

**Interview of UK Foreign Minister Robin Cook : by John HUMPHRYS on BBC Radio 4 'Today' Programme on 6 October 2000 (uniquement en version anglaise) - Transcription -**

**Question :** Can I turn you to the speech that Tony Blair is going to be making in Poland today, the most important speech he's made on Europe - so we are being told - in which he will urge Europe's elected leaders to reassert their democratic control over Brussels. Apparently this includes some sort of senate in which elected representatives from the member countries would sit occasionally. Is this really what Europe needs, another bureaucratic institution even if you call it a democratic institution ?

**Cook :** Well it will be a democratic institution ...

**Question :** Well, there will be a big bureaucracy attached to it ...

**Cook :** No no, no no... It doesn't need to have any kind of great bureaucracy. As there is a European Parliament, there's no need for any further administrative requirements of any substance to attach to it. But the important point that Mr. Blair is making here is that we want a Europe that meets and responds to the priorities of its people on jobs, on tackling crime, on protecting the environment...

**Question :** You mean it doesn't at the moment ?

**Cook :** No, it has got to respond to those priorities and it will only do so in a way which is responsive, if it is accountable, if there is a democratic element.

**Question :** You've got a parliament ..

**Cook :** Yes, but the place to look for a healthy democracy is in the member states. I do find it a matter of regret and surprise that the national parliaments which represent the very healthy and vigorous democracies of the member states don't have a formal role in the institutions. Now, this could be one way of making sure they're firmly anchored in that debate.

**Question :** So, are you saying that the parliament itself as it stands, the European Parliament, is not doing this job. And in that case, what's the point of it ?

**Cook :** Oh, the European Parliament carries out a very important task of scrutinising the directives of legislation that come out of Brussels, and nobody is suggesting that that should be a task of any second chamber or senate.

But increasingly there are a lot of intergovernmental elements to what Europe does, for instance the work we're now doing on European security. It would be very helpful, if the members of the national parliaments could meet to debate, to discuss that, in that second chamber. And also to make sure that we are getting right the border line between what Europe does - because we need, as a cross-border element, to work together to achieve it - and what is right and proper for the national parliaments and the national democracies to do, because they do it better as a national matter.