

Summary of the debates in the Assembly of the Republic (Lisbon, 12 June 1985)

Source: Imagens do processo de adesão de Portugal à Comunidade Europeia- Lisboa: RTP [Prod.], 1986. Radiotelevisão Portuguesa, Serviço público de televisão SA, Lisboa. - VIDEO (00:02:11, Couleur, Son original).

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Last updated: 05/07/2016

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[Carlos Fino] Initially getting rather mired down in apparently formal procedural issues, the Assembly of the Republic finally managed to focus on what was undoubtedly the major issue on today's agenda: the signature of the Treaty of Accession to the European Communities.

It all began with a motion for a resolution tabled jointly by the PS and PSD, for the extension — as happens every year, incidentally — of the normal working dates of the Assembly until 15 July.

The PCP immediately objected to it, demanding the withdrawal of the motion, and a vociferous quarrel ensued, each of the parties bombarding the others with arguments defending its own interpretation of the rules of procedure.

A consensus was finally reached that it would be more correct to table a motion for discussion, but the PCP contested it again and in very harsh terms. 'Provocative, shameless, weird, abusive, unconstitutional' were some of the adjectives used.

The debate had so far remained on a purely formal level, but it eventually exploded into the central issue: the PCP admitted that its concern was that the Assembly might yet ratify the EEC accession agreement, and it was therefore pressing for the Assembly of the Republic to be dissolved.

The PS and the PSD answered to the effect that, even without a Government, the Assembly was still completely legitimate and that, on this at least, there was agreement between the two parties.

This summary is designed to convey the essence of what was debated today, here in the Assembly.

[João Amaral] The issue on the table now to defend the national interest is actually that there should be no Assembly, that you will not be here to discuss this Treaty.

[Jorge Lacão] We have 90 members on this bench representing part of the country, and that is the essential issue. The PS has much more legitimacy than its bench to interpret what is in the national interest.

[Cardoso Ferreira] It is very clear from what Mr João Amaral said that what is at stake is actually an attempt to avoid a major defeat that is in prospect for the Communist Party with the accession of Portugal to the European Economic Community. That is the real issue.