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THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION
AND THE FUTURE OF EPC

by

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In November 1984, the EPU, in collaboration with the Institut für Europäische Politik, organised a workshop on the future of European Political Cooperation, attended by scholars, politicians, and diplomats. This Working Paper represents a compilation of some of the contributions made at this workshop, including the keynote paper by Dr. Regelsberger.

Further information about the work of the European Policy Unit can be obtained from the Director, at the European University Institute in Florence.

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EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION (EPC)

Contacts With Third Countries: Past and Present

by

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I. EPC as a central element of Western Europe's external posture

What is the nature of West-European (and in particular the EC countries') external relations? Do nation-states and forms of traditional diplomacy still dominate the scene or have competences been transferred to a single (supranational) organ acting on behalf of its members? The answer will be: there is a complex and even growing network of individual activities and common representation, the components of which vary with "internal" West European interests and needs as well as "external" challenges and developments.

The importance of EPC within this framework of common, coordinated and national steps in foreign policy may be discussed differently depending on the observer's perspective (integrationist view or protagonist of intergovernmentalism). No one, however, can deny that almost 15 years of consultations by EC Member States on a wide range of international questions and fixed procedures made EPC a central element of West European foreign policy making. The cooperation of the former six and today ten governments reached a "plateau"¹⁾ of common viewpoints and actions which serves national interests in an interdependent international system that still leaves room for individual foreign policy. Its institutional setting is far more refined than those of other West European fora (e.g. Western European Union; Council of Europe), offering direct and frequent contacts between the ten governments and in particular the diplomatic staff both on ministerial and official level.

There is no need to go into the limitations of political cooperation here (see the contributions of Ph. de Schoutheete and S. Nuttall in this working paper). Suggestions on how to reach "external identity"²⁾ are an essential part of the current debate on institutional reforms within European circles. Tendencies towards a variable geometry in EPC matters, it seems, will be strengthened soon as several EC member governments refuse to follow those partners favouring a common foreign policy in the context of the future European

Union. Because "speaking with one voice" à Dix and soon à Douze will prove to be laborious, smaller multilateral groupings but also forms of "multiple bilateralism"³⁾ may grow in importance. In any case, EPC will neither substitute individual national foreign policies nor particularly stimulate European integration.

Academics and government officials alike have long followed the EC countries' steps towards a coordinated foreign policy in terms of EPC's procedures and the outcomes of consultations, i.e. without raising the question of the status of EPC in relation to other levels and forms of a concerted foreign policy in Western Europe and of the importance of EPC as a means of foreign policy making compared with others as seen from the ten capitals. Attention has also been paid to the links between EPC and Community structures, which are seen as "beneficial"⁴⁾ to European coherence in world politics.

To assess Europe's international role a comprehensive approach seems to be more promising than an analysis of the different fora at stake in isolation. In this context, the question of how third countries see "European" foreign policy undoubtedly is of major value, as the Ten's weight in the international system will largely depend on how third countries perceive and evaluate the importance of this new actor. Even more so because the distinction between EC, EPC and other forms of West European cooperation may be sometimes alien to outside observers. Is Europe already perceived as a unity in both economic and political terms? To what extent do third countries react to EPC and Community structures compared with traditional bilateral links to EC Member States? Are they satisfied with the existing mechanisms for getting in touch with the Ten?

Before some patterns of outside perceptions of this "fluid" Europe⁵⁾ are presented here (point IV), it might be helpful to ask, first of all: what are EPC contacts with third countries about? In short (details will be elaborated in point III): the answer is at least twofold. Talking about the "external relations" of the Ten means

- * the network of daily "diplomatic trade" between the group of EC Member States traditionally represented by the Presidency (in various formations and on different levels) and non-EC countries, i.e. the rest of the world. Contacts usually take place both in the European capitals and abroad on an ad hoc and informal basis;
- * the system of more institutionalized forms of contacts between the Ten and a selected group of states outside the Community borders - originally allied and other "Western oriented" countries; today the group includes also Third World countries and in particular specific groupings of them. Contacts are organized according to fixed rules and at regular intervals.

These categories do not exclude one another but overlap considerably in political practice. This holds also true for the relationship between an outside observer and individual EPC members. In describing EPC contacts with third countries, it is worth noting that the growing weight of the Ten as an interlocutor in world politics did not supersede the traditional network of bilateral relations between EC member states and third countries. Traditional links and the "new system" of EPC's external relations overlap frequently and compete with each other due to the interests of the parties concerned. Depending on the status an outside observer attributes to a certain country within the EPC club, it may well be that he addresses first and foremost his individual partner to make his voice heard in Europe, regardless of which country holds the Presidency. For the analyst it is difficult to assess the importance of this kind of daily and traditional "diplomatic trade". No doubt, however, these different forms of informal exchanges of views, be it on the level of government officials or the political top, also belong to the present feature of the Ten's external relations.

As another of EPC's characteristics, the interrelations with the Community's external (economic) relations have to be considered. In theory and to a certain degree also in practice clear-cut distinctions were drawn between these two "pillars"

of European foreign policy for some time. Today a pragmatic approach is followed, based on the assumption that binding the various levels together corresponds much better to the needs and expectations of Europe's role in world affairs. In institutional terms, a single outside representation in cases where EC and EPC issues are mixed has become the rule (the so-called "tandem" representation or "bicephalous presidency"⁶). European representation in the Euro-Arab Dialogue, partly in the CSCE and towards third countries in cases where the Ten decided upon economic sanctions may serve to illustrate the pragmatic approach of recent years. In a more subtle way, "grey zones" of overlappings already belong to daily European reality. EPC contacts with third countries are multiplied by those taking place in the EC framework (e.g. Association or Cooperation Council meetings, existence of diplomatic missions to the EC).

II. Provisions in EPC documents: An evolving system of contacts with third countries

The proliferation of EPC's external relations originates primarily from the outside world. It might be interpreted as a sign of the Ten's international weight and their attractiveness as a coalition partner. An ever-growing number of third countries seems to be interested in being associated with the European club. From the perspective of the Ten the question becomes pressing which status to attribute to which "client" and how to keep EPC efficient, given the limited resources at the Ten's disposal. Apart from using means of "traditional" diplomacy to make their voice heard towards the outside world, the Europeans themselves seldom take the initiative to establish specific links with non EPC-members.

At least the basic documents of political cooperation say little about how the common positions should be made known outside the EC borders. Apart from sporadic information in the annual reports on European Union official documents keep silent about the scope of contacts with "privileged" third countries and about the content of those contacts.

The principles of pragmatism and flexibility led the Foreign Ministers of the then Six to present a first report on Political Cooperation which described the objectives and procedures of their future foreign-policy coordination in general terms only. Except for stressing a general willingness to establish additional forms of consultations "where necessary"⁷⁾, the authors did not foresee how to implement common viewpoints or joint actions towards the outside world. It was, indeed, too early to consider Europe's external representation (e.g. role of diplomatic missions in third countries; consultation at international organizations) in greater detail at a time when the Six still had to prove their willingness to closer cooperation in the field of international affairs. Explicit mention of the association of applicant countries was made, however, in Part four of the Luxembourg Report of 27 October 1970. This was the logical consequence of the Heads' of State and Government mandate to seek progress in the internal integration process in view of enlargement. To facilitate entry into the EPC "club" new members should be familiar with the "acquis politique" as early as possible. According to the Luxembourg Report, every Ministerial meeting of the Six was to be followed by a second Conference of Foreign Ministers of the "old" and the "new" Member States. On the level of the Political Committee, the chair was charged with involving the staff of the Foreign Ministries in the applicant countries about consultations and to report back to his other five colleagues. Once the agreements on application to the EC would be signed the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Norway should participate fully within EPC.⁸⁾

Until the first balance of the Nine's cooperation (Norway had to withdraw after the negative vote of its people on 26 September 1972) was drawn in 1973 (Copenhagen Report 23 July 1973), contacts with third countries arose gradually on an ad hoc basis. The more the preparation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) progressed with the Nine acting as a unit,⁹⁾ the more frequent were the contacts with the rest of the 35 participating countries. First steps as a single interlocutor were also undertaken in the framework of the United

Nations at that time.¹⁰⁾ The Nine's second main topic of consultation beside the CSCE, the Arab-Israeli conflict, marks the beginning of contacts with countries of the Middle East region, which in their initial period caused some irritations among the Nine about their representation towards third countries.

