

## The Spierenburg Report

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## The Spierenburg Report

In September 1978, the European Commission sought authorisation to set up an independent think-tank so that it might review its working methods and draw up proposals which might lead to their improvement. The Group of Five, established in January 1979 under the leadership of Dirk Spierenburg, a diplomat from the Netherlands and former President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), also included Karl Buschmann, President of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, Paul Delouvrier, former Director of Finance of the ECSC and President of the Board of Directors of *Electricité de France* (EDF), Giuseppe Petrilli, former Member of the European Commission, and Dick Taverne, Director-General of the *Institute for Fiscal Studies* and former British Treasury Minister.

In close cooperation with the 'Three Wise Men', a committee established for the purpose of submitting to the European Council proposals on reforming the way in which all the Community's institutions worked, the Spierenburg Group considered methods of reforming the organisation, structures and administrative policy of the European Commission. The Spierenburg Report, submitted on 24 September 1979 to Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission, and published immediately, called in particular for the appointment of a single Vice-President, to be responsible for coordinating the Commission's work, and for a reduction in the number of Commissioners to one per Member State. This restriction in numbers, which was intended to increase the efficiency and coordination of the work of the Commission, was to be accompanied by a reduction in the number of portfolios. Likewise, it was proposed that the number of directorates-general (DGs) be reduced to ten; the report also specified the duties that devolved to the Private Offices. Finally, the 'Group of Five' advocated enhancing the status of Europe's international civil servants and improving human resources management within the Commission.

The recommendations set out in the report, entitled 'Proposals for the reform of the Commission of the European Communities and its services', were implemented somewhat haphazardly. While a reform of administrative policy was rapidly set in motion, the Council took no action on the proposal for a reduction in the number of Commissioners and directorates-general.