

'The European Parliament gives a massive vote of confidence to Santer's team' from Le Monde (20 January 1995)

Caption: On 18 January 1995, the European Parliament approves the new Commission presided over by Jacques Santer.

Source: Le Monde. dir. de publ. COLOMBANI, Jean-Marie ; Réd. Chef FERENCZI, Thomas; PLENEL, Edwy; SOLÉ, Robert. 20.01.1995, n° 15 547. Paris: Le Monde. "Le Parlement de Strasbourg accorde une large confiance à l'équipe de M.Santer", auteur:SCOTTO, Marcel , p. 3.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_european_parliament_gives_a_massive_vote_of_confidence_to_santer_s_team_from_le_monde_20_january_1995-en-467f887c-385f-4927-8cba-4e746ccbfe02.html



Last updated: 06/07/2016

The European Parliament gives a massive vote of confidence to Santer's team

Strasbourg (European Union)

from our correspondent

On Wednesday, 18 January, the new Commission of the European Union, presided by Luxembourg's Jacques Santer, was supported by a wide majority of the European Parliament. Meeting in plenary in Strasbourg, Parliament cast 416 votes for the new Commission, with 103 against and 59 abstentions.

The major political groups in the European Parliament — Socialists, Christian Democrats and Conservatives, Liberals, representatives of the RPR and Forza Italia — voted massively in support of the new Commission. The Greens, the Radicals, the French Communists and the Far Right voted against, while the group headed by the French MEP, Philippe de Villiers, and the Spanish Communists abstained.

'Most governments in Europe only dream of attaining similar results', declared Mr Santer at the end of the vote. Last July, the European Parliament had approved his appointment as President of the Commission only by a wafer-thin majority.

Renewed legitimacy

The many votes garnered by Mr Santer, the successor to Jacques Delors, were, in a sense, his revenge. Mr Santer voiced his satisfaction, saying that 'For the first time, the Commission can be proud of its democratic and parliamentary legitimacy.' He will officially take up his duties on 23 January in Brussels, as soon as the EU Council of Ministers has given its seal of approval.

At a joint press conference, the President of the European Parliament, the German Social-Democrat MEP, Klaus Hänsch, said that both Parliament and the Commission had been strengthened by the new investiture procedure, which provided 'ample information to the public' and helped to set the conditions for 'critical and realistic cooperation'.

The European Parliament made use of the new procedure to speak out. Right until the end, Mr Santer had to defend his Environment Commissioner, the Dane Ritt Bjerregaard, who, it was alleged, had stated in an interview with a Danish newspaper that the European Parliament 'was not a real parliament'. She claimed she had been misinterpreted. Jean-Louis Bourlanges (France, UDF) and the Dutchman Gijs de Vries, Chairman of the Group of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, led a last-minute attack on her during the sitting and demanded a public apology.

Mr Santer's victory was clinched when the Group of the Party of European Socialists (PSE) decided, on Tuesday evening, to support the Commission. However, the PSE, the largest political group in the European Parliament, undertook to carry out 'strict surveillance' and recalled that the European Parliament could, at any time, pass a vote of no confidence.

Support from the Christian Democrats

The PSE had no real problem in adding its votes to those of the President's political friends, the MEPs from the Christian-Democratic and the Centre Right groups, the European Parliament's second largest bloc. Amongst the French MEPs, opposition came mainly from those elected on the Tapie list and from the two extremes of the political spectrum, the Communists and the National Front. In all, 29 French MEPs out of a total of 97 voted against Jacques Santer, while four of them decided to abstain.

Marcel Scotto