Out of these experiences more detailed arrangements were needed to go beyond the procedures established within the EC borders. Consequently, the Copenhagen Report¹¹⁾ stressed the incorporation of the Nine's ambassadors in third countries and their representatives at international organizations into the EPC network. It is, however, interesting to note that the Foreign Ministers stressed primarily the Heads' of the Missions contribution to formulating common European views on specific international issues of interest for the decisions of the Nine. Nothing was said on how the EC countries should make known their views towards the outside world. The role of regular consultations among the EC countries' embassies was oriented towards facilitating the internal EPC decision-making process. The Political Committee would address itself to the posts abroad for information (including common reports on specific questions of common interest). In their second report the Foreign Ministers welcomed the fact that the "coordination reflex" had already swept from the Nine's capitals to their embassies in third countries. Again, no explanations were given on how results of the foreign policy consultations should be transmitted to the countries concerned or whether and how outside observers should communicate with the new actor in international politics.

In political practice, the Nine's first steps towards harmonized positions on the fourth Middle East War of 1973 and the setting up of a dialogue with the countries of the Arab League directly affected European-American relationship. Worried about the ambitions of its junior partner in world affairs, the United States pressed for close association with EPC. After lengthy discussions during Kissinger's proclaimed "Year of Europe", the Nine responded favourably to the American demand. In their "Gymnich Gentleman's Agreement"¹²⁾, the Foreign Ministers decided to consult "allied or friendly countries" according to the

interests and needs of each individual case. If one of the Nine wished to inform a third country and the others agreed on it, the Presidency was charged to act as spokesman of the group. The chosen procedure, however, did not prevent other member governments from contacting third countries on EPC issues on a bilateral basis.

Out of this pragmatic approach, a variety of both ad hoc and formalized contacts emerged, attributing a steadily growing role to the country holding the Presidency. Already acknowledged at the Paris Summit of 1974 ¹³⁾ the President's task as representative of the Nine/Ten in international diplomacy was explicitly stressed in the latest EPC document, the Foreign Ministers' Report of 13 October 1981, and by the European Council in the Solemn Declaration on European Union of 19 June 1983. Whereas the latter only briefly reaffirms the need for a closer cooperation in foreign policy issues, particularly by "strengthening the Presidency's power of ... representation in relations with third countries" and by "increased contacts" with non-EEC Member States ¹⁴⁾, the former deals expressly and extensively with the "external relations" of EPC.

In greater detail, ¹⁵⁾ Chapter seven of the London Report enumerates various forms of contacts between the Ten and other third countries interested in Political Cooperation:

- * "The Presidency may meet individual representatives of third countries."
- * In this "and if the Ten so agree", it may be accompanied by the preceding and succeeding Presidency (Troika).
- * "The Presidency may respond to a request for contacts with a group of Ambassadors of Member States of organizations with which the Ten maintain special links."
- * Furthermore, meetings of the Presidency with representatives of a third country are foreseen "in the margins of a Ministerial level meeting of the Ten", however, only with the explicit permission of all EC countries.

* The Heads of Mission of the Ten in third countries meet with representatives of the host countries if the latter express the "desire" to do so.

In addition to the aforementioned procedures, the Foreign Ministers agreed on the principle that it is the Presidency's task to inform third countries about the content of common statements of Ministerial and European Council meetings. This is why the Ten's texts should be "accompanied by a list of posts in third countries where the local representative of the Ten will draw the declarations to the attention of the host government." If such a list is lacking, the Presidency is free to take the initiative.

On the one hand, these general rules cover the various forms of the Ten's current diplomacy; on the other hand, official EPC documents keep silent about the reach and frequency of contacts established up to now, as well as about the quality of the Ten's activities towards the outside world. Official EPC texts traditionally reflect procedures which in practice have been under way for a certain time; the format of already existing contacts and the creation of new ones develop on a flexible and pragmatic basis before being fixed as a general principle. Latest proposals (made e.g. by the Ad hoc Committee on Institutional Affairs to the European Council, Dublin in December 1984) aim at the creation of a secretariat which might relieve the Presidency as spokesman of the Ten, among other things, and at a single European representation in certain international organizations and third countries. Within EPC circles the improvement of the Ten's cooperation in and with third countries is on the agenda. Subsequent Presidencies from the United Kingdom in 1981 onwards,¹⁶⁾ deal with the question of how to "europeanize" the Ten's missions abroad both in terms of a mere coherent representation towards the host governments and of a greater efficiency of the internal working of the Ten's diplomatic staffs.

III. EPC contacts with third countries: an attempt to design some categories

Since the early days of EPC, the number of contacts with the outside world has developed steadily at all levels, with an obvious dynamism during the last years. Irrespective of the size of its national diplomatic apparatus, the Presidency feels a growing workload in its role as spokesman of the Ten. Some observers presently note a "boom" on the part of third countries seeking to establish links with the Ten. The reason behind this trend: several not yet "privileged" countries are eager to reach the same formal status the Europeans have given to another country of the same region. It is also said that smaller countries, in particular, will be "heard" by the Ten only if a formal framework exists. The present trend towards a dialogue between EC countries and other groupings may well be interpreted as the latter's attempt to compensate for a certain feeling of inferiority.

To the extent that an outside analyst is capable of lifting the curtain of informality and confidentiality which governs EPC diplomacy, presumably even more than national foreign policy-making, he feels the need to systematize the existing network. A first attempt to design some categories of EPC contacts with third countries is made here.

First of all, it might be helpful to differentiate between ad hoc and institutionalized contacts with third countries. Some characteristics of both forms are elaborated in point 1 and 3 of this chapter. The reader will, however, immediately realize that each category in itself has different "faces", which need further consideration and qualification. On the other hand, certain forms of EPC's "external relations" may be classified both as already formalized or still ad hoc and informal depending on the observer's approach. The network of the Ten's contacts at the UN General Assembly and at the various stages of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europa (CSCE) serve to illustrate this point.

1. Generally speaking, ad hoc, informal contacts cover the whole range of activities (information, consultation, action) the Presidency undertakes as spokesman of the Ten towards representatives of non-EC countries both individually and as a group in the framework of international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental.

One major part of the Presidency's task is simply to keep in contact with the outside world, to inform about EPC positions, to hear third countries' comments etc.: i.e. to manage the daily "diplomatic trade" as does every other actor on the international scene. Exchanges of information on concrete EPC issues may take place within the Community countries usually in the capital of the country holding the Presidency. Be it somebody from a diplomatic mission or a government official from abroad who pays a bilateral or explicitly EPC-related visit to the country in the chair, this kind of behaviour is difficult to describe in detail. Even inside the EPC bureaucracy deficits in knowledge become obvious.

Up to now the Presidency has been free to choose how to spread news on the Ten's contacts with the outside world. Due to different political styles, the level of information varies from one Presidency to another.

The mixture and frequency of contacts varies according to the Ten's agenda and international developments. As one element of continuity among others, mention can be made of the series of contacts between the Presidency and the parties concerned by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Be it the Secretary General of the Arab League or other political figures (e.g. Egyptian President, King of Jordan, Israeli Government), or lower ranking officials from those countries, a network of outside "lobbying" to which the EC countries have and want to react has grown over the years. Its concrete outlook, however, changes according to the priority the Presidency is ready to attribute to the external relations of EPC as well as to the access of third countries to the spokesman of the Ten (e.g. size of local embassy, traditional relationship).

Furthermore, this first set of traditional "diplomatic trade" covers part of the activities undertaken by the Presidency outside the "EC borders". Be it in his capacity as spokesman of the Ten, be it as representative of the national government, members of the Presidency dispose of an enormous number of communication channels to inform about EPC when they visit third countries or attend international conferences etc. European diplomatic missions abroad and their contacts with the host governments play an important role. Besides, more recently special meetings of the Ten's Heads of Mission with the local press are envisaged on a regular basis. Consultations among the Ten's embassies intensified considerably. The frequency of meetings on the ambassadorial level and below is high; it ranges from monthly gatherings (the rule) to bi-monthly and even weekly ones, informal contacts included. Contrary to developments within the European borders, where the idea of associating selected third countries more closely with EPC by holding common meetings met with opposition from some EC countries, this procedure has been established abroad. In an ever-increasing number of posts, the Ten invite representatives of the host government and the political world to participate in their discussions, a change in practice which might be seen as a qualitative shift from purely ex post information to a certain form of consultation in advance.

