

Aide-memoire from the Commission to the Hague Summit (19 November 1969)

Caption: On 19 November 1969, the aide-mémoire drawn up by the European Commission for the Hague Conference sheds light on the stakes involved in the forthcoming European summit.

Source: Bulletin of the European Communities. Dir. of publ. Commission of the European Communities. January 1970, n° 1; Volume 3. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/aide_memoire_from_the_commission_to_the_hague_summit_19_november_1969-en-fe5177ad-7e69-430c-80af-7763cae68e8a.html

Publication date: 21/10/2012

Aide-memoire from the Commission to the Conference (19 November 1969)

“The Commission welcomes the meeting of the Conference of Heads of State or Government.

The meeting takes place at a time when the transitional period of the Community is approaching its end, when its enlargement is once more entering an active phase, and when recent difficulties of an agricultural and monetary nature have made a keen impression on opinion inside and outside the Community.

This being so, it is essential that the Conference should be crowned with success and give a new political impetus to the creation of Europe, with a view to the decisions to be adopted by the Community institutions.

1. At a time when anxiety is felt at the present state of the Community, the Commission feels it should point out that despite numerous difficulties considerable results have been achieved during recent years: the establishment of the customs union, the elaboration of the common agricultural policy, vigorous economic expansion, higher living standards, the active policy of aid to the Associated States and the Community's cohesion and growing authority at international level.

2. So that the results thus far achieved, notably in the customs union and the common agricultural policy, should not be subsequently jeopardized, it is essential that the Heads of State or Government affirm their will to continue the building of a genuine Community, i.e. to complete the customs union by the establishment of an economic and monetary union in the years ahead.

To this end, the Council and Commission should be invited to determine speedily the stages leading to this objective and in particular to define the necessary action for the next five years, notably in the matter of common economic and monetary policies, the Community's industrial and technological development, and social and regional action designed more particularly to cope with the changes taking place in these fields.

3. Enlargement of the Community is an essential factor in the creation of Europe; the Commission thus feels that the Conference of Heads of State or Government should note the unanimous will to bring about this enlargement.

The Commission trusts that the Opinions it sent to the Council in 1967 and 1969 will form a useful point of departure for the negotiations to be undertaken.

4. As it said recently — in its Opinion of 1 October 1969 — the Commission considers that the strengthening and the enlargement of the Community should go hand in hand. Besides the decisions taken at the end of the year, strengthening includes the measures necessary to progress towards economic and monetary union and the reinforcement of the Community institutions.

5. Reinforcement of the Community institutions has become essential. As the Community develops, it needs stronger institutions to ensure its internal government. It needs them equally to enable it to cope with the danger of unwieldiness which it runs by enlargement. It is therefore essential to re-establish normal functioning of the institutions as laid down in the Treaties, without waiting for any institutional strengthening which may be envisaged when the Communities are merged. The Community should also be made more democratic by adopting without delay election to the European Parliament by universal suffrage, and thus giving the peoples of Europe an interest in the destinies of the Community.

6. In conclusion, the Commission recommends that the Conference stress the essentially political character of the task in hand and accordingly indicate its will to impel Europe towards political union.

7. Important decisions for the day-to-day life of the Communities are called for in the immediate future. The adoption of the general lines which the Commission has set out above would greatly help in these decisions. Accordingly, the Council should indicate the political will of the Member States that the institutions take these decisions by the end of the year and in particular adopt the procedures for co-ordinating economic policies and the machinery of monetary co-operation, the multi-annual Euratom programme, the common

agricultural policy financing regulation for the final period, and the decisions on the creation of the Community's own resources and greater budgetary powers for the European Parliament.

It should also express the political will of the Member States that the date when negotiations on the enlargement of the Community are to be reopened be determined at the same time.

The Commission urgently draws the attention of the Heads of State or Government to the above. It is convinced that if the Conference can agree on these lines of advance it will have imparted decisive stimulus to the building of Europe. Its deliberations will thus have profound repercussions in Europe and throughout the world.”