

Interview with Gaston Thorn: the European Parliamentary Assembly (Luxembourg, 6 February 2006)

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[Étienne Deschamps] In 1959, you were elected a Liberal Member of the Luxembourg Parliament and you then held a seat for nearly ten years in the European Parliamentary Assembly, which was later to change its name to the European Parliament. In that period, what was the nature of the Assembly's activities, what was its role and its possible influence on the evolution of Community issues?

[Gaston Thorn] At that time, the Assembly spoke of everything and nothing; it did not have much influence. The most important thing about it was its name and the fact of its being a European Assembly but, apart from that, it did not motivate anyone and was regarded with indifference.

[Étienne Deschamps] Did your colleagues in the Luxembourg Parliament not attach any importance to the fact that some of them were appointed as delegates to Strasbourg? Was it considered as an additional activity or...?

[Gaston Thorn] It was considered as an additional activity. No one gave much importance to our European mandate.

[Étienne Deschamps] But, nonetheless, had it already formed your views on Community issues?

[Gaston Thorn] A little.

[Étienne Deschamps] Like an apprenticeship?

[Gaston Thorn] Yes, of course. Let us say that contact with other 'European' representatives had an influence. I felt that I was a member of — I would not call it a certain caste — but a certain group.