The fact-finding tours of the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to the Middle East following the Venice Declaration of 1980 are among the most well-known examples of another category of the Ten's external behaviour towards third countries: concrete actions. To the extent that the EC countries have successfully harmonized their views on a wide range of international issues over the years, declaratory diplomacy was felt to be inadequate to Europe's real role in world affairs. For several years, the Ten have tried not only to speak with one voice, but also to act in concert and to take over concrete responsibilities for solving international problems. The participation of "European" troops in the Sinai peace-keeping force may serve as an (in the end successful) example to illustrate internal and external constraints the Ten are confronted with.

Lord Carrington's trip to Moscow in July 1981 when he submitted the Ten's proposals on Afghanistan to the Soviet government, and Tindemans' visit to Turkey in 1982, the result of the Ten's concern about democratic structures and the violation of human rights in non-EEC countries, represent concrete activities undertaken at high level by the spokesman of the Ten. Intervening in the name of the EC countries on specific issues predominantly concerning human rights violations, is part of the task the embassies of the country holding the Presidency have to fulfil. Over the years the Presidency has launched a number of démarches to free people from prison, torture and oppression all over the world (Africa, Latin/Central America, Soviet Union).

2. "External" contacts at international organizations/conferences may be dealt with separately. Although belonging in principle to the category of ad hoc contacts, they have reached a certain degree of formalization for example on the fringe of the annual session of the UN General Assembly, in the CSCE at its various stages where the Nine/Ten act as a group and via the Presidency, which as the spokesman of EPC has become an accepted interlocutor.

Already in early days of EPC, diplomats from Israel and Egypt regularly informed the ambassadors of the Nine in New York of their interpretation of UN texts on the Middle East conflict. Representatives from Greece, Turkey and Cyprus as well as ambassadors from Africa (e.g. Nigeria) set up contacts with the Nine during the mid-Seventies. Both the Soviet Union and the United States gradually followed this strategy, too.¹⁷⁾ After initial shortcomings in US-European consultations in the UN framework, which seemed to be located on both sides of the Atlantic (at least) the procedures improved and led to regular meetings between the US Ambassador to the UN and the Presidency, represented by the respective Head of one of the European missions. More recently, common discussions of the Ten and the United States at ambassadorial level take place.

As EPC progressed at the UN, some states - particularly the smaller members of the Western Group - came to feel isolated to a

certain degree. Some of these sought to compensate by establishing closer links within European capitals, i.e. in the country holding the Presidency. At the UN, contacts with the Nine remained sporadic over the Seventies. The idea of creating an enlarged group of about 20 Western countries (ranging from the USA to Malta) - the Vinci Group - did not meet with much enthusiasm on the part of the EC Member States.

An ever-closer harmonization of views between the Nine/Ten and their partners of the alliance arose out of the CSCE process. From the preparatory stage of the Helsinki Conference up to Madrid and Stockholm, a network of institutionalized contacts between the EPC and the NATO caucus was set up. Meetings of the Nine/Ten were usually followed by those of the 15, today 16 members of the Atlantic Alliance¹⁸⁾; this procedural order does not imply, however, that the smaller caucus decided upon the guidelines and content of common positions, which were submitted to the larger group for approval. This was the case up to the Belgrade conference; later on a shift in weight from the EPC to the NATO level became obvious. Towards the Eastern caucus and the group of the Neutral and Non-Aligned states the Presidency or the Nine/Ten as a whole seemed to play a minor role as interlocutor outside the plenary CSCE sessions. The flow of information between the "blocs" was obviously channelled from one country to another on an ad hoc and individual basis. The rules concerning EPC's diplomacy towards non-member countries did not prevail in the CSCE process.

3. The second main pattern of "external relations" refers to formalized procedures, which are understood in general as the Ten's "contacts with third countries". Going into detail, however, the analyst discovers a multitude of different contacts between the Ten and a third country or a group of states. The degree of formal institutionalization or informality, frequency and duration, as well as the level and size of meetings, are as varied as the informal contacts: as William Wallace wrote on Political Cooperation generally: EPC does not represent a fully developed or settled structure."¹⁹

The following analysis of EPC's "external relations" is broadly based on the Ten's own understanding at present of EPC contacts with third countries. In terms of geographical regions, Western Europe and North America prevail, not surprisingly in view of how long these contacts exist. Another, and obviously more suitable, typology might be "allied and like-minded countries". The table below clearly reflects that most countries closely associated with the Ten belong to the "West" in general and the Atlantic Alliance in particular. Within this group, the former and present applicant countries may be dealt with separately because of their privileged status as candidates for full EPC membership. Another criterion to be discussed may be the distinction between the Ten's contacts to individual third states and those to certain groups of countries. It is also interesting to note whether consultations take place at political, i.e. ministerial or senior official level, or both, and who is representing the European side, i.e. the Presidency, the Troika, the Ten as a whole.

The following description goes much along the lines of "allied and friendly" countries or the Western "Camp" and "others". In some way it also reflects the history and evolution of EPC contacts with third countries/groups of countries:

the Western "Camp"	EC acceding countries	Others
Australia	1.1.73 Denmark, Ireland,	People's Re- public of China
Canada	(Norway), United Kingdom	
Japan	1.1.81 Greece	India
New Zealand	1.1.86 Portugal, Spain.	(Andean Pact)
Norway		Asean
Turkey		Contadora
United States of America		Arab League
Council of Europe		

a) The group of Western countries

How to associate the US has been a key issue for EPC since it was set up in 1970. The Gentleman's Agreement of 1974 provided a framework for informal discussions between the Foreign Ministry of the Presidency and US representatives. Even today some stress that contacts still take place on an ad hoc basis; others agree that certain tendencies towards institutionalization are visible. The main centres of EPC - US contacts are the capital in the country holding the Presidency, Washington and New York (UN). The US mission to the EC in Brussels plays the role of a coordinator among US posts within the European borders and that of a central information agency towards the Administration in Washington. Consultations between representatives of the US embassy and government officials of the Presidency are said to be regular and close. The level of contacts varies depending upon the issues of the agenda and, sometimes, as insiders say, the size of US embassies in European capitals. The Middle East, East-West relations, especially the CSCE, and Central America are among the topics of mutual interest. American diplomats first of all address the "heart" of EPC, the Political Committee, and in particular its chairman. Compared with most other third countries, the USA finds itself in a privileged position: the US Ambassador to the country holding the Presidency is informed about the agenda of those meetings in advance, enabling the American side to comment on the points of interest before consultations take place among the Ten. These outside views are then explained by the chairman to his colleagues at the beginning of the Committee meeting.²⁰⁾ Furthermore, the Presidency reports back to US officials on the results of the Ten's deliberations. A similar procedure was established - at least for a certain time - on the working-group level. As some Europeans are uneasy with the procedure and feared creating a precedent for other third countries to go beyond the present status quo seems unlikely. Concerning more "formalized" contacts with members of the Administration in Washington, it took until 1982 to organize special meetings at top official level. On the fringes of the

UN General Assembly, the European Troika headed by the Danish Political Director assisted by his colleague of the preceding and the succeeding Presidency met with "high level officials"²¹⁾ from the Reagan Administration. Since then it seems that this kind of a European-American dialogue takes place once in each presidential term. Ministerial meetings still are the exception to the rule, leaving aside the "normal" contacts between the US Secretary of State and his colleagues in Europe, which may of course also deal with Political Cooperation issues, thus adding to the specific EPC procedures, e.g. within NATO, at the Summit of the Seven or bilaterally.

The establishment of links with the US government in Washington was hampered both by a certain ignorance on the American side regarding the new actor and by reservations on behalf of some European governments who hesitated to give priority to a single representation of the Nine/Ten instead of privileged bilateral contacts.²²⁾ Those EC Member States who favoured a more independent European role in world affairs wanted to keep a certain distance from the US, instead of "going into bed with an elephant". Since 1975 access to the White House and the State Department has improved. In special cases of utmost interest to the US government, such as the Camp David accords, Washington increased the flow of information to gain European support.

Today it is customary to organize periodic luncheon meetings between US officials and the ambassadors of the Ten and, occasionally, with the Presidency ambassador.

