

Report by Diane Elles on European political cooperation and the role of the European Parliament (19 June 1981)

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

(a) Historical

In accordance with instructions laid down by Heads of Government at the Hague Summit of 1969, certain objectives and procedures for European Political Cooperation (EPC) were set out in a report adopted, in its final form, by the Nine at Luxembourg on 27th October 1970.

The objectives of political Cooperation as set out in that report are:

‘to ensure through regular exchanges of information and consultations a better mutual understanding on important international problems;

to strengthen their solidarity by promoting the harmonisation of their views; the coordination of their positions and where it appears possible and desirable, common actions.’¹

The Luxembourg report also called upon the Member States to

‘provide in an initial phase the mechanism for harmonising their views regarding international affairs.’

The Foreign Ministers of the Nine agreed a further report at Copenhagen on 23rd July 1973, which set out improved procedures for coordinating foreign policy. The report explained that EPC refers to cooperation on foreign policy questions which involve European interests whether ‘in Europe itself or elsewhere, where the adoption of a common policy is necessary or desirable.’

This Second Report also contained a political engagement by Member States to consult together on all important foreign policy questions before fixing their own definitive positions. Later the same year, in December 1973, the Foreign Ministers of the Nine published a Document on European identity which recognised the foreign policy and to some extent the security implications for more united Europe. In paragraph 9, it was stated that:

‘The Nine intend to play an active role in world affairs and thus to contribute, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to ensuring that international relations have a more just basis; that the independence and equality of states are better preserved; that prosperity is more equitably shared; and that the security of each country is more effectively guaranteed. In pursuit of these objectives the Nine should progressively define common positions in the sphere of foreign policy.’²

In response to external pressures and internal demands, in Paris in December 1974 the Heads of Government created the European Council. The European Council was a formalisation of the irregularly held summit meetings between the Heads of Government and State and while remaining an institution outside the Treaties, has, since its first meeting in March 1975 in Dublin, become an established body and its authority accepted by the Community. It meets “in the Council of the Communities and in the context of political cooperation”, thus covering both Community and EPC matters. It should be added that the nature and duties of the European Council have never been precisely defined, nor its competence.

In December 1975 Mr Tindemans submitted his report on European Union to the European Council. He outlined a number of proposals concerning the development of a common foreign policy of the Nine, notably emphasising that coordination of external policies should make way gradually for common policies.

The European Parliament has both in the Political Affairs Committee and in the plenary sessions of the Parliament, devoted some considerable time and study to the advancement of the foreign policy of the Nine and the procedures needed to ensure more effective cooperation.

Two reports on EPC have been adopted by Parliament, one drafted by Mr Mommersteg in 1973 (PE 31.986/fin/2) and the latest report on the subject, by Mr Blumenfeld (PE 50.829/fin.) voted by Parliament in January 1978.³

(b) Existing Machinery of EPC

- Meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the Nine (Ten) take place four times a year, or more often if considered necessary. These meetings are prepared by the political committee or Davignon Committee⁴ which normally holds a two day meeting every month. The political Committee is composed of the Political Directors of the Foreign Ministries. After each of these meetings a Colloquy is held between the Foreign Minister (President-in-Office) and the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. It should be observed that the Secretariat to the Council of Ministers is not involved in the preparation of these meetings, which are organised in the capital of the country of the president-in-Office for the time being.
- Working parties of experts, established as a result of the Second Report on political cooperation, meet frequently to deal with sectoral matters of immediate concern as well as long term problems. These working parties consider for instance: CSCE, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, the United Nations, Asia and Latin America.
- A sophisticated communications system, linking the Foreign Ministries of the Ten, known as 'COREUNET' permits the direct communication of political information between the Foreign Ministries.
- A group of European "correspondents" was established by the Copenhagen Report. This group, consisting of officials of national foreign ministries, is entrusted with the task of studying problems of organisation. The European "correspondents" prepare the work of the political Committee, for certain matters, on the basis of instructions given to them by that Committee.
- The Embassies of the Nine in the capitals of the Member States of the Community are fully informed of developments in EPC and they receive information on Community issues by the Foreign Ministry of the government to which they are accredited. They are occasionally involved in consultation on specific subjects and members of the diplomatic staff in each of these embassies is entrusted with maintaining contacts with the Foreign Ministry of the host country, within the framework of EPC.
- There is also coordination between the Political Committee and the Permanent representative of the Nine to international organisations in order to seek common positions on the basis of instructions given to them under EPC procedures where appropriate.
- Apart from meetings of the type described above which are normally held in the capital of the country holding the presidency, countless meetings of ambassadors of the Nine in third countries or of representatives of the Nine to international organisations and conferences are also held each year. In this respect the meetings held by the delegations at the UN and by those responsible for preparing the position of the Nine concerning follow up to CSCE⁵ are of particular importance.

The Foreign Ministers also hold informal meetings over the weekend at a quiet country house or castle once in every Presidency. The first meeting of this kind was held at Schloss Gymnich in Germany and meetings of this kind are often referred to as "Gymnich type" meetings. Other informal meetings "en marge du conseil" are also held from time to time.

The Commission is represented at most EPC meetings, and for the most part of their duration. It also acts for the Community on the parts of Basket 2 of CSCE, and the Euro Arab Dialogue falling within the Community's competence. The Commission attends the quarterly meetings of the Foreign Ministers within EPC and the colloquies held between the Foreign Minister and Parliament's Political Affairs Committee.

The commission is also represented at the working parties on sectoral or specialist matters and may be asked to intervene. It shall be recalled that the President of the Commission attends the meetings of the European Council.

Mr von der Gabletz⁶ has described the working methods of EPC as follows: "normally, a concerted or common policy starts off with a public declaration of principles by ministers or by the European Council, establishing the broad consensus among the Nine. The next steps are detailed studies and option papers prepared by the working groups which can serve as the basis for specific decisions and diplomatic action. What has often been labelled 'declaratory diplomacy' is in fact only the first indispensable stage of a collective diplomacy."

EPC is not institutionalised, to the extent that it has no permanent secretariat or headquarters. In effect, the country holding the presidency is responsible for providing the necessary administrative support during its six month term of office. As Mr von der Gabletz has described the situation: "The presidency assumes wide responsibilities for internal management, political concertation and external representation during its term of office. This presidential system fulfils important functions. For the country of the presidency, it provides the double opportunity to become a temporary European diplomatic capital and to train its diplomatic staff very thoroughly in European affairs. For the community, the rotating presidency proves its character as a 'Community of equals' even in the field of international diplomacy traditionally dominated by bigger and medium sized powers. The heavy burden of the presidency has so far been outweighed by the added international prestige. The administrative assistance to the presidency by other Member States which the Copenhagen Report provided has been kept within narrow limits."

CHAPTER 2 - FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EPC

In applying the proposal of the Luxembourg report that "the governments should...cooperate in the field of foreign policy" the Nine, working through EPC, have placed the main emphasis of their work on a number of issues of international affairs reflected in the subject matter of the working parties the Political Committee: CSCE, Eastern Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, United Nations, Asia and Latin America. Apart from the overall interest of the Nine in the evolution of the Middle East situation, they and the Commission have constituted the European side of the Euro Arab Dialogue. Finally, a link has been established between the Foreign Ministers and the Minister responsible for internal security and the Ministers of Justice of the Nine concerning cooperation in combating terrorism and a number of related problems.

In East West relations the Nine have largely concentrated, within EPC, on concerting a joint approach to the agenda items of CSCE and to the CSCE follow up conferences at Belgrade and Madrid. In doing so the Nine have worked closely with members of the North Atlantic Alliance on preparing an overall Western approach to the subject matter of CSCE. Indeed the detailed and careful preparation of their approach to CSCE led to the Nine becoming the dominant force in the Helsinki/Geneva meetings and in subsequent follow up operations. One of the major successes of EPC has been the solidarity demonstrated by the Nine concerning practically every aspect of CSCE.

Apart from conducting Western initiatives in the somewhat episodic Euro Arab Dialogue, the Nine have issued a number of declarations on the Middle East. The statement of the Foreign Ministers of 6th November 1973 was the first of a number statements made by the Foreign Ministers, the European Council and the General Committee of the Euro Arab Dialogue in which the Nine have developed a consistent if controversial attitude concerning the Middle East.

