

'What is required of the EEC', from Süddeutsche Zeitung (18 April 1970)

Caption: On 18 and 19 April 1970, the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung outlines the implications of establishing European Political Cooperation (EPC).

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. DÜRRMEIER, Hans ; Herausgeber PROEBST, Hermann. 18-19.04.1970, n° 93. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Was von der EWG verlangt wird", auteur:Fackler, Maxim , p. 4.

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What is required of the EEC

By Maxim Fackler

Europe does not consist only of the European Economic Community, but it does nevertheless consist predominantly of it. Of course, it is possible to find politicians and commentators who would prefer to reverse this statement. They would then claim that Europe finds its expression predominantly in the EEC, but naturally not only in it. This would be a shift in emphasis, of the kind not exactly to cause the EEC real harm, but nevertheless to detract from its aura that there could be no flourishing development on our continent without it.

Those who would reverse the statement, however, actually spur on the EEC to produce evidence that, without any tangible development of the nucleus of Europe, which is how the EEC sees itself, everything else would necessarily have to progress at least more slowly. Both forms of the statement entail a recognition that no one is now able to imagine a world without the Community. It is now almost impossible to envisage how it would be if the Community had still to be founded today. The world is so full of urgent problems that it would not be at all easy at present for any initiative to be taken with a view to the foundation of the Community, although it would be recognised as something that was necessary. During these years of transitions and of powerful movements it is good to have the EEC as a point of order.

The babble of European voices

So, we Europeans are more than satisfied that the EEC exists. We also have reason, once again, to build upon it, since the six states meeting at the summit conference in The Hague have pulled themselves together and managed to snap out of the gloomy mood that had taken hold. The EEC is now in the process of taking the fundamental success of the summit conference and going into greater detail. Early next week, the full complement of the Council of Ministers is to meet with the Foreign Ministers in order to take a very significant step: the timetable for the run-up to enlargement is to be established. The Community is now feeling so secure again that it can approach its enlargement with equanimity. It is true that the wine market still has to be regulated and that the conflict there — between the quality and quantity of the bottles, as it were — has to be settled. If this question still remains just as open at the beginning of the week as the Agriculture Ministers left it, then, although the Council of Ministers cannot allow itself to be delayed in establishing a timetable, its programme for negotiations would then be encumbered by the proviso that it would not really be effective until after there has been a peace agreement on the wine question.

In The Hague, the EEC decided to enter into negotiations in the middle of the year on the acceptance of new members, and it must keep its word. The Council of Ministers has to establish the common platform of the Six with the minimum and maximum conditions that are to be submitted to the applicants. The applicants have to make a commitment to the Rome Treaties and to everything that the EEC has established in the approximately ten years of its existence. Just as the EEC intends to keep its word, it is also taking the British at their word, namely that they do desire to be accepted as members. The new wave of British aversion towards accession to the Community is not being officially recognised in Brussels or at the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg. During the years of the negotiations — and they will last for years — it will be left to the British Government to straighten things out with their own citizens, with their farmers and with their housewives, who are afraid that there will be price rises. The Council of Ministers is listening to the plea from the Minister for Europe, George Thomson, and not to the Cabinet Minister, Peter Shore, who had expressed the opinion that Britain could just as well stay out of the EEC as go in.

It is not easy to ascertain what is likely to cause more difficulty for the Council of Ministers: to establish the procedure for negotiations with the applicants or to initiate closer political cooperation in the Community. And this is the second very important topic for the Council of Ministers. Superficially, it is a matter of introducing consultations or regular meetings of the Six about the establishment of a joint secretariat or something similar. However, it is essentially about the single voice for Europe. The call for Europe to speak 'with one voice' has been ringing in our ears for almost a quarter of a century now. The Europeans themselves have let the call ring out, Europe's partners have given their agreement and, in some instances,

returned the call with even more force. There was the 'de Gaulle' period, during which he admittedly could not say that Europe was behind him but when he was regarded externally as the personification of Europe. This was not what was meant by the 'one voice', especially since France wanted to maintain a presence throughout the world to an extent that Europe as a whole had not envisaged.

Speaking with a single voice means seeing the interests of Europe coordinated and representing them — for which purpose it would almost be appropriate to compile a catalogue of these interests. The Foreign Ministers of the EEC should now really make a start on something of this kind, at a moment when there are again the beginnings of whisperings in Western Europe, this time about the Federal Republic. Willy Brandt's visit to the United States caused some consternation, for example among the French of various persuasions. It is really surprising that the French, who are once again looking anxiously across the Rhine, seem not to have sufficient self-confidence and immediately sense alarming historical turns of event in the ups and downs of the balance in Europe.

The first signs of political cooperation

The reasons why the EEC must acquire a shape politically, in foreign policy, are quite obvious. Even the dispute over trade policy between the EEC and America has a political side, because it provides information about how loudly Washington wants to hear the single voice of Europe, how strong the partner should, in its opinion, be. One highly political matter, on the other hand, is the preparation for a European security conference, which will come some time, although it is hardly likely to take place this year. However, this year, political cooperation within the EEC will at best be able to make its first mark in Europe. The term 'European security' covers détente, policy towards Eastern Europe and defence. The EEC Council of Ministers is still a long way from being able to coordinate policy towards Eastern Europe; it can simply prepare for how coordination might be achieved. It can also consider how to ensure that Great Britain, as a presumptive member of the Community, is in a position from the outset to contribute its own ideas.

We harbour certain expectations, but we do not push them too high. It is not the right time to promote the European Federal State with any great justification. The conditions are not even right for a confederation. Of course, we may certainly demand of the EEC that it does not behave as if it wishes to work against a confederation or a federal state. If all the six countries make it known that they are doing their utmost to leave nationalism behind, we may then — almost — be satisfied.