From 1982 onwards it has become a general rule that the Foreign Minister or Head of State or Government of the incoming Presidency holds talks with his American counterpart in Washington covering EC and EPC issues. This arrangement, esteemed in particular by the small Community countries when acting as Europe's spokesman, does not always meet with enthusiasm on behalf of the US Administration when it comes to fix a date with the Foreign or Prime Minister of a small Member State. French or German politicians are undoubtedly better off.

For years, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have shown interest in the foreign policy coordination of the EC countries. Informality and pragmatism along the lines of the London Report presently mark the contacts with these countries which are loose compared to those of the other countries of the Western "Camp". The capital of the Presidency is to be seen as the centre for information; the Heads of Mission are said to present themselves regularly in the Foreign Ministry of the country holding the Presidency.²³⁾ Up to now the exchange of views is restricted to senior official level; Ministerial meetings are not planned yet. In addition, the Ten reacted favourably to proposals made by the governments in Ottawa and Wellington to arrange meetings between the European Heads of Mission and the Canadian and New Zealand authorities in the capital of the host government.

The format of consultations with Japan clearly indicates the importance both partners attach to harmonizing their views also on international political issues. After initial steps in 1979, contacts now take place in a formalized way. Once every six months a ministerial meeting is foreseen bringing together the Japanese Foreign Minister and the President in office of the Ten accompanied by his colleagues of the last and the incoming Presidency. The premiere took place during the Presidential term of the Federal Republic of Germany (first half of 1983) after the EC countries had agreed to the Japanese suggestion earlier that year. Due to the full diaries of Ministers the Japanese proposal to meet alternately in Europe and in the Japanese capital is far from becoming reality. Gatherings on the fringe of other meetings (e.g. OECD) seem to be an appropriate way to manage these difficulties. Latest developments indicate that both sides agreed to expand contacts at the directorial level, including both the Presidency country and Japan as meeting places. Already in 1982 the Japanese Foreign Minister held talks with the current President in office, though still on an ad hoc basis, when he paid a visit to several countries in Europe and when Leo Tindemans visited Tokyo during the Belgian Presidency of 1982. At ambassadorial level the Ten regularly exchange views with the Japanese Political Director in Tokyo. Now and then these meetings are attended by the Japanese Foreign Minister.

As one observer rightly states, it was the concern with US policy since the late Seventies which led both Europeans and Japanese to look for coalition partners to strengthen their own positions.²⁴⁾ The US hostages in Teheran and the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan mark the beginning of close consultations and even concerted action against the Iranian authorities. The war between Iran and Iraq is another topic of mutual interest of both sides, as is the Middle East as a whole. East-West relations in their various dimensions represent another subject under discussion.

EPC's individual contacts with the group of Western countries described above are supplemented by common ministerial meetings of the same countries in the framework of ASEAN. There the Ten (represented according to the Troika formula) meet regularly with their colleagues from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the USA, together with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

Norway, which was integrated into EPC for several months in the early Seventies (January - September 1972), is closely associated with the Ten, particularly at the official level. Contacts with the Presidency country are said to be intensive and fruitful, in general. Again, Political Committee meetings are the focal point of interest to the Norwegian embassy in the capital of the Ten's spokesman. Like representatives of other third countries, Norwegian officials are concerned about a certain lack of continuity in EPC's external relations, which results from the individual handling of each Presidency and from the limited staff in some EC countries.

Apart from informal contacts in the UN-framework, regular meetings take place in the Norwegian capital between the ambassadors of the EC countries and government officials (usually the Political Director), and at times the Foreign Minister. Furthermore, ministerial meetings - the President in office meets his Norwegian colleague once in Europe and once in Oslo - seem to have become a habit, although it is not yet clear whether they cover EC questions primarily.²⁵⁾

From the review of the history of EPC's external relations Turkey seems to be the longest-standing partner of the consultation system. The Additional Protocol (1970) to the Association Agreement of 1963 envisaged cooperation on political issues of mutual interest. To stabilize the Mediterranean region in general (i.e. the EC's global approach) and the southern flank of NATO in particular, Ankara was to be regularly informed on EPC deliberations. Consultations initially limited to the Presidency at the directorial level multiplied and in late 1972 were also held on the top political level. From then on, the President in office was charged with informing his Turkish counterpart about the Nine's discussions. It is interesting to note that the EEC/Turkey Association Council was considered to be the right forum for this informal dialogue. The more negotiations on Greece's full EC/EPC membership progressed, the more consultations with Turkey came to a halt. To keep a certain balance in the EC's relations with the two countries, in 1978 the Nine offered to strengthen their political dialogue with the Turkish government to compensate for Greece's EPC membership. Only in 1980, however, did the Turks accept the offer of the Nine. Ankara, for good reasons, favoured consultations as equal partners, i.e. contacts with the Presidency should go beyond purely ex post information on common positions the Nine/Ten had adopted already before meeting the Turkish representatives. This format of consultations at an early stage, however, was difficult to enter for the EC countries and obviously incompatible with the consensus principle of the EPC decision-making.

From December 1980 onwards, it has become a general practice to meet once or twice every six months in the country holding the Presidency. The European side is usually represented by the Political Directors (Troika); the Turkish delegation is led by a senior official of the Foreign Ministry assisted by diplomats from Turkish missions in EC countries, according to the rotating Presidency.

The military seizure of power in September 1980 did not affect the agreed procedures. The Nine expressly wished to keep in

contact with the Turkish authorities. The Generals' request for consultations on the level of Foreign Ministers, however, met with a certain hesitation on the European side. It was accepted "in principle" without advocating regular meetings. The first and up to now only meeting took place in September 1981, during the British chairmanship. Since then relations have worsened owing to Turkey's internal policy, which did not fulfil European hopes of Turkey's speedy return to democracy. Turkey's internal developments had an effect both on the agenda of the Ten's discussions among themselves and with the government in Ankara. Whereas issues like the Middle East or East-West-relations usually mark the Ten's talks with third countries, in the case of Turkey the political situation of the country itself is a major point of the common discussions. The EPC/Turkish relationship is also significantly different from the contacts described above from the point of view of bilateral links - both "special partnership" and rivalry - between EC members and third countries. 1983 marks the year of extremes in EPC contacts with Turkey: during the German Presidency consultations intensified (in quantitative terms at least); two directorial meetings were held instead of the usual one. During the following Greek Presidency (second half of 1983) the dialogue came to a halt which lasted through the French Presidency of 1984. Some may argue that bilateral contacts between Turkey and EC Member States or the Commission may serve as a substitute; from the point of view of a country which attaches great importance to a certain format (as a sign of acceptance by the Ten), the present situation is felt to be discriminatory.

- b) Among the group of Western countries, those who once have been or still are candidates for EC membership dispose of specific links to EPC ²⁶⁾ which justify treating these countries separately.

Contacts between the "old" and future "new" members of EPC start from a somewhat formalized basis: a letter explaining the principle of both EPC procedures and content is handed over to the acceding country at an early stage of the negotia-

tion process for EC membership. According to EPC rules, this communication is not of a binding character. It serves to inform the applicants about EPC in general. In turn, acceding countries in a reply usually accept future participation in principle.

Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom were closely associated with EPC from its very beginning. Special meetings of Foreign Ministers of the Six and the candidates were held immediately after "normal" consultations at ministerial level. From the date of signing the accession treaties the "newcomers" were fully integrated into Political Cooperation.

For the "southern" enlargement a somewhat different procedure was chosen, extending the transition period from the stage of information on EPC to that of full participation. The Nine's decision to let the candidates wait for full EPC membership until the ratification process was finished and EC membership definitely approved in all countries was a clear consequence of the "Norwegian case". During the period of EC negotiations, therefore, Greece was regularly informed on the Foreign Ministers' and Political Directors' consultations via the Presidency. From the date of signature of the accession treaty (May 1979), information was said to be transformed into consultation,²⁷⁾ the country in the chair taking the leading role. The Athens government's association with EPC ended in full participation in late 1980 before Greece became a member of the EC on 1 January 1981.