Meeting in Venice in June 1980, the European Council decided that, in regard to the Middle East, the time had come to promote the implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community – “the right to existence and to security of all the States in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, which implies recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people”. The Nine foresaw the need for guarantees for a peace settlement; a just solution to the Palestinian problem, including the association of the PLO with the negotiations on this point; an agreement on the status of Jerusalem; and an end to Israeli occupation of the territories won in 1967 and to Israeli settlements in these territories. The President-in-office of the Council, Mr Thorn, was asked to ascertain the position of the parties concerned with respect to these principles and objectives, and during the summer did so in the course of a “fact-finding mission”. The results of this mission were discussed by the European Council at its meeting in December in Luxembourg when they identified the four main problems as Israeli withdrawal, self determination for the Palestinians, security in the Middle East, and Jerusalem. The European Council, having discussed various options or formulas by which the principles laid down at Venice could be realised, instructed the President in office, in consultation with the Foreign Ministers, to discuss these with the parties concerned, and to report back to the European Council.

In the Mediterranean the Nine have supported the efforts of the UN Secretary General to bring about the reunification of Cyprus but have been unable to make any independent contribution to the search for a sanction to the Cyprus problem. Apart from the active encouragement given by the Community as such to democratic developments in Greece, Portugal and Spain, in which the European Parliament itself played a notable part, the Foreign Ministers of the Nine, acting through EPC, have coordinated their views on the emergence of pluralist democratic systems in these countries and they have acted in parallel with the Community in paving the way for the eventual entry of Spain and Portugal into the Community, following Greece’s entry on. 1st January 1981.

Apart from their involvement in CSCE and their stance on the Middle East settlement it is probably in the General Assembly of the UN that the Nine, working through EPC, most overtly assert themselves on the world scene.⁷ But if the Nine have often been able to make notable contributions to discussions within the UN, it is also in the UN that the Nine have most evidently failed, sometimes in spectacular fashion, to achieve a united front. Thus the Nine have found it much more difficult to vote together concerning Middle East problems in the UN than they have done to reach agreement on declarations concerning the Middle East outside the UN framework. On issues relating to Southern Africa, Palestinian rights and nuclear weapons, amongst others, there have frequently been splits between the Nine in major votes. Indeed, the comment has often been made that the Nine vote together on unimportant questions and differently on important ones.

The intervention of outside military forces in the civil war in Angola led the Nine to focus on problems in Southern Africa. Thus in declarations made in Luxembourg in February 1976 and April 1977 they condemned apartheid and underlined their opposition to attempts by foreign powers to establish zones of influence in Africa. They declared themselves, also, in favour of independence and self determination for Africans. The main policy adopted by the Nine concerning South Africa was the establishment of a code of conduct⁸ for European firms in September 1977. The code of conduct was agreed on hastily without a great deal of prior reflection, and it has not worked consistently well. Individual member governments have been reluctant to submit reports to the Foreign Ministers concerning their compliance with the provisions of the code, but where governments have complied there have been some improvements in labour conditions

The list of matters covered by the Foreign Ministers acting in political cooperation over the last year (1980) reinforces the role of the Community in world affairs and draws attention to the many major issues which are of direct concern to the political and economic well-being of the member-states.⁹ Issues included: measures to be taken for the transition for countries which have applied for accession, including Greece, Spain and Portugal; the Nine’s position on Afghanistan; guidelines for action in the Middle East; reactivation of the Euro Arab dialogue; the problem of the American hostages in Iran; the Iran-Iraq conflict; CSCE proceedings; Cyprus; events in Turkey; Zimbabwe’s independence; the Namibian situation; South Africa; relations with ASEAN; the situation in Kampuchea; position of the Nine towards Latin America and the Andean Pact; harmonisation of positions at the UN.

CHAPTER 3 – SUBJECT-MATTER OF EPC

As outlined in the previous chapter the main subjects treated within EPC are classical areas of foreign policy. The involvement of the Nine in the preparation of and follow-up to, CSCE, has, however, involved EPC directly in the security, economic and human rights aspects of relations between the Member states of the Community and the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. It has also involved the Nine in the detailed preparation of the overall Western approach to the three “baskets” of CSCE and this, in turn, has led to a significant inter-relationship between EPC and those responsible, within the Atlantic Alliance, for preparing the NATO approach to the same questions. Members of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee have heard, from the Presidency, through the Colloquy, that the strictly military aspects of “Basket” of CSCE have been studied within EPC and that the Nine have not, therefore, excluded defence considerations from EPC subject-matter. Your rapporteur welcomes this progress on the part of the Foreign Ministers, but considers that this beginning should be further developed. In considering Afghanistan and the Middle East, to take such two subjects covered by EPC, your rapporteur is convinced that a distinction cannot be drawn between the “foreign policy” and the “security” aspects of these two problems. In their Declaration on European Identity of 14th December 1973 the Nine stated: “The Nine, one of whose essential aims is to maintain peace, will never succeed in doing so if they neglect their own security.” In Section B3 of Chapter II of his report on European Union Mr Tindemans said: “No foreign policy can disregard threats, whether actual or potential, and the ability to meet them. Security cannot therefore be left outside the scope of European Union.” He suggested that, until such time that the Member States would be able to draw up a common defence policy, members of the Community should “regularly...hold exchanges of views on our specific problems in defence matters and on European aspects of multilateral negotiations on security. Exchanges of views of this kind will one day enable Member States to reach a common analysis of defence problems and, meanwhile, to take account of their respective positions in any action they take.”

Mr Blumenfeld, in his report on EPC, took up the ideas of Mr Tindemans and developed them further by proposing that exchanges of views between the Nine on specific problems in defence matters and on European aspects of multilateral security negotiations could take the form of the national Defence Ministers joining together with the nine Foreign Ministers at their quarterly meeting to discuss the security aspects of foreign affairs problems whenever appropriate. Officials from national defence ministries could similarly take part in EPC working parties when appropriate.

Your rapporteur endorses the analysis made by Mr Tindemans and the suggestions put forward by Mr Blumenfeld.

She notes also that Mr Genscher, the German Foreign Minister, stated at Stuttgart on 6th January 1981 that a common European foreign policy should include co-ordination in defence. Further, on 28th January 1981 Mr Colombo, the Italian Foreign Minister, in a speech made at Florence, proposed that, in the context of EPC, “the elements of foreign policy that are vital to a joint security policy must be carefully singled out.”

Your rapporteur wishes to propose that the Foreign Ministers should give serious consideration to the establishment of close and continuous links with the permanent representatives to the North Atlantic Council of the nine member states which take part in the work of the Atlantic Alliance. These contacts should concern not merely the development of Western positions concerning CSCE follow-up matters, but should touch on the security aspects of those foreign policy problems dealt with in the North Atlantic Council which are also the subjects of consideration within EPC.

The establishment of a direct chain of contacts linking the European Council/EPC/Parliament would permit the Ten to extend their activities, in an approach involving both EPC and the community itself, to questions such as how to relate East-West negotiations in the economic field (Comecon/EEC links) with other separate types of East West negotiations directly concerning members of the Nine, such as MBFR, CSCE and SALT.

Disarmament is a subject permanently on the agenda at the UN and guidelines and policy decisions by the Ten cannot be taken without considering security implications. The supply of raw materials to the Ten,

which demands policies of protection and surveillance by Member states, is the subject of a report to the European Parliament by Mr Diligent. These matters should no longer be dealt with piecemeal and in isolation from the overriding considerations of Western security.

CHAPTER 4 - THE TEN AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations is one of the main fora in which the Ten play major role in world politics. The rapid development of the activities and of the standing of the Ten in the UN is nicely demonstrated by the change of attitude shown by the Soviet Ambassador to the UN, Mr Malik, who, when the joint declaration on the Middle East was circulated on 6th November 1973, asked "Who are these Nine?" Less than two years later in the course of a meeting with the nine ambassadors of the EEC to the United Nations, on 16th October 1975, Mr Malik, trying to obtain their agreement to the Soviet initiative on disarmament, addressed them as "the mighty Nine"¹⁰.

Co-ordination of positions

The Nine have gone a long way since then. Statements made by the President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers on behalf of the Nine as an entity have become a regular occurrence and have increased in weight and substance. Although individual Member States might add their reservations, it has become normal for the Presidency to speak regularly for the Nine as a whole. This practice should not, however, prevent other members from confirming the agreed line. It could sometimes be beneficial for other members to take the floor to support the Presidency and so strengthen the position of the Ten.

