 10. c 11. j 12. k