



IIPS

Recent Developments in the EU

Lecture by His Excellency Bernhard Zepter
Ambassador and Head of Delegation European Union,
Delegation of the European Commission in Japan

12 July 2005

Capitol Tokyu Hotel

The Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS) hosted a lecture by His Excellency Bernhard Zepter, Ambassador and Head of Delegation European Union, Delegation of the European Commission in Japan, who gave a speech entitled “Recent Developments in the EU.” The event was held at the Capitol Tokyu Hotel, Tokyo, on July 12, 2005 with the support of the Nippon Foundation.



Touching upon the subject of the EU constitution at the onset of the lecture, Ambassador Zepter explained that the EU already has a solid legal infrastructure and that the significance of establishing an EU constitution in the institutional sense is different from what is generally being considered. That is, rejection of the EU constitution by some of the member countries would not destabilize the EU, nor would it invite worrisome situations because mechanisms for stable development into the future are already in place. He pointed out, however, that the EU constitution carries a symbolic meaning of the integration of the EU;

that it is a symbol of realizing peace, stability and prosperity in Europe; and that it is an issue concerned with the identity of Europe.

Next, Ambassador Zepter commented on the economy, finance, and expansion of the EU. Referring to the incorrect information about a shortage of funds in the EU, he explained that the EU had sufficient funds necessary for carrying out its activities. As for the expansion of the member countries, he noted that a slowdown in the speed of expansion, which had been maintained from the post-Cold War period, would be inevitable, but that feeling pressed by it would be dangerous as the expansion trend would undoubtedly continue. He also expressed his view that Japan and the EU have continued to maintain a favorable relationship as seen by the settlement of the ITER issue, and that the relationship would become increasingly important in the future. He then answered questions posed by the attendees before concluding his lecture.