Wherever possible the Political Directors of the Ten try to coordinate national viewpoints concerning issues arising at the UN General Assembly well before debates and votes are held. To help them to do this they are assisted by a group of experts specialising in UN matters, drawn from national foreign ministries. Particularly during the General Assembly itself, the instructions and policies fed into the delegations of the Ten in New York must keep abreast of what is usually a rapidly changing and fluid situation.

Your rapporteur has observed that considerable progress has been made in the cooperation between the Nine, in particular during the sessions of the General Assembly. Frequent and regular meetings take place between the representatives of the permanent missions of the Nine serving on each of the six UN committees in order to coordinate positions. At the 35th sessions of the General Assembly, Greece, although not then a full member of the Community, took part in these meetings and formally associated itself with the Nine on a number of items.

Voting Behaviour

The voting pattern of the Nine cannot be said to be consistent but it has certainly improved. Of politically significant resolutions, in 1979, 54% were unanimous, compared with 47% by 1973. Of other resolutions, 63% were unanimous in 1979 compared with 43% in 1973. Overall, the percentage of unanimous resolutions has risen from 46% in 1973 to 57% in 1979.

On the occasions when members of the Nine have not voted unanimously they have voted with a minority group considerably more often than they have voted alone. This record may appear reasonably good, but it has often been the case that the issues on which the Nine have been divided have been of greater significance than those on which they have voted together. The type of issue which has caused divided voting has included the development and testing of nuclear weapons, in the case of France, and problems connected with the decolonisation of Southern Africa in the case of Denmark and Ireland. France has also voted differently from the other members of the Nine on the Middle East. On a number of occasions Britain has voted alone or with a minority group on resolutions concerning Namibia and South Africa. British and French membership of the Security Council has led to the development of shared interests between these two countries concerning a high proportion of the issues with which the UN deals and this, in turn, has made it easier for the rest of the Nine to align their policies and votes with these permanent members of the Security Council. The Federal Republic of Germany and Italy have recently been temporary members of the

Security Council and their presence there has also been useful in this respect.

It is important to note that on occasion a resolution that has been voted on repeatedly from year to year may be modified or receive a change in emphasis. Its political significance may also therefore change, as in the case of the non use of Force in International Relations and in resolutions on Human Rights and Scientific and Technological Developments.

The voting decisions of the Nine, although they may not always be unanimous, now attract some considerable interest as a focal point, balancing the long-held domination of the Soviet block, relying as it did on 43 Eastern European Supporters. The Report of the Foreign Ministers to the European Council (24th November 1980) draws attention to the firm stand of the Nine which contributed to unequivocal United Nations condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the 35th General Assembly 1980.

Contribution of the European Parliament

The relevant resolutions adopted by the European Parliament should be made available during the preliminary discussions of the permanent representatives of the Ten and their views taken into account. Resolutions of particular significance of the Parliament should be drawn to the attention of the General Assembly by the Delegations of the Ten, particularly by that of the Presidency.

Belgian Socialist members of the Parliament's Political Affairs Committee have suggested that the possibility should be explored of members of the European Parliament acting as members of their national delegations to the UN. It might be difficult to achieve this in the case of all national delegations since the nature of the membership of a national delegation to the UN differs from country to country

For the first time, a delegation led by Signor Bersani represented the European Parliament at the UN 11th Special Session, in connection with the Third Development Decade. The six members of the Parliament took part in a de facto meeting with the President - in - Office, the Commissioner and their staff before the formal meeting of the Council of Ministers was convened to take policy decisions. This type of initiative by members of the European Parliament should be encouraged so that the views of parliament can be heard contemporaneously by the Council on issues being discussed at the United Nations.

CHAPTER 5 - RELATIONS WITH THE US

In their attempts to arrive at joint positions concerning specific foreign policy issues the Nine have often acted in close cooperation with the US. Issues concerning which consultation with the US government has been especially close have included attempts to resolve the Cyprus crisis, the development of a common policy concerning the change of regime in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and the Middle East peace initiatives of the Egyptian and Israeli government.

Your rapporteur understands that the US State Department maintains close contacts with the Foreign Ministry of the Presidency, involving high level contacts between US diplomats and Presidency officials concerning EPC agenda items. But although it has been possible to concert the policies of the Nine and those of the US concerning some issues, lack of mutual information and consultation has sometimes been evident. Following the announcement by the US administration of the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran, the Community was expected to follow, however closely governments may have cooperated to reach agreement, public opinion in Europe was not prepared for this immediate show of solidarity.

Your rapporteur wonders therefore whether some new and additional consultative machinery between the Ten and the US is now necessary or desirable. In this respect she wishes to recall the suggestion made by Chancellor Brandt at the time of the Hague Summit in 1969 that a high level contact committee, at political level, should be set up between the Member States of the Community and the US. Your rapporteur considers that it would be useful to give fresh consideration to this proposal, although she realises that there is a danger of unnecessarily duplicating the existing methods of communication between the Ten and the Government which might become adequate if a determined political effort were made, at both ends, to

ensure prior mutual consultation concerning every major foreign policy move.

If the proposals contained in this Report (and indeed in several previous Reports on EPC) for the formation of a political secretariat, or similar structure, whether movable or to be sited in one place, the mechanism for consultation and cooperation both with the US and other non member countries would be facilitated.

In accordance with indications from the new Reagan administration, the role of the US in world affairs is likely to be more forceful. This should be an encouragement to the Ten to reinforce their own 'voice' in international events if there is not to be a return to a bipolar system, based on relations between the two superpowers. The strengthening of the Community's position in foreign policy issues does, however, imply a proportionately greater need to ensure close cooperation with the US on all matters of mutual concern and hence simple and feasible procedures to ensure this cooperation.

With the increasing importance of Japan as a major economic force in world affairs, the question also arises of how far it would be desirable or practicable to develop consultation between the Ten, the US and Japan on EPC agenda items. It should be recalled that Western economic summit meetings¹¹ are increasingly called upon to discuss matters which fall within EPC, thus adding weight to the need to consult Japan as well as the US.

CHAPTER 6 - SHORTCOMINGS OF EPC

Some of the shortcomings of EPC will have been apparent for some time, but the events of 1980 emphasized the need for urgent remedies and showed a lack of ability to react quickly, the lack of mechanisms for consultation, the limitation of the subject-matter to be discussed, the lack of linkage between political, economic and commercial considerations, the lack of joint commitment, and possibly, of the greatest importance, lack of common objective for the Community as a whole.

The invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops in December 1979 showed up the inability of the Nine to react immediately to this event. The first meeting of the council of Ministers took place in Brussels three weeks later. The measures proposed by the Council were only what could generously be described as the result of a 'lowest common denominator' and were not as forthright and positive as those proposed by the European Parliament the following day.

The taking of the American hostages in Teheran resulted, after protracted delay, in agreeing to follow us policy of imposing economic sanctions on Iran. This was a classic example of failure by the American government to understand the sensitivities of the European Member States, by seeking to insist that the Nine should follow a policy already announced in the States. There is a clear need for better and closer cooperation on issues which affect both the US and the Community and where joint action is desirable, on the basis of joint interest and/or mutual support.

The interdependence of the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, relating to military, economic and human rights issues, implied close cooperation between the Nine and NATO in preparation of the Western position for the Madrid Conference. These issues cannot be discussed in isolation one from the other. The increase in technological exchanges, imports of East European energy sources, cannot be considered without greater openness by these countries on their military measures and other matters falling within Basket I of the Final Act.

There is no reason to disbelieve that this cooperation between NATO and the Nine existed, yet in their discussions on CSCE, the Parliament's Political Affairs Committee was unable to have the benefit of an exchange of views with any representative from NATO. This false impression of isolation and lack of contact should be removed. A request should be made by the Parliament to invite a senior representative from NATO to attend and participate in the meeting of the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliament when assessing the results of the Madrid Conference.

If the reactive capabilities of the Ten are weak, the political use of the Community's greatest strength, its

extensive international trade relations and its economic power, without obligation, without objective and without the necessary infrastructure, will remain totally negative.