During EEC negotiations with Portugal and Spain, periodic bilateral talks with some "Communautarians" (e.g. the Federal Republic) were of major interest a long time. In early 1982 the European Council as well as the Foreign Ministers felt the need to intensify EPC contacts with the two "newcomers", at least quantitatively. They publicly stressed keeping the applicant countries "closely informed"²⁸⁾ about EPC, which in practice meant an exchange of views on the issues of the Ten's discussions. Meetings are presently held on the ministerial and directorial level. Unlike the practice during the "northern" enlargement, the EC countries are represented by the Presidency only.

The initial idea of a Foreign Ministers' meeting of Twelve was substituted by the Troika formula in 1983, after a trial period in 1982. The change in format, some argued, was due to restrictions in the diaries of participants. In any case, it may also be understood as a certain signal as to the priority some partners among the Ten may give to consultations with the applicant countries. Another argument put forward is a certain feeling of imbalanced representation and EC predominance if the formula the 'Ten/Portugal, Spain' is used. Unlike the Ministers' meetings, on the level of Political Directors contacts with Portugal and Spain are organized separately (once per Presidency; Troika formula).

The representation of Twelve at the San José meeting with Central American states (September 1984) marks a new element in the Ten's contacts with Portugal and Spain. The outside observer is inclined to interpret this new "European face" as a sign of a qualitative leap in EPC relationship towards acceding countries, at least in a specific issue area. Details on the preparatory stage of the Costa Rica Conference and on the implementation of the agreed conclusions may allow a more in-depth assessment on the participation of the Portuguese and Spanish side. At any rate, the Ten agreed to repeat the exercise during 1985.

c) Others

The third and relatively young category of EPC's "external relations" mainly consists of contacts with several groups of countries. The format seems to offer advantages for both sides: it corresponds well to European efforts to stabilize international politics by promoting forms of an intra- and inter-regional dialogue; non-EC countries favour representation within a group because it reduces the feeling of inferiority.

The ASEAN countries ²⁹⁾ are among the Ten's privileged partners in Third World regions. Every 18 months meetings take place on the ministerial level. Consultations on "political" issues have broadened since the beginning of the dialogue in 1978; initially bound to developments in the South-East Asian region

(e.g. Kampuchea, refugee problem) the Foreign Ministers today also discuss other EPC topics, particularly East-West relations (e.g. Afghanistan).

The continuity of the European-ASEAN relationship contrasts with the ups and downs of the Euro-Arab-Dialogue (EAD).³⁰⁾ Starting in 1975, with the problem of how to integrate the PLO, high-level meetings have been blocked by inner-Arabic crises caused by Sadat's policy and Egypt's exclusion from the Arab League in 1979. Attempts to revive EAD's central organ - the General Commission composed of senior officials (ambassadorial level) from every member of the two groups - had only limited success. Though supporting in principle the idea of enlarging the originally "economic" dialogue to a "political" one the Ten still hesitate to change the existing formula. Up to now the Arabs' idea of holding conferences of Foreign Ministers has not become reality. The results of the December 1983 meeting of the General Commission (restricted representation) after a five years' break, which could be interpreted as a step forward, was not encouraging, nor were further steps during 1984.

Institutionalized contacts with Latin American states may be characterized as a nine days' wonder; only once (1980) EC Foreign Ministers held discussions with their colleagues of the Andean Pact³¹⁾ which were primarily oriented towards closer economic links. Both the idea of economic cooperation and political support for the Contadora peace initiative in Central America led Europe to propose a dialogue with this group (Columbia, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela). Still ad hoc in nature, yearly meetings on ministerial level are becoming a general rule, although the concrete formula varies (EPC Troika/Contadora, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua at the Costa Rica meeting in 1984).

In Western Europe, as well, the format of group-to-group discussions has found followers. In the aftermath of the Genscher-Colombo initiative, the Council of Europe, at least its non-EC members, felt the need to redefine their own role in the process of Euro-

pean integration and to reconsider the relations between the two bodies. In this context the then Austrian Foreign Minister, Pahr, proposed to intensify the already existing discussions on international issues between the Ten and the Eleven (i.e. the non-EC members of the Council of Europe). In addition to informal talks of Foreign Ministers on the fringe of Committee of Ministers' meetings, consultations at the senior official level (Political Directors or Ambassadors) were suggested. The Ten responded favourably to the proposal in early 1983. On the basis of an agreed agenda on "some topics of EPC",³²⁾ the Presidency (Troika) informed the representatives of the non-EC members of the Council of Europe in April that year. The succeeding Presidencies should follow the procedure once during each term. More recently, the German Foreign Minister launched the idea of intensifying informal discussions at political level.

Another development of EPC contacts with third countries in the Eighties concerns the People's Republic of China. As one element of intensifying EC-Chinese relationship, the Ten established a fixed mechanism for political consultations. In June 1983, the chairman of the Political Directors met the Chinese Ambassador to the country holding the Presidency. Contacts progressed during the French Presidency in 1984, judging by the change in format of the meeting (ministerial level; Troika)³³⁾ East-West relations and the Middle East region were among the topics of mutual interest. As a consequence of the Ten's concertations with some of the countries mentioned before, India also wanted to be associated with EPC. As a clear sign of European support for the non-aligned countries, a positive answer was given to the Indian request in 1984. The two sides agreed to adopt the same procedures as in the Chinese case.

Formalized contacts between the Ten and Israel at the ministerial level seem to be close to reality. Apart from the informal network established with the Presidency, traditional links with some EC Member States and regular gatherings in the framework of the Cooperation Council EEC/Israel the French took the initiative to establish separate consultations on EPC issues.

Claude Cheysson, as President in office, in early 1984 invited his colleagues to hold an informal exchange of views with the Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir on the Middle East conflict, after the normal Cooperation Council session had ended. It needs to be seen whether succeeding Presidencies will follow this first step; at least the Israeli government would be in favour of it.

IV. Some patterns of outside perceptions: the Ten as a "third power"?

"En fait, l'image extérieure des Neuf est trop flatteuse."³⁴⁾
This assessment, given some years ago by one of the experts on EPC, when homogeneity of views was obviously easier to reach, remains true today. Notwithstanding EPC's inherent limits (e.g. consensus principle, few instruments, intergovernmentalism, negative repercussions of Community crisis) the Ten are an attractive interlocutor to the outside world. A steadily growing number of third countries is interested in establishing closer political ties with Europe. The format of contacts varies. Some wish to be associated on a formal institutionalized basis for reasons of prestige and the country's own international profile. Others, particularly within the Western "camp", prefer informality, which allows information and even consultation at an early stage. Some outside observers are satisfied to receive details on EPC declarations via the Presidency and publicly to share common positions with the Ten on issues of mutual interest. Others favour influencing EPC decision-making in advance, i.e. before the Ten agree on common viewpoints.

It is largely the Community's economic weight and its external relations which are of interest to the outside world. Third countries then perceive that the members of the economic "power", Europe, also share common views on a wide range of international political questions which are made public in numerous official statements by the Foreign Ministers and increasingly at the highest political level (European Council).

The Presidency's intensified activities as spokesman of the Ten, and in particular the Troika formula for strengthening continuity, seem to contribute to this positive image. Diverging views and conflicts of interest within the EPC circle seem to be unknown or at least are ignored from an outsider's perspective. No doubt, after more than ten years' experiences with EPC diplomacy, those third countries which followed Europe's efforts "to make its voice heard in world affairs" from the very beginning might be better aware of the Ten's real international weight and their internal cohesion. They seem to be familiar with the existing network of groupings and actors. Others may be unsure whom they should address within the "European borders" where the Ten, the Council, the EC Commission, the European Parliament and also the Member States individually all play a role in international affairs.

EPC contacts with third countries do not substitute bilateral diplomacy between individual EC Member States and outsiders. On the contrary, some argue that the external relations of EPC led to intensified cooperation between (the small) EC- and non-EC countries on a bilateral basis. This tendency will likely increase to the extent the Ten and future Twelve fail to reach consensus on international issues. Under these circumstances, however, the "Big Four" within the EPC club will be better off as privileged partners of the outside world.

