

'Delors: the GDR, the thirteenth guest at the table' from L'Express (26 January 1990)

Caption: On 26 January 1990, the French weekly magazine L'Express analyses the points made by Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, who is calling for the GDR to become the 13th member of the European Communities.

Source: Les Cahiers de l'Express. 1985-1995: 10 ans d'Europe. De l'Acte unique à l'Union des Quinze: la décennie Delors. dir. de publ. SAMPERMANS, Françoise. Février 1995, n° 31. Paris: Groupe Express. "Delors: la RDA treizième à table", auteur:Louyot, Alain , p. 47-48.

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Delors: the GDR, the thirteenth guest at the table

The Commission President remains adamant: the Community cannot ignore the ‘other’ Germans

Like all pioneers, Jacques Delors is sometimes misunderstood. That is why the European Commission President this week expressed ‘some disappointment’ on the day after the meeting of EEC Foreign Ministers last weekend in Dublin. On Tuesday evening, in front of the TV cameras filming *Moment of Truth*, as he explained ‘his’ vision of a Federal Europe ‘by the end of the millennium’, he had to summon up all his passion and persuasive powers in order to answer his critics.

‘It is too early’, was how most of the Twelve responded, as Jacques Delors, in Ireland, came back to the idea that he had put forward a few days earlier at the European Parliament in Strasbourg about the need to take into account East Germany’s application to become the thirteenth Member State of the Community. Hans Van den Broek, the Netherlands Foreign Minister, more forthright than his European colleagues, said that East Germany was far from fulfilling the relevant criteria and that, in any case, Austria had submitted its application first.

The impromptu meeting in Dublin was not one of discord, however. The Twelve unanimously approved 515 million francs in emergency aid for Poland and Romania. They also approved the plan for a phased conversion of the existing and planned economic cooperation agreements with the countries of Eastern Europe that are moving towards democracy into ‘association agreements’ that establish political links.

Even more significant was their agreement to convene a CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) Summit in 1990, as Mikhail Gorbachev had proposed. That Summit, which might take place next autumn in Paris, will be attended by 35 Heads of State and will strive to define the new face of Europe.

The only remaining stumbling block was East Germany. To understand Delors’ disappointment, we have to consider his reasoning, which may be summarised as follows: European integration will take place with the full participation of the Germans, or it will not take place at all. That is why it must be made an attractive proposition for them. That was the aim of the keynote speech given by the Commission President in Strasbourg. The novel element in that long speech was the appeal for a strengthening of the powers of European institutions, particularly those of the European Parliament. In West Germany, this is a better rallying cry than economic and monetary union. The idea of a ‘federal-type’ Community, embracing East Germany, is also likely to please the Germans, who are hoping for reunification within a European framework. After a private dinner with Jacques Delors last Wednesday at Chez René, one of the Commission President’s favourite restaurants on the Boulevard St Germain, a beaming Chancellor Kohl left, promising the owner that he would come back soon for a longer visit. Delors’ European critics will be busy with speculation once again.

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