The distance between Community matters and EPC has grown successively smaller in recent years, economic and political considerations overlapping in increased proportion to the growing economic strength of the Community relative to the rest of the world. Enlargement of the Community, relations with China, the Arab states and recent events in Poland, financial aid to third countries, trade embargoes on account of violations of human rights, trading restrictions and limitations on imports, security of the availability of raw materials, including oil, are few of the many examples which bear this out. One of the most significant examples of overlap is in consideration of East West relations which in the context of CSCE and the Helsinki Final Act should be expected to see variations in trade with the Soviet Union in relation to if not parallel with observance of the provisions of Basket 3. Statistics disprove that there has been decline in trade, even since the Afghan invasion and indeed there is renewed activity to obtain Soviet markets by individual Member States. It may well be that the trade instrument should not be used to the detriment of the Member States, particularly in times of recession and when there is heavy unemployment. If this be the case, there should at least be concerted agreement that while trade may not now be used as an instrument of foreign policy, the trade concessions being made today can become a useful tool of Community foreign policy in the future.

Whatever the internal discussions may be within the Community, it is more and more being regarded from outside as a powerful economic and political force in world affairs. Through its economic strength it now extends its influence to almost every part of the globe.

While there may be individual political decisions affecting isolated commercial and economic agreements, the Ten have the task of formulating foreign policy guidelines covering a vast range of activities at present looked at in isolation.

From these few observations, it may be concluded that a new approach and new effort are needed.

CHAPTER 7 - A NEW APPROACH

The Luxembourg report of October 1970 called on the then six Member States to “provide in an initial phase the mechanism for harmonising their views regarding international affairs.” As noted earlier much has happened to EPC in the decade that has passed. As Otto von der Gablentz has concluded, EPC has acted as: “an instrument of collective diplomacy a factor of European unification and a contribution to a foreign policy of European dimensions.”¹² But the undoubted achievements of EPC should not lead us to imagine that EPC has led to the creation of a genuine European foreign policy of the Ten. It has not. Al though it is undoubtedly the case that through EPC the Nine have substantially increased their collective weight in world politics the basic aims and nature of EPC have not changed - or have not changed very much - since 1970. EPC remains an instrument to co-ordinate those aspects of the foreign policies of the individual Member States concerning which there is consensus between them. This fundamental limitation of the scope of EPC has been demonstrated on the occasion almost every colloquy between Parliament’s Political Affairs Committee and the Foreign Ministers when almost every one of the successive Chairmen of the Foreign Ministers says, in the course of his introductory statement, that the task of EPC is to “harmonise” or to “coordinate” selected aspects of foreign policy, not to develop and operate a common foreign policy.

Your rapporteur considers that EPC has reached a point where its effectiveness, and therefore the weight of the Ten in world politics, cannot be increased unless two radical steps are taken. First, a change of philosophy is required. Second, a new institutional structure is needed.

The change of philosophy is that the Ten should move, during the early 1980’s from the present coordination of agreed aspects of national foreign policy to the formulation and application a common foreign policy at least in certain mutually agreed areas.

Mr Tindemans, in his report on European Union, called upon the Member States to undertake an obligation

to reach a common point of view concerning foreign policy. He suggested that the Member States should define the broad guidelines for foreign policy within the Council. On this basis, the Council must then accept the obligation to reach common decisions on specific questions. He suggested that the Member States “must now undertake the political commitment to pursue a common foreign policy within a given number of specific fields, selected in relation to their importance and the prospect of practical results.”¹³

The reasons why the Community needs to make a qualitative change in EPC, of the type suggested above, are quite simple. The present system of “coordination” or “harmonisation” of national foreign policies means, in practice, that the foreign policy activities of the Ten are basically “reactive” rather than geared towards the taking of initiatives. Until the Ten develop agreed philosophies concerning the major aspects of international affairs, such as relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, relations with the US, the Middle East etc., and until they give practical application to these philosophies in the form of appropriate policy initiatives, they will be condemned to a role of response and reaction that will leave the power to shape the development of world affairs in the hands of others.

Further, even the ability of the Ten to react to a crisis situation, such as the change of regime in Iran or the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, will remain inherently limited until framework policies have been hammered out between the governments which can provide an adequate basis for rapid and effective reactions. It is clear that the Ten will not be able to react rapidly and appropriately to crisis situations in the absence of a suitable infrastructure in the form of some kind of standing secretariat. This requirement is examined in the next section of the report.

Until new aims and new practices are agreed upon, the short-comings in EPC, pinpointed by Mr Blumenfeld in paragraph 7 of his report, will continue to limit the further development of EPC. As Mr Blumenfeld wrote, the shortcomings of EPC “derive principally from the fact that the Davignon procedures are operated by Foreign Ministers and their officials, who in spite of their European vocation, are conditioned to furthering their own country’s objectives and interests in foreign affairs. This fact imposes a fundamental limitation on the potential degree of coordination which is possible in the interests of the Ten or the Community. Even if the political will to achieve coordination exists on the part of several Member States, the whole operation of the Davignon procedure leads to decisions achieved on the basis of the lowest common denominator of national interests, largely as interpreted by foreign ministry officials.”¹⁴

Your rapporteur wishes, next, to comment on the convention within the EPC that member states will not take, individually, major foreign policy steps without previously informing and consulting other members of the Ten. This obligation was established by the Copenhagen Report which in Section II of Part II laid down that: “each state undertakes as a general rule not to take up final positions without prior consultation with its partners within the framework of the political cooperation work” Two criteria apply to this commitment. First: “The purpose of the consultation is to seek common policies on practical problems.” Second: “The subjects dealt with must concern European interests whether in Europe itself or elsewhere where the adoption of a common position is necessary or desirable.”

If this aim were to be implemented in practice, this would in itself be a significant achievement of EPC. But it is not. Useful though the achievements of EPC have been the Ten’s influence in world affairs will not be consistent and reliable, and they will not merit the confidence and trust of their international partners, until the principle of prior consultation is strictly observed.

The full application of this principle should be one of the first priorities of the Ten in EPC before it can undertake more ambitious moves along the lines outlined by your rapporteur above and of the type proposed by Mr Tindemans.

A number of world crises over the years have demonstrated that prior consultation between the Ten is not enough. It is also necessary for the Ten to develop a system of close and continuous political consultation with the US that really works. There was for example, and understandably perhaps, a lack of adequate communications at the time of the Yom Kippur war in 1973. Neither the US nor the Ten can expect each other to provide full diplomatic and political support in a situation in which there has not been prior

consultation on a major foreign policy decision.

But even if closer prior consultation with the US can be arranged, a need has arisen, particularly under pressure of events in the Middle East and South-West Asia, to create means by which the Ten can deal adequately with sudden crises. The ability of the Member State holding the presidency to organise rapidly a united and effective response to a crisis is at present severely limited by the absence of adequate institutional machinery. Successful 'crisis management', such as has been called for recently, is essential if the Ten are to retain their credibility, in the face both of potential aggressors and of public opinion in the Member States.

The mechanism proposed by Lord Carrington is both practical, simple and effective. Meetings between the Ten should be convened automatically within 48 hours in every case where any three Member States believe that there is a crisis which requires rapid consultation.¹⁵

The need is to be able to react rapidly and in unison to a crisis situation, after the fullest internal and external consultation possible in the circumstances. Once such an initial reaction has been achieved, the Ten must be able to gather information and concert their action so as to pass from a negative to a positive stance, so progressing from reacting to the crisis (as has been the case hitherto) to taking positive initiatives to resolve it in the interests of the Ten. Such initiatives might include action at the UN, the mobilisation of support for the Ten from neutral and non aligned nations, and concerted action by all the Nine against the country which had instigated the crisis. From such several initiatives might in turn emerge a proposal for the resolution of the crisis which, if it had secured sufficient international support following diplomatic action by the Ten would have some chance of achieving its object.

Once the desirability of the Ten being able to act in this way is accepted, it follows that some kind of institutional structure for EPC is essential: Your rapporteur discusses its exact nature in a succeeding section of this report.

Whatever the internal discussions of the Ten, the rest of the world look to the Community to act and react as one, as a major political force for stability and economic advancement. The Community, therefore, should be given the means to fulfil the role demanded of it.