History shows that the Ten's credibility as a major international actor is questioned now and then. Which EC Member State (big or small) acts as interlocutor is or at least was of a certain importance. In the seventies, e.g. Ireland during its Presidencies met with reservation on behalf of the US Administration. The Arab side doubted the then Nine's reliability when it was "only" Denmark who informed about the Europeans' position on the Arab-Israeli conflict in November 1973. In the aftermath of the Venice Declaration of June 1980, again, it was not so easy to understand from the Arab side why every six months representatives of another (small) EC Member State (Luxembourg in the second half of 1980; the Netherlands in the first half of 1981) sought contacts to carry out the fact-finding

missions of the Presidency agreed upon by the European Council. Another aspect affecting the international role of the Ten may be seen in the predominantly declaratory diplomacy and in the lack of independent EPC instruments. Statements of the Nine/Ten first tend to raise the hopes of third countries, which are disappointed when common views fail to be transformed into common actions. Again, the Middle East conflict may serve to illustrate this.

In the eyes of numerous Third World countries the EC Member States appeared as an emerging "third power" on the international scene where the two superpowers set the tone. The "civilian power" Europe seemed to offer cooperation on the basis of equal partnership, thus supporting the emancipation of developing countries. Reality proved to be somewhat different. Nonetheless "the rest of the world, Eastern Europe included" wants to know what the Western Europeans think about a given issue before defining their own policy.³⁵⁾ Outside observers may also ask to what extent the Ten's views converge with or differ from US perceptions, and what is their potential to influence US policy. In cases, where a clearly defined American policy was lacking, as in the UN in the mid-seventies, Third World countries first of all informed themselves about EPC positions and tended to interpret the Nine's policy as policy of the "West".

How did the smaller non-EC members of the West react to this monopolizing tendency of Political Cooperation? The more the Nine/Ten successfully concerted their national foreign policies, the more non-EC Member States in Western Europe felt excluded and cut off. At the UN and elsewhere, they tried individually and collectively to establish closer links with the "club" (e.g. Council of Europe). In the CSCE framework the existence of a Eastern and Western "bloc" (EPC and NATO caucus) helped the European neutral and non-aligned countries to set up a grouping of their own.

The US Administration shows a somewhat ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, US concern and even hostility towards an autonomous European actor on the international scene is well known

and has been analysed several times.³⁶⁾ Be it the Fourth Middle East War in 1973, be it the situation in Central America in 1984, Washington or at least part of the Administration found it hard to acknowledge not only a "regional" but also a "global" role for the EC countries.³⁷⁾ On the other hand, a more coherent European policy is beneficial for the USA and serves to strengthen Western interests in world affairs, it is argued by the American side.

Other NATO members like Norway and Turkey seek close contact with the Ten in the hope of strengthening their own and Europe's weight, particularly in influencing US policy. In this context the role EPC contacts with allied countries might play in defining a European security policy at an early stage and outside the NATO framework seems to become of major importance. The decision of the members of the Western European Union (WEU), in autumn 1984, to revitalize the organization and to make it a major forum for discussion of European interests in defence matters needs further consideration with respect to the WEU/EPC relationship. To the extent the Group of Seven intensifies its activities, consultation with the non-WEU members of the EPC group will be indispensable to harmonize views towards real "European" attitudes. Notwithstanding the "relief" of certain EPC members at discussing security issues also (and possibly predominantly?) outside the Ten, consultation between the two bodies is desirable. The concrete format of contacts still needs to be defined.

Since the late seventies, when the international climate - Afghanistan, Poland - worsened and US leadership declined, as reflected, for example, in the affair of US hostages in Teheran, third countries outside Europe as well (e.g. Japan) made increased efforts to find coalition partners. The then "Mighty Nine"³⁸⁾ themselves responded favourably to common and concerted actions with non-Member States to the benefit of Europe's international role. The eighties, however, also mark several drawbacks of European Political Cooperation. One major obstacle is inherent to the Community's own drawbacks. To the extent the EC countries fail to solve their internal problems, they lose credibility in the outside world.

It remains to be seen whether 1985 will be the year to give a new impetus to European Union and to a European foreign policy.

Notes

- 1) This characterization of EPC has first been used by Philippe de Schoutheete, European Political Cooperation: Achievements and prospects: European documents, in Agence Europe, Brussels, 3 July 1979, No 1061; then by William Wallace, Introduction: Cooperation and Convergence in European Foreign Policy, in: Christopher Hill (ed.), National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation, London 1983 p. 11 ff. and William Wallace, Political Cooperation, in: Helen Wallace, William Wallace and Carol Webb, Policy making in the European Communities, 2nd ed., London 1983, p. 373 ff. and Wolfgang Wessels, Die Europäische Politische Zusammenarbeit, in: Werner Weidenfeld und Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 1983, Bonn 1984, p. 227 ff.
- 2) This is the wording of the Interim report to the European Council (Dublin 3./4. December 1984), prepared by the Ad hoc-Committee on Institutional Affairs
- 3) Cf. Reinhardt Rummel, Zusammengesetzte Außenpolitik. Westeuropa als internationaler Akteur, Kehl/Strasbourg 1982
- 4) Cf. the London Report on EPC, published in: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, European Political Cooperation (EPC), Bonn 12/1982, p. 272 (hereinafter, EPC Documentation)
- 5) As David Allen writes in a paper on "Europe's role in world affairs. A framework for considering European foreign policy", presented at the Conference at the European University Institute Florence, 23./24. November 1984
- 6) Christopher Hill and William Wallace, Diplomatic Trends in the European Community, in: International Affairs, January 1979, p. 50; Paul Taylor, The European Communities as an Actor in International Society, in: Journal of European Integration No 1 (Fall) 1982, p. 12 f.
- 7) Point III.4 of the Luxembourg Report of 27 October 1970, in: EPC Documentation, op. cit. 32
- 8) This was the case from 22 January 1972 onwards.
- 9) Cf. Jan Höhn, Außenpolitik der EG-Staaten. Im Fall der KSZE. Geschichte, Struktur, Entscheidungsprozeß, Aktion. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen, München 1978
- 10) Beate Lindemann, EG-Staaten und Vereinte Nationen. Die politische Zusammenarbeit der Neun in den UN-Hauptorganen, München/Wien 1978
- 11) Published in: EPC Documentation, op. cit., pp 43 - 55
- 12) In detail see Press statement of the President in Office, 11.6.1974, in: EPC Documentation, op. cit., p. 69

- 13) Cf. Communiqué of the Heads of State and Government, in: EPC Documentation, op. cit., p. 73
- 14) Point 2.2 and 3.2 of the Stuttgart Solemn Declaration. Text, in: Bulletin of the EC, 6/1983, pp. 24 ff.
- 15) EPC Documentation, op. cit., pp. 271 - 279.
- 16) An overview of activities during the German term (first half of 1983) is given by (the then Secretary of State): Berndt von Staden, Ein neuer Schritt zur europäischen Union, in: Auslandskurier 1983, No 5-6, p. 15 f.
- 17) Beate Lindemann, op. cit., pp. 132 f., 213, 92 f.
- 18) See Alfred Pijpers, European Political Cooperation and the CSCE Process, in: Legal Issues of European Integration, Amsterdam 1984, pp. 135 - 148, according to S.J.P. van Campen, Nato Political Consultation and European Political Cooperation, in: Frans Alting von Geusau (ed.), Allies in a Turbulent World. Challenges to U.S. and Western European Cooperation, Lexington 1980, pp. 63 - 74. The CSCE is the only example of cooperation between the two systems (p. 69).
- 19) William Wallace, Introduction: Cooperation and Convergence in European Foreign Policy, in: op cit., p. 2
- 20) Beate Lindemann, op. cit., p. 89
- 21) Cf. Annual report on EPC of 15 December 1982
- 22) Reinhardt Rummel, op. cit., p. 69 f.; see also Phillip Taylor, Political Cooperation among the EC Member States' Embassies in Washington, in: Journal of European Integration, No. 1/1980, p. 40, who stated that the larger EC members appear "less amenable to increasing political cooperation" in Washington.
- 23) Cf. the explanations of Bonn's Political Director, Pfeffer: Franz Pfeffer, Europa ist weiter, als viele annehmen, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 24. August 1983
- 24) Toshiro Tanaka, Euro-Japanese Political Cooperation: In search of New Roles in International Politics (Conference paper), Taipei 1983
- 25) Le Monde, 15. May 1984. According to Agence Europe, 14./15. January 1985, recent talks between the Norwegian Foreign Minister and the Italian Presidency dealt with EC matters.
- 26) See Philippe de Schoutheete, La Coopération Politique Européenne, Brussels 1980, pp. 147 ff.
- 27) Philippe de Schoutheete, Coopération, op. cit., p. 224
- 28) Cf. Conclusions of the London European Council, in: Bulletin of the EC, 11/1981, p. 8

