

# ‘The right kind of political union’ from L’Europe en formation


**Caption:** In its summer 1990 edition, the federalist journal L’Europe en formation reports on the Dublin European Council of 25 and 26 June 1990 and emphasises the need for the Europe of the Twelve to pursue a common foreign policy if it is to establish its presence in the world.

**Source:** L’Europe en formation. Eté 1990, n° 278. Nice. "Ne pas se tromper d'union politique", p. 3-5.

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## The right kind of political union

### Editorial

The Dublin European Council on 25 and 26 June saw the start of discussions on political union at the level of Heads of State or Government. A new stage has begun, and we shall have ample opportunity to analyse its implications in the months to come. But we must tread carefully: political union is inherently a decisive issue, and the governments have been systematically avoiding it for years.

After such a long wait, nothing would do greater harm to Europe's future prospects than to go for the wrong kind of political union. If Europe is to meet the challenges of the end of the 20th century, in a world of rapid and far-reaching change, the Twelve must be clear about their constitutional objective and the means to be employed in order to achieve it (in particular, what role will the European Parliament play?).

The approach in this respect is similar to that adopted on economic and monetary union, when it was decided that real economic and monetary union was impossible without a European system of central banks, irrevocably fixed exchange rates between the European currencies, and the pooling of reserve funds.

The same applies to political union. Are we aiming at the federal union which the European Parliament and the President of the Commission want, with a European government competent in all areas in which the nation state can no longer fully meet the challenges of the age — starting with the economic and monetary challenges, but also those raised by the technological revolution, foreign policy, security and defence? If that is our aim, we can talk about achieving it in stages. If, on the other hand, the aim is to preserve the sovereignty of the individual states and simply devise more mechanisms for concerted action and cooperation between them, then there is no point in stages and transitions: the elements of a new pact are within the diplomats' immediate reach. That would mean, of course, that there will be no real progress in European integration.

In which case we may well lastingly undermine — with Mrs Thatcher's blessing — the judicious institutional balances that account for the success of the Community since 9 May 1950, and the fact that celebrations have recently been held to mark its 40th anniversary. What we shall have then is a second edition of the Single Act. Once again, the promise of political union will end in an anticlimax, and *The Economist* will be free to continue poking fun at General 'Jacques de Gaulle'.

Recent events in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union show the absolute need for unified, coherent action by the Community in today's world.

Europe cannot hope to play its proper role in the international community of today without a common policy on external affairs, security and — at least in the longer term — defence. We have political cooperation, of course, but let's be serious ... If, as the Strasbourg European Council declared at the end of December 1989, the Community is to play its full role as a 'point of reference', the 'cornerstone of a new European architecture' and a 'mooring for a future European equilibrium', the Twelve must drop their platonic diplomacy of insipid political cooperation, whose impact on world affairs is of no real concern to anyone and is as negligible, or even more negligible, than the resolutions of the United Nations.

Among other things, the European Community must be capable of formulating and imposing a single European 'Ostpolitik'. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are seeking association with the European Community, and at least three of them — Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia — will become members within ten years, following in the footsteps of the GDR, which will join the Community by way of the Federal Republic.

The European Community must pursue a single development policy with regard to the countries of the South. It would be laughable to suppose that the machinery provided by the Lomé Convention will suffice to prevent a general worsening of the situation in Africa. It would also be ridiculous to believe that agreements with the Mediterranean countries will suffice to solve the conflicts between countries of the southern and

eastern Mediterranean. The deteriorating social and economic situation (and the political situation in the case of Israel and the Palestinians in recent months) is a threat to the security of the Community. Sub-Saharan Africa is highly unstable. The Maghreb, on our doorstep, is becoming infected by Islamic fundamentalism and, helped by a galloping birth-rate, Algeria at least is plunging into a major social crisis.

The European Community must pursue a unified policy towards the State of Israel and the Palestinians. While Yitzhak Shamir imposes his cabinet of 'hawks', European Political Cooperation contents itself with noting simply that 'the status quo in the Occupied Territories is untenable'.

Finally, the European Community must reformulate a long-term policy on the United States and the Atlantic Alliance, aimed at updating and revamping the whole set of existing relations between the two shores of the North Atlantic. Although Europeans and Americans have been talking about 'partnership' for years, it is striking that the new arrangement for consultation between the President of the United States, Mr Bush, and the President of the Commission, Mr Delors, is the outcome of a very recent initiative.

It would be illogical if Mr Mitterrand's proposal for a grand European confederation were to include the Soviet Union but exclude the United States and Canada, which are full members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), unless we make other arrangements to strengthen our permanent links with those great democracies, whose security depends on ours, as ours does on theirs.

These are a few examples among many. The important thing is that the Twelve should at last give themselves the means to ensure that the European Union plays a major role on the world stage.

L'Europe en formation