CHAPTE R 8 - THE INSTITUTIONS AND EPC

(i) The European Council

The Committee of Three have recalled in their Report on the European Institutions, that the European Council, composed of the Heads of State and Government, would meet 'in the Council of the communities and in the context of political cooperation.' Since the European Council is a body set up outside the Treaties, when decisions are taken on matters of political cooperation - also outside the scope of the Treaties - there is no formal mechanism which links this particular role of the European Council to any of the other institutions of the Community. Although without formal powers, the European Council has been accepted by the Community as the body which lays down guidelines on major political issues within the community and in EPC, its deliberations affecting the Community's internal and external relations. Yet so far, there has been no formal contact with the European Parliament except when the President-in-Office at the time, Mr Lynch, addressed the first session of the newly elected Parliament in July 1979.

The only contact has otherwise been indirect. It has become practice for the activities and decisions of the European council to be contained in a report made by the Foreign Minister, President-in-Office, after each European Council meeting. The Report of the Committee of Three confirms that 'it is not right that this obvious gap in its relations with the Treaty institution should persist. We propose that the President of the European Council should attend the Parliament in person¹⁶ once in each Presidency. The Foreign Minister can continue to report on the third annual meeting as before. The aim should be to give the Parliament a clear idea of what conclusions Heads of Government have reached and why, and to discuss how other institutions might contribute to the tasks in hand. The parliament will express its views in the ensuing debate and the European Council should take due note of them. Indeed, in all its work in the Community sphere the

European Council should be more alive to Parliament's rights and interests. It is up to the Presidency as well as the Commission to bring such factors firmly to the attention of Heads of Government. Only thus can the relations between European Council and European Parliament be placed on a firmer footing of trust and cooperation.'

Your rapporteur endorses this proposal, which would go some way to enhancing the political accountability of the European Council to Parliament, covering both Community and EPC matters.

The preparation of the agenda for the European Council is undertaken by the Foreign Ministers assisted by COREPER. The Foreign Ministers' council meeting before the European Council also has to consider matters within EPC. This artificial distinction should be dropped. This view supports the continued emphasis given in the Report to the need for the European Council to ensure co-ordination between Community policies and actions taken in political Cooperation.

(ii) The Council of Ministers

While the obligations and functions of the Council of Ministers are set out in the Treaties, the Foreign Ministers meeting in political Cooperation have no legally binding obligations laid upon them. The ever decreasing distance between the functions of this last body and the Foreign Ministers council in particular, with the participants being one and the same persons, makes the holding of separate meetings less and less realistic. Indeed it has been said that sometimes the only way for an observer to know which body is meeting is by the position of the Commission representative at the table. The overlapping of foreign policy and external commercial relations, for instance in trade negotiations with third countries, the granting of food aid, the transfer of resources from the Community to less developed countries, the negotiations of accession treaties, seriously call into question the arrangement whereby there is still - if only in name - a clear division in the meetings of these two bodies.

Your rapporteur therefore proposes that this organisational division should be removed. This step should lead to official recognition of closer cooperation between the Secretary General of the Council's secretariat and the political Directors' Committee.

(iii) Foreign Ministers Meeting in Political Cooperation

In its analysis of the role and functions of the president-in-Office of the Council the Report of the Committee of Three emphasises that 'the heaviest burden in the external field is the administration of Political Cooperation... The Presidency is thus alone responsible for the management of business, ranging from the practical organisation of meetings to the maintenance of a flow of ideas and initiatives. Even for the largest state, to run the PoCo (Political Cooperation) machine effectively at full capacity means a considerable strain on resources. This view is reflected in the attempt to establish a system, whereby staff from the Foreign Ministry of the previous Presidency together with staff from the Foreign Ministry of the following Presidency assist to some extent the Presidency in office. This arrangement constitutes at best a *faute de mieux* and does not solve the problems raised earlier of a crisis mechanism, of permanent review of EPC matters, of continuity in one place by the officials concerned with EPC.

Suggestions for improvement of procedures and mechanisms are made in the following section of this report.

(iv) The Commission

The functions and duties of the Commission are laid down in the Treaties, but the Commission is not excluded from attending EPC meetings, either at Foreign Minister level or at Working Party level. From the oft-reported observation made in this report and in the Report of the Three, for the need for correlation between economic and foreign policy your rapporteur would encourage Commission representation at EPC meetings.

(v) The European Parliament

If more space is devoted in this report to improvement of the role of members of Parliament in the development of EPC it is mainly because of the radical change in the nature of the Parliament since June 1979. Directly elected representatives owe a responsibility to their electorate on all matters including the activities of the Community, both internal and external, and more particularly on those matters over which there is, or seems to be, no democratic scrutiny.

Closer cooperation between the Foreign Ministers of the Ten and the Parliament is urgently needed. It should be recognized that in the former delegated Parliament, members had the opportunity to question Foreign Ministers in their national Parliaments and to debate foreign policy issues. In the directly elected Parliament, not only are these opportunities not available to the large majority of members, but in the Parliament there is so far very little opportunity for members to discuss fully foreign policy matters and they get very inadequate results in the answers they receive to their questions on foreign policy issues.

Your rapporteur therefore goes into some detail on aspects of the relations between the Foreign Ministers and the Parliament, including the colloquies with the Political Affairs Committee, Parliamentary debates, Questions to the Foreign Ministers and motions for urgent debate under the present Rule 14 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

(a) Reorganization of the Colloquy

Your rapporteur considers that the present procedures used to prepare and organize the colloquies held between Parliament's Political Affairs Committee and the Foreign Ministers meeting in Political Cooperation should be improved.

At present one of the main problems is that questions put by members to the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers tend to cover not only the whole range of subject-matter covered by the Community as such, but also as far as foreign policy matters are concerned, matters which may not have been discussed.

Further, the form of the Colloquy' is unstructured and varies from meeting to meeting.

Your rapporteur considers that it might be useful to put forward a number of proposals concerning the organisation and form of the colloquy, as follows.

First, it is essential that all four Colloquies be held each year. In 1978, 1979 and 1980 only three out of four Colloquies were held each year.

When the agenda of the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers is known, agreement should be reached between the Chairman of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee and the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers concerning three or four major themes that might be most usefully selected for detailed discussion during the colloquy.

Members of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee have often expressed the hope that a colloquy should be held immediately following the meeting of the Foreign Ministers since, very often, there has been a delay of days or even weeks between the holding of the relevant meeting of the Foreign Ministers and that of the colloquy. Members of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee were therefore extremely satisfied that Mr Colombo, in his capacity as Chairman of the Foreign Ministers, arranged that the colloquy held in Brussels in early May 1980 followed, directly, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers. Your rapporteur is sure that she speaks for all members of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee in expressing the hope that this practice will be a regular one. If, however, the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers finds it necessary to delay the holding of the colloquy to a later date the colloquy should be preceded by the circulation of a written statement by the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers.

This would: reduce the need either for the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers to spend too high a proportion of the limited time available at the colloquy on his oral introduction to the committee, or to rely on members having read the Press Statement.

Since members of the Parliament are free, at meetings held during the rest of the year, to engage with the Council in a dialogue concerning specifically Community' business, including Community business conducted at European Council meetings, it would perhaps be desirable for the Chairman of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee to emphasise at the beginning of each colloquy that questions or discussion during the colloquy should be limited to matters clearly falling within the scope of EPC.

After the opening of the colloquy by the Chairman of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee, it is suggested that the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers should make a statement, stressing the main points of interest which would last no more than half an hour. This could be followed by the question-and-answer part of the colloquy, lasting up to a maximum period of two and a half hours, depending on the time of day the colloquy was held, and divided into distinct sections. Each section or period would concern one of the themes of the Foreign Ministers' meeting as agreed for discussion between the Chairman of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee and the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers. After the last of the questions on the first theme the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers would reply to them before the Chairman of the Committee calls for questions on the second theme, and so on.

During the question-and-answer part of the colloquy the Chairman of the Committee should control the discussion tightly, encouraging members to limit their intervention solely to questions on the specific themes under consideration and preventing them from making statements on subjects. It is suggested that a time-limit of three minutes could be imposed for the putting of each question.

Questions and answers concerning the agreed themes might be followed by a final period, lasting up to half an hour, for the discussion of questions concerning EPC subject matter not covered by the agreed themes and, also, for the consideration of proposals made by members of Parliament's Political Affairs Committee concerning either the operation or the subject matter of EPC in general.

Finally, this section would be followed by the concluding formalities.