- 29) Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei
- 30) Comprising the EC countries and the members of the Arab League.
- 31) Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
- 32) Franz Pfeffer, *op. cit.*
- 33) According to Bulletin of the EC, 4/1984, p. 63
- 34) Philippe de Schoutheete, *Coopération*, *op. cit.*, p. 121
- 35) This assessment was made by Rüdiger von Wechmar, Bonn's first Ambassador to the UN who left just recently, in: *Bergedorfer Gesprächskreis, Die deutsche Frage - neu gestellt, Protokoll No. 74/1983*, p. 88
- 36) Cf. Beate Kohler, Euro-American relations and European Political Cooperation, in: David Allen, Reinhardt Rummel and Wolfgang Wessels, *European Political Cooperation: Towards a foreign Policy for Western Europe*, London 1982, pp. 83 - 93; Philippe de Schoutheete, *Coopération*, *op. cit.*, p. 60 ff.
- 37) Cf. Kissinger's famous speech, in: Department of State Bulletin, No 1768, 14 May 1973, pp. 593 - 598
- 38) Beate Lindemann, *op. cit.*, p. 132

The Future of the "External Relations" of
European Political Cooperation

by

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The Future of the "External Relations" of
European Political Cooperation

by Philippe de Schoutheete

Two preliminary observations are in order before I approach the topic of the future of European Political Cooperation's "external relations". First, predicting the future in political science is always more or less informed guesswork. I have done my best to neutralize the influence of my personal policy preferences on this guesswork. Second, it is difficult to distinguish the future of the "external relations" of EPC from the future of EPC itself. After all, European Political Cooperation is by nature an external projection of the common purpose of the Ten.

That being said it may be useful to distinguish the mechanics of EPC -- the possible evolution of the procedures of EPC -- from the substance -- the problems which are most likely to be in the foreground of EPC activities.

PROCEDURE

The first prediction which can reasonably be made is that EPC will continue to develop on the lines it is presently following: there will be more of the same. Member States tend to consider political cooperation a success story and they view the results with what amounts sometimes to self-indulgent complacency. They will therefore go further along this road.

This view implies that EPC will exert increasing influence on the respective national foreign policy apparatuses. Political cooperation is frequently, and up to a point rightly, branded as too declaratory: but it should not be judged on its declarations alone. The real impact of EPC is the influence it exerts on the national foreign policies of the Member States. For the same reason one should be careful about introducing too clear a distinction between "national" foreign policy and "European" foreign policy in the form of EPC. This distinction may be useful for analytical purposes, but the truth is that these two branches influence each other; neither is chemically pure, both are largely interdependent.

There will be a parallel development of the influence which political cooperation exerts on the external relations of the Community. Mr. Nuttall elaborates this point elsewhere in this Working Paper. I will note only that recent relations with Poland and Central America have demonstrated the Ten's awareness of the political clout which Community activities can carry. This makes for greater cohesion between the two branches of European activity, a point from which I derive considerable satisfaction.

Another likely development is an increase in the number of political contacts which the Ten entertain with other groups of states. Such contacts already exist with the countries of ASEAN, the Contadora group, Central America and the Arab League through the Euro-Arab Dialogue. Contacts with the Andean Pact countries are likely to be consolidated in the not too distant future. The diversity of the political systems and of the foreign policy

choices within the ACP group probably impede the development of a political dialogue with the Ten within the institutions of the Lomé agreements, except on isolated questions like apartheid. On the other hand, the Council of Europe has, in the last few years, acquired a new function: that of clearing house for a political dialogue between the Ten and Western European countries outside the EEC. My guess is that the dynamic impulse of Marcelino Oreja, the new Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will increase this activity.

I have argued elsewhere that the development of contacts between groups of states is one of the characteristics of modern day diplomacy. It certainly serves to alleviate the uncomfortable feeling of inferiority in size and number that an isolated state may feel (if it is not a superpower) when seeking to establish a dialogue with a ponderous and unwieldy entity like the Ten in political cooperation.

Finally, there is the possible emergence of a political secretariat. This possibility, which has been proposed time and again over the years and always unsuccessfully, seems now a little closer than before. It would not be surprising if such a proposal, in one form or another, appeared in the conclusions of the "Dooge" committee.

The most probable form a political secretariat could take would be that of a small diplomatic cell, possibly recruited on the basis of an enlarged "troika" system, i.e. the Presidency and two countries preceding and succeeding it. It could be assisted by a very small administrative staff (and a computer) and led by

a secretary general, who would be more likely to be a civil servant than a political figure, but who should have sufficient standing to be able to talk to ministers and foreign ambassadors. It should be based in Brussels in order to facilitate contacts with the Commission and the Secretary General of the Council and ensure cohesion in the sum of European activities. Its main tasks could be:

- memory: archives and precedents, secretariat of the meetings.
- conscience: to recall the rules and customs of EPC.
- external relations at a routine level for the information of foreign governments, the "political" level remaining in the hands of the Presidency.

A political secretariat, so conceived, would seem to be a reasonable compromise between the need to alleviate the task of the President (especially in view of enlargement and the continuous development of external relations of EPC) and the fear of creating a new bureaucracy, which would burden the functioning of EPC and compete for "power" with the national administrations.

SUBSTANCE

It seems to me most probable that Member States will devote considerable attention in future to three areas where difficulties have arisen in recent years: discussion of defence

matters, relations with the USA and the particular case of Greece.

The Nato Council has recently confirmed that the "Defence-Détente" equation, which derives from the Harmel report of the sixties, remains as valid a political guideline in the eighties as it was in the seventies. Nevertheless, European governments' perception of the relative weight of the two concepts changed between the seventies and the eighties. In the seventies the main preoccupation of western European governments in East-West relations was the management of détente in the glow of Ostpolitik and the Helsinki agreement. In the eighties the main preoccupation has undoubtedly been the stationing of missiles. The change occurred somewhere between the famous speech by Chancellor Schmidt in London in 1977 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the beginning of 1980, with the double-track decision of the Nato Council in December 1979 serving as a useful benchmark.

Such a change in emphasis, even if the basic concept remains valid, could not but have a considerable impact on EPC. Member States in political cooperation are well equipped to discuss the management of détente and in fact the CSCE process figured prominently on the agenda of EPC activities from the very first ministerial meeting at Munich in 1970. But, by their own rules, they are not equipped at all to discuss defence matters. Therefore, an issue that became in the eighties a major concern of several Members States in East-West relations, and in some cases the major problem of foreign policy as a whole, fell outside the scope of EPC precisely at a moment when the moral and

political support of partners would have been most welcome for the Member States most directly implicated.

This evolution serves to explain a certain number of events in recent diplomatic activity. First, as others have noted, the Ten played a leading role at the CSCE conferences of Geneva and Belgrade, but a much more subdued one at the conferences of Madrid and Stockholm, where the Nato caucus has been predominant. Second, internal efforts, first in the London report of 1981 and later in the Genscher-Colombo initiative, have been made to introduce some discussion of security and/or defence matters in the framework of the Ten. Four research institutes in 1981 suggested independently that strategy and security problems should be discussed by a group of "core countries," thereby establishing a sort of "directoire" on security matters. Finally, in 1983 and 1984, Belgium and France proposed that the Western European Union should be reactivated.

In the present preliminary stages it is difficult to assess the impact of this last development on EPC, but some impact it is bound to have. The promoters clearly aim to create a forum for discussion of defence matters (and, to some degree, of arms procurement) at a European level. WEU was proposed not out of appreciation for this specific institution but because it happened to exist and to comprise those members or the Ten who were ready to discuss defence matters. In this sense it is typical of the pragmatic approach which has characterized the development of EPC from the very beginning. Precautions will be necessary to prevent the reactivation of WEU in any way impairing or diminishing the activities of EPC. This may imply the building

of links between EPC and WEU just as links were built with the Community institutions in the formative years of political cooperation. With some flexibility on all sides it should be possible to reach a situation whereby WEU activities are in fact an application of "variable geometry" to political cooperation, a concept that academics may wish to analyse and consider.