Your rapporteur wishes to make some proposals concerning the participation of the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers. First, in his opening statement, he should, at each colloquy, report on the attitude of the Foreign Ministers concerning any foreign policy guidelines suggested by the European Parliament since the previous colloquy. Second, the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers should, at each colloquy, report on Schloss Gymnich type meetings and on meetings of the Foreign Ministers "en marge du Conseil" as well as on formal meetings of the Foreign Ministers in political cooperation. Third, the appropriate members of the Commission should be invited to attend colloquies and to speak on themes wherever relevant.

(b) Questions to the Chairman of Foreign Ministers

Of the other links between Parliament and the Foreign Ministers the most significant are the questions put by members to the Chairman of the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation. In December 1974 the heads of government agreed that the Presidency of the Council would answer questions on political cooperation put by members of the Parliament. In February 1975 the foreign ministers agreed that the Presidency would answer written questions under Rule 45, oral questions without debate under Rule 46, with debate under Rule 47, and questions at question time under Rule 47A of the Rules of Procedure, on "the activities of political cooperation." Since then there has been regular consideration of EPC matters under these provisions.

Although a small number of questions are tabled for the foreign ministers to answer at each part session, it seems to your rapporteur that members of the Parliament do not take sufficient advantage of this procedure to extract full and detailed replies on the wide range of important topics covered by EPC at any one time.

Your rapporteur wishes to urge the political groups and individual members of the Parliament to table appropriate questions so as to elicit a constant flow of information from the foreign ministers to Parliament concerning the latest developments in EPC.

In a note addressed to the former Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, Mr Colombo, Belgian Socialist members of the Committee stressed that in their view the quality of the answers to parliamentary questions concerning EPC should be improved. They suggested that, without revealing national positions a breakdown of different standpoints on EPC subjects should be provided in the replies. While this may be unrealistic, your rapporteur nevertheless urges strongly that the amount and the quality of the information given in replies by the President-in-Office to questions on EPC at question-time should be substantially increased.

In regard to the answers provided at Question Time by the President-in-Office on behalf of the Foreign Ministers to Members supplementary questions, it is understood that the unsatisfactory standard of replies to them stems from a shortcoming in the preparations made by the Foreign Ministers and the Committee of Political Directors (Political Committee) Whereas the reply to the original question is discussed and agreed by the Foreign Ministers and/or the Political Committee, no attempt is made to anticipate Members' supplementary questions.

What is required is that likely supplementaries should be anticipated, and agreed replies prepared in advance for the President-in-Office. Given the comparatively limited number of Members who table questions to the Foreign Ministers, and on the basis of experience of Members' interests both in the old and the new Parliament, and as shown at the Colloquies, it should not be difficult to make an assessment of likely supplementaries, and to prepare replies to them. This technique has, after all, been used for decades in replying to questions to Ministers in the British and probably in other Parliaments.

Although the adoption of this procedure would involve a little additional preparation by the Political Committee, the advantages, in providing considerably more prepared and authoritative information for Members of the Parliament, would be substantial and valuable.

The Chairman of Foreign Ministers should ensure that answers to written questions should not be unreasonably delayed or withheld. It has been known for seven months to elapse before receipt of an answer. If Members are to participate more fully when events are moving fast, they must have more rapid answers particularly on factual matters.

The subject matter of questions to which an answer may be expected from the Chairman of Foreign Ministers was discussed during the plenary session of Parliament on 17th December 1980 at Question Time¹⁷. In view of the uncertainties on this matter, it was proposed that the Bureau of the Parliament should consider what questions can be submitted to the Foreign Ministers replying on EPC matters and that a member of the Council should attend that discussion. Your rapporteur suggests that this matter be handled by the President-in-Office and the President of the Parliament with a view to obtaining more satisfactory answers from the Chairman of Foreign Ministers.

(c) The Annual Debate on EPC

The annual debate held on the oral report given by the Presidency on political cooperation represents another major contact between Parliament and EPC. Since 1973 the chairman of the Foreign Ministers has replied to a debate in Parliament on his statement.

Although the annual debate held by Parliament on EPC is a useful and stimulating exercise, Members of Parliament find it difficult to prepare their contribution to the debate circumstances in which they have to discuss, immediately, an oral report by the President-in-Office. The Blumenfeld Report and the accompanying resolution adopted by Parliament in January 1978 proposed that it would be a great improvement if written report on EPC were made available, in all working languages, a month before the

debate. As Mr Blumenfeld has concluded: “This would permit a more considered appreciation by members of the work of the foreign ministers, which in turn would produce a more balanced and informed debate.” A month in politics is a very long time. Your rapporteur suggests that a statement issued a fortnight before the debate would be a reasonable period of time, as long as it is adhered to by the President-in-Office. She therefore hopes that members of the Political Affairs Committee will agree to urge the foreign ministers to implement this proposal as amended.

At this point it seems useful to mention the proposal made by Belgian Socialist members of the Political Affairs Committee that a discussion should be held every six months, when a new Presidency takes over, on a paper which sets out the presidency’s objectives for EPC during this term of office. This proposal is supported by your rapporteur, who urges its implementation.

(d) Urgency Motions for Debate

During the plenary part sessions of the Parliament, members debate motions for a resolution under the urgency procedure allowed by Rule 14 of the present Rules of Procedure of the Parliament. Many, if not all, of these resolutions concern issues of foreign policy and in such cases the President of Parliament is requested to forward the adopted texts to the Foreign Ministers acting in political cooperation. It should no longer be acceptable for an elected Parliament to correspond with Foreign Ministers at ‘second hand’. The Chairman of Foreign Ministers or his deputy should be requested to attend these debates; to hear the views of the Parliament and, wherever possible, reply, at least on the facts, as presented in the resolution, even if he is not able to state the political position of the Ten on the issue. If, however, Parliament were to make this request, the timetable of Parliament’s proceedings must be such that the Foreign Minister or his deputy is not expected to waste time waiting for the Parliament’s agenda to be implemented. The following proposals’ are therefore put forward in regard to attendance of the President-in-Office at the part-session of Parliament, so that the maximum cooperation and minimum of frustration may hopefully be achieved.

(e) Attendance of the President-in-Office, Chairman of Foreign Ministers, at Parliament’s part-sessions.

Questions to the foreign ministers are normally taken on the Wednesday of each part-session during the one-and-a-half hour period allowed for question time, one hour of which is set aside in principle for questions to the Council and half an hour for questions for the foreign ministers. This fits in with the tradition that the Wednesday of each part-session is “Council day” on which all business directly concerning the council is transacted. However, Parliament now finds it extremely difficult to fit in, on Wednesday, all items directly concerning the Council – quite apart from EPC items. Thus in September 1979 Parliament’s agenda had to be drastically altered during the course of Wednesday itself to the annoyance of many members and others. It would therefore seem desirable for the President-in-Office or his deputy to attend Parliament’s session not only on Wednesday but also during all or part of the Thursday of the session. This would present two advantages. First, agenda items concerning the Council could be taken on the Wednesday and the Chairman of the foreign ministers would be available to meet Parliament’s Political Affairs Committee in order to brief them on the most recent discussions on EPC held by the foreign ministers at meetings “en marge du Conseil” or at separate informal meetings of the Schloss Gymnich type. If members of the committee agreed with this suggestion an approach would have to be made to the Bureau which, in view of the problems of administration and interpretation, tries to limit as far as possible committee meetings held during part-sessions, to authorise the holding of meetings of this kind during sessions. If the chairman of the foreign ministers himself is not available to brief the Political Affairs Committee on Thursday he could be replaced by his deputy. The urgency motions - see (d) above - on foreign policy matters (or on other matters of concern to the Council) should be placed at the head of the agenda for the Thursday morning. If this procedure were to be accepted Parliament would also have to give an undertaking to adhere to the agenda and the timetable laid down.

(f) Parliament and New Policies in EPC

Your rapporteur is well aware that national parliaments do not, traditionally, play a major role in the formulation of national foreign policy. This is a task left to the Foreign Minister and his officials, and although major issues of foreign affairs are debated by national parliaments there exists only a limited possibility of their being able to shape their country's foreign policy. Nonetheless there is accountability from the Foreign Minister to his national parliament through question time, and foreign policy is one of the issues on which the record of his government is judged when the time comes for national elections.

Although the European Parliament has established links with EPC - the beginnings of a European foreign policy - through the colloquy and through question time, it, like national parliaments, has little possibility of contributing to the shaping of joint policies of the Ten as expressed through EPC. But on major issues dealt with in EPC we have seen extremely far reaching and dramatic changes in the collective policy of the Ten, as, for instance, the increasing importance placed by the Ten on the rights of Palestinians and the recognition of the PLO as an interlocuteur valable for the Nine. Both the European Parliament and the peoples of the Ten have been confronted with a fait accompli in this case which they have been unable to alter. Your rapporteur wishes, therefore, to raise the problem of the accountability of the Minister and officials responsible for such shifts in the substantive policies of the Ten, with a view to requesting suggestions, from members of the Political Affairs Committee as to how and to what extent the European Parliament might be able to debate important new shifts of policy within EPC. One idea might be, for example, for the Political Affairs Committee to convene to its meetings senior officials responsible for the conduct of the Euro Arab dialogue so as to permit exchange of views before and after each meeting of the General Committee of the Euro-Arab Dialogue in which Members of the Parliament could be informed as to proposed policy developments and could express their views concerning them.

CHAPTER 9- INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Even if the Ten do not manage to agree in the near future, to move from their present coordination of some aspects of foreign policy to the development of a common foreign policy the need to improve the infrastructure of EPC still remains. Your rapporteur understands the reasons that have, over the years, led national foreign ministries to oppose the creation of anything in the nature of a permanent secretariat for EPC.

It is natural that officials of foreign ministries, who are trained career diplomats, believe that they themselves are those who are the most competent to conduct EPC business and it is quite natural that they should wish the present system to continue. Further, it is understandable that the Foreign Ministers themselves should confidently entrust the handling of EPC affairs to those who work for them in the foreign ministries in their home capitals. Since EPC has not been considered to be a Community activity as such, but, rather, a "parallel" intergovernmental activity of the Ten, it is understandable also that until now some Foreign Ministers and some civil servants may have considered the traditional structure of EPC to be adequate.

Those who consider the present form of EPC satisfactory argue that "the informality and flexibility of EPC procedures have proved to be a source of strength and not of weakness". It is also argued that "An administrative secretariat, detached from the Community, would accentuate the dual structure of the present European edifice - Community and intergovernmental. Above all, it would weaken what has turned out to be one of EPC's most important secrets of success, namely the identity of persons responsible for the European as well as the national systems of deciding foreign policy."¹⁸

Your rapporteur's comment is that EPC is now in very much greater need of continuity and the ability to react immediately and appropriately to world events than it is of "informality and flexibility." Further, your rapporteur sees a permanent secretariat for EPC as a bridge between the community and what has been up to now the purely intergovernmental structure of EPC, so providing a useful step towards blending the Community and the extra-Community activities of the Ten. It could do much to bring about a more coherent and efficient system of liaison between EPC and the institutions of the Community.

In the third place, your rapporteur would point out that in each country those at present responsible for deciding national and European foreign policy would remain one and the same: the only change that an EPC secretariat would introduce would be that it, rather than the foreign ministry of the country holding the presidency for six months, would coordinate EPC in a continuous and coherent way. Your rapporteur does not criticise or question the efficiency and competence of the national foreign office officials who, under the foreign ministers and the political directors, conduct EPC business, but the infrastructure of EPC is not adequate. In particular it lacks continuity and permanence. There is no permanent secretariat, with all the bureaucratic aids this implies. The political directors and those who help them to run EPC do this in their separate national capitals, flying into meetings and then returning home a few hours later. Thus EPC is inevitably a slow moving and clumsy mechanism. Despite the sophisticated communications system operated by the foreign ministers, they or their representatives can only meet to discuss and react to new developments in the world situation in fits and starts. Sudden and dramatic events and crises such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, or the change of regime in Iran to which reference has been made already in this Report, find the Ten unprepared, off balance and unable to provide an appropriate reaction immediately.

The Committee of Three, in their report on European Institutions implied that some kind of continuing administrative structure for EPC would be a most useful development. Having referred to the lack of a permanent secretariat for EPC and having stressed that “even for the largest state, to run the PoCo (EPC) machine effectively at full capacity means a considerable drain on resources. While we do not wish to go into the possibilities in detail, it is clear that any such improvements in PoCo administration would make it easier for each State to shoulder the tasks of the Presidency as a whole and would serve the general aim we have in view.”

Mr Philippe de Schoutheete in his book “La Cooperation Politique Européenne”¹⁹ states in his conclusions: “If one assigns to political cooperation the ambitious aim of a common foreign policy developing within the framework of a confederative concept, in liaison with other policies leading to a European Union, it is clearly an illusion to believe that this can be achieved without any form of specific structure. The Presidency alone, changing every six months and making use of a few officials who are normally employed in other duties, cannot suffice. Whatever its name might be, an administrative structure should be created to ensure continuity, to provide dynamism, to contribute to thinking on foreign policy and, above all, to permit organised coordination with the other aspects of European activity. This administrative structure could be small and flexible, and might be dependent upon the Member States but, in one form or another, it must exist.”²⁰

Your rapporteur is convinced that at the very least a permanent office with a small technical staff should be established in one community capital or city. This staff should have the responsibility of preparing and following up meetings of the Foreign Ministers, the Political Directors and EPC working parties and would prepare, according to political instruction’s received, agendas, convocations, minutes and other working documents. It should also be responsible for keeping all the records and archives of EPC meetings.

Lord Carrington, in his Hamburg speech²¹ recognised the need for better organisation than existed at present. Foreign Ministers need an experienced foreign policy staff who, he suggested, could be seconded temporarily from Member states. It was not necessary for there to be a large staff, but they should be ‘of high quality.’ Your rapporteur supports this proposal from Lord Carrington and believes that establishment of this staff should be a priority for Member states. There are various options as to how these officials should be recruited and where they should have their office. They could be drawn mainly from the Foreign Ministries of the Ten and meet in Brussels, or at least to start with, in the capital of the Presidency for the time being.

This initiative would do something practical to get EPC beyond the present situation which, it must be said, has made some progress not so much because of the will of the Community’s governments, but because of the external pressures of events outside the Community. But a skeleton or framework staff of this kind would only constitute the bare minimum of what our rapporteur believes is really needed. In paragraphs 25-30 of his report on EPC, Mr Blumenfeld made a number of proposals concerning the creation of a Political Cooperation Office.²² According to Mr Blumenfeld the office could, administratively “be responsible to the

Secretary General of the Council, but politically it should work on the instructions of the Foreign Ministers and possibly on the instructions of the European Council. It would be funded from the Community Budget. It would work equally closely with the Council and the Commission, either by supplying representatives to Committees and working groups of COREPER and the Commission, or by inviting representatives of these bodies to attend its own working units. The Office would normally establish a working group to cover each of the principal fields in which a common foreign policy or coordinated action by the Member States had been achieved or was necessary. The office should be cited at Brussels. The Office would replace the present EPC machinery at the level of officials. In order to emphasise the shift towards the development of a foreign policy for the Community the Office should recruit staff on a different basis from that of the present Political Committee. Senior officials should continue to be drawn from the national Foreign Ministries. There could be an advisory role for expert observers of Community foreign affairs to assist with policy studies in specific fields or on defence.”

If, as your rapporteur hopes, the governments of the Ten are prepared to go further than the first and minimalist option she has suggested above, she urges that they should give serious consideration to the Blumenfeld proposals and to envisage the creation of a Political Cooperation Office of the type envisaged by him. Although she considers that Brussels would be the most functional site for a Political Cooperation Office, your rapporteur firmly believes that it is more important to establish a Political Cooperation Office quickly in one or other city than to make the site a sticking point and to postpone the creation of such an office because of disagreement on the site.

CHAPTER 10 - A NEW REPORT ON EPC

The Copenhagen Report on EPC followed the Luxembourg report after an interval of three years. A further interval of seven years has passed during which time we have seen enormous changes in world affairs and a considerable growth in the foreign policy activities of the Ten as expressed through EPC. A number of dramatic events have caught the Ten unprepared and unable to provide an immediate and appropriate response. Further, in remarkably few cases have the foreign policy moves of the Ten been “creative” rather than “reactive”. Your rapporteur is convinced, therefore, that the time has come for a new Report on EPC and that the European Council should request the Foreign Ministers to submit to them, before the end of 1981, a third report on political cooperation.

Your rapporteur considers that the views and recommendations of the European Parliament concerning EPC, as expressed in the Blumenfeld report and in the present report, should be fully taken into account in the preparation of a third report on EPC. Your rapporteur also considers that the new report should pay particular attention to the need to establish an adequate institutional infrastructure for EPC so as to enable the Foreign Ministers:

- (a) to react immediately and appropriately to urgent events in world politics; and
- (b) to transform the basically “reactive” foreign policy moves of the Nine into a more positive and creative series of foreign policy initiatives.
- (c) to make an effective link between the economic strength of the Community and foreign policy.²³

A third report on EPC must also take into account the significant institutional changes that have come about since the approval of the Copenhagen Report, notably the creation and institutionalisation of the European Council and the transformation of the European Parliament from a nominated into an elected body.

Your rapporteur considers it essential that a third report on EPC should contain detailed proposals concerning the development of a new and close relationship between the European Parliament and EPC.

Your rapporteur accepts that the preparation of a report, to be adopted unanimously, might be subject to delay. Therefore, your rapporteur proposes that Foreign Ministers should in any case be requested to look urgently at new and more efficacious mechanism for handling EPC. The result of such inquiry, which could

include more than one option, should take into account proposals contained in the report of Mr Blumenfeld and this report. The results of the Foreign Ministers' inquiry should be discussed at the earliest possible time between the Chairman of Foreign Ministers and the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

CHAPTER 11 – CONCLUSIONS

Your rapporteur has already set out, in the text of this report, the arguments that have led her to arrive at a number of conclusions. This chapter, therefore, simply sets out some specific proposals concerning EPC and the European Parliament's relationship with it which are based on the arguments contained in the previous chapters.

First, the Foreign Ministers should be asked to produce proposals for improving the machinery of EPC, including alternatives, and could be discussed in the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

Second, your rapporteur proposes that the Foreign Ministers establish a third report on political cooperation. This report should be approved by the Foreign Ministers and submitted to the European Council before the end of 1981. The European Parliament should be consulted by the Foreign Ministers concerning the contents of the report, through the colloquy, and the report should, in your rapporteur's view, be referred by the European Council to the European Parliament for its opinion before the European Council takes final decisions concerning its recommendations.

Third, the Foreign Ministers should, already, before a third report on political cooperation is drawn up, implement the main proposals contained in the European Parliament's resolution²⁴ of January 1978 which accompanied Mr Blumenfeld's report on EPC. In particular, the Foreign Ministers should agree, forthwith, that the annual report on EPC submitted to Parliament should take the form of a written document which should be made available to Parliament in all official languages, a month - or at least a fortnight - before the annual debate on EPC.

Fourth, your rapporteur considers that a chapter of a third report on political cooperation should set out proposals, by the Foreign Ministers, as to how the Ten could move, during the 1980's, from the present harmonisation or coordination of agreed aspects of foreign policy to the formulation and application of a common foreign policy at least in certain mutually agreed areas.

Fifth, your rapporteur proposes that the quarterly colloquy held between Parliament's Political Affairs Committee and the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation should be reorganised as far as its form is concerned according to the suggestions she has set out in chapter 8 of the present report. She considers that the reorganisation of the colloquy should be carried through as soon as possible, before the establishment of a third report on political cooperation. If, however, the Foreign Ministers are not prepared to agree to changes concerning the colloquy immediately this matter should be the subject of a chapter of a third report on political cooperation.

Sixth, quite apart from the reorganisation of the old colloquy, your rapporteur proposes that a number of improvements be made to other contacts between the European Parliament and the EPC. These should include:

- (a) the presentation of a report to Parliament twice a year, once during each Presidency, by the President of the European Council, including foreign policy matters falling within EPC;
- (b) steps or measures to improve the quality and speed of answers to Parliamentary Questions concerning EPC, including a breakdown of different standpoints on EPC subjects;
- (c) the attendance by the President-in-Office of the Council at Parliament's part session during part of the Thursday morning in order to reply to the motions for resolutions debated on matters of urgency (under the Rule 14 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure) falling within EPC;
- (d) the submission of a paper or a statement by the new Presidency at the beginning of the six-month period

of office, setting out the Presidency's objectives for EPC during this period: and
(e) the agreement of the Foreign Ministers to give serious consideration to proposals by the European Parliament, particularly through the colloquy, concerning specific subjects to deal with by them in EPC.

Your rapporteur hopes that these proposals can be implemented in the immediate future but, once again, if the Foreign Ministers are reluctant to act forthwith the present suggestions should be studied within the context of the preparation of a third report on political cooperation.

Seventh, a mechanism whereby any three member states can demand the convening of a meeting of the Ten within forty-eight hours, on grounds of an existing crisis should be introduced immediately.

Eighth, your rapporteur proposes that the Defence Ministers of the Ten should take part at all meetings of the Foreign Ministers at which the subject-matter has significant security implications. Further, your rapporteur suggests that officials from national defence ministries should regularly attend meetings within the framework of EPC so as to ensure liaison between national foreign and defence ministries concerning major developments in world affairs directly affecting the security of the Ten.

Ninth, your rapporteur proposes that all relevant resolutions of the European Parliament should be drawn to the attention of the permanent missions of the Ten at New York and, where relevant, to the UN General Assembly by the delegations of the Ten particularly by that of the Presidency. Your rapporteur also suggests that the governments of the Ten should, where possible, explore the possibility of appointing appropriate members of the European Parliament as members of their national delegations to the UN.

Tenth, your rapporteur proposes that the Foreign Ministers should agree to admit the Commission to all parts of all EPC meetings.

Eleventh, appropriate measures for improving consultation between the foreign Ministers of the Ten and the diplomatic representatives of the US and Japan should be proposed.

Twelfth, the distinction between the meetings of the General Council (at the level of Foreign Ministers) and those of Foreign Ministers meeting in Political Cooperation should be dropped.

Thirteenth, there should be changes in procedure to enable closer political control by the Foreign Ministers of the Community's policies concerning both external economic relations and developing countries.

Finally, the Member States of the Community should renew their commitment, to speak with one voice on external matters of vital concern to the Community.

1) Bull, EC 11-1970

2) Bull, EC 12-1973

3) The motion for resolution attached to the Report as contained in Annex I.

4) So-called because it was created as a result of the first Report on Political Cooperation, which was drafted by a committee chaired by Vicomte Davignon, then Political Director of the Belgian Foreign Ministry. Vicomte Davignon also chaired the committee which drafted the second report on political cooperation and procedures used under EPC are often referred to as "Davignon procedures".

5) Whether at the level of the Nine itself or representing the view-point of the Nine within the Atlantic Alliance.

6) Otto von der Gablentz: "Luxembourg revisited or the importance of European Political Cooperation", Common Market Law Review, November 1979. At the time he wrote the article the author was Assistant Undersecretary at the Bundeskanzleramt.

7) The following chapter of the report is devoted to a more detailed analysis of the role of the Nine in the UN.

8) Relating to trade and investment.

9) Report on European Union from Ministers of Foreign Affairs to the European Council, 24 November 1980.

10) Beate Lindemann, "Europe and the Third World: the Nine at the UN", The World Today, July 1976.

11) In which France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and Canada, Japan and the US take part.

12) Common Market Law Review, November 1979. "Luxembourg revisited or the importance of EPC".

13) See Chapter II, Section B of Doc 481/75

14) See Doc 427/77

- 15) Lord Carrington, in his speech to the Uebersee Club in Hamburg on 17th November 1980.
- 16) Consideration must be given to the special position of the President of the French Republic.
- 17) Rainbow, EP, for 17th December 1980, pp. 188-189.
- 18) von der Gabletz: "Luxembourg revisited or the importance of European Political Cooperation."
- 19) NATHAN (Paris) and LABOR (Bruxelles), 1980, page 175. Rapporteur's translation.
- 20) Mr de Schoutheete is Chef de Cabinet of the Belgian Foreign Minister, Mr NOTHOMB, and has been closely involved in EPC for a number of years.
- 21) op.cit.
- 22) These proposals were not put to the vote in the form of a draft resolution before the Political Affairs Committee at the time.
- 23) See Lord Soames' speech, 4th December 1980 in Paris "Europe in the world of tomorrow."
- 24) Annex I.