The matter of relations between Europe and the United States comes up repeatedly in discussions of EPC. It is true, as some observers have noted, that the level of these relations is rather more intense now than it has been in the past. American commentators generally greet warmly all indications of EPC's vitality. Nevertheless, if the European Community picks up a new dynamism in its development, as I hope and think possible, differences of tactics, opinion and interests are bound to arise between the two sides of the Atlantic in the fields of international trade, monetary system and relations with the developing world. If political cooperation develops in parallel with EEC activities, conflicting views will inevitably appear in certain instances, as they did in the case of the Venice Declaration on the Middle East. Growing coordination of European views in the field of defence, such as I have predicted, might have a similar effect. In other words, a more assertive Europe would appear in Washington to be a less comfortable ally.

The problem, I believe, is not to discover how these difficulties can be avoided -- they probably cannot -- but how they should be dealt with. There is probably no snap solution to the problem, but what seems evident is that existing mechanisms are inadequate to take care of the complex economic and political

problems which may arise and to avoid surprises and misunderstandings. We have to look for something better and more coherent whereby, at a relatively high level, discussions and exchanges of views can be held on a variety of subjects.

European Political Cooperation was created and has developed on the tacit assumption that participating states have a similar view of their general geopolitical and strategic interests. The advent of the Pasok government in Athens has put this tacit assumption in doubt. On certain aspects of policy in the Middle East and several aspects of East-West relations, Greece not only has views that differ from those of the other Nine but insists on underlining the fact. This development has not in fact altered the general balance of EPC statements, but it has on several occasions (for instance in the Korean Boeing incident and in several phases of the Polish crisis) condemned the Ten to silence.

Intimations of future difficulties can be discerned from other recent events. Upon signing the Solemn Declaration on European Union in Stuttgart in June 1983, the Greek government asked that a declaration be inserted in the minutes that "nothing can restrict its right to determine its foreign policy in conformity with its national interest". From a legal point of view this affirmation is uncontroverted. But EPC has never been a legalistic exercise. It has been a pragmatic enterprise to establish common positions and common actions in foreign policy. The reaffirmation of "national interest" in the context of a declaration aiming at strengthening EPC demonstrated that one of EPC's bases was being put in doubt. The other Member States are,

of course, also guided by what they see as their national interest. But they see their national interest precisely in the search for common positions and common actions which is the "raison d'etre" of EPC. The Greek government clearly did not, or at least not necessarily.

Such a position may well be taken in future by other governments, so the problem should not be viewed as limited to Greece and current political realities. If political cooperation is to develop, especially in the context of an enlarged Community, it should find ways and means to define a "European" position and eventually to act upon it, even if one member has reservations or dissents. At times this may be possible through "variable geometry". At times perhaps by acting through Community channels where majority voting is possible. As is frequently the case in EPC, the solutions will be neither very neat nor completely satisfactory, but, along with the other problems I have mentioned, I suspect that they will occupy the minds of the practitioners of European Political Cooperation in the future.

THE FUTURE OF THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

by Simon Nuttall

Introduction

To discuss the future of the external relations of European Political Cooperation (EPC) is encouraging, since it implies that they have a present. To some, this is not self-evident. The current academic orthodoxy seems to be that the external relations of "Europe" can best be perceived and categorized as a series of broadly coherent activities and policies undertaken by West European countries in a variety of fora.

This analysis sets too little store by the declared intention of Member States of the Community to use EPC as a means of speaking with one voice in international affairs.

It also neglects some characteristics of EPC which distinguish it from other ways of coordinating foreign policy. These include : -

- the existence of highly developed machinery for policy formation;
- the fact that positions are regularly made public by recognised spokesmen (for example at the United Nations);
- the substantive content of positions and policies.

It is likely that, in the future, the activities of EPC will continue on existing lines. We may hope, however, that there will be a strengthening of procedures and an improvement in the quality of the product.

2. It has to be recognised that the consensus procedure adopted by EPC imposes constraints on rapid qualitative progress. This paper will examine ways in which progress may nevertheless be made regardless of the continued existence of the veto. Three possibilities will be examined : -

- a more constructive use of possibilities for action within the Community framework,
- a strengthening of the external operation of EPC;
- a more effective response to expectations on the part of third countries.

More constructive use of possibilities within the Community

3. It might be thought that to achieve a more constructive interplay between EPC and the Community requires better coordination than exists at present. The shortcomings of such coordination are from time to time criticized by the practitioners of EPC. The problem should not be exaggerated, however. A high proportion of the activities of EPC have little, if any, bearing on the Community. An even higher proportion of the activities of the Community is of no interest to EPC. In the limited area in which the two overlap, coordination is not difficult and does in fact take place. Although it is formally the responsibility of the Presidency, the Commission can be of assistance because of its direct knowledge and experience of what is going on on both sides. Problems do exist in some cases, but usually at the level of coordination among departments at the level of national administrations.

4. More thought should be given by Member States to the use of Community instruments to achieve foreign policy objectives. Instruments suitable for this purpose are : -

- the common commercial policy;
- financial aid
- Cooperation Agreements.

Commercial policy measures

5. Economic measures with regard to third countries, designed to give effect to foreign policy aims, may be taken under the common commercial policy (Art. 113 EEC). This was the case with regard to the Soviet Union after the imposition of martial law in Poland and with regard to Argentina following the invasion of the Falkland Islands. In both cases, common European foreign policy views were given expression by Council Regulations which would not have been adopted for reasons of commercial policy alone. Clearly, these possibilities have their limitations. There must be serious doubt about the effectiveness of sanctions as a long-term response to a given situation, but specific actions of this type can serve a short-term purpose by sending a political signal.

Furthermore, Art. 113 provides further possibilities for action which do not encounter the arguments brought against the use of sanctions. In the first part of this year, following the UN report on the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf War, the Council was seized of a proposal to regulate by a Community measure the export of certain chemical substances used for the manufacture of weapons. For various reasons, this proposal was not approved, and Member States took a set of broadly convergent national measures. Action by the Community as such would have been more effective in practice and more striking in sending a political signal.

The use of common commercial policy instruments for foreign policy purposes encounters objections of an institutional nature on the part of Denmark, whose authorities are under an obligation to oppose such actions in the Council even when there is no objection to the substance of what is proposed and the Danish Government is prepared to introduce identical national legislation. This might be thought to preclude further Community action on these lines. However, it should be recalled that proposals based on Art. 113 EEC can be adopted by a qualified majority. Even those who favour a wide interpretation of the Luxemburg compromise would have difficulty in invoking an important national interest when the disagreement concerns not the substance of a measure but the mode by which it should be adopted.

Financial aid

6. The Community Budget may be used to give financial aid to third countries in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. An example of this is Central America. The Community conducts an aid programme in Central America currently running at around 40 mio ECU annually. An additional sum of 20 mio ECU was put into the draft Budget for 1985, the intention being to reinforce the Central American programme. This programme was being run in any case for development reasons, but it is unlikely that the additional funds would have been forthcoming had it not been thought desirable to underline the Community's political and economic approach to the region set out in the communiqué issued after the San José Conference.

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The Polish Church is promoting a scheme for aid to private agriculture and handicrafts financed primarily from outside sources. Several Member States have indicated that they would support a financial contribution by the Community. No decision has yet been taken, pending the setting up in Poland of a Foundation to administer the scheme. If in due course a decision is taken to make appropriate provision in the Community Budget, it will be a further example of using Community funds primarily for foreign policy objectives, since the scheme would not have had a high enough priority had it been examined from a purely development point of view.

The advantage of the use of Community financial resources is that only these carry the European label which gives an action its specifically European character.

Cooperation Agreements

7. The Community has a number of Cooperation Agreements with regional groupings. The Agreement with ASEAN is in force and has been working well for some years. The Agreement with the Andean Pact is signed and awaiting ratification. An agreement will be negotiated with the countries of Central America. This facility provides the Ten with an opportunity to develop a distinctive new type of foreign policy approach, which would no longer simply be a reflexion of bilateral relations but a dialogue of region to region. This could be an important contribution to the way in which international questions are managed in the future.

8. The Community's Cooperation Agreements with individual third countries also give an opportunity for political as well as economic dialogue. This is the case with, for example, China and India. In these cases, the Cooperation Agreement with the Community give some additional substance to the political dialogue with Member States, although they are less important than in the case of regional dialogues. Nor is it suggested that there can or should be political dialogues with all the individual countries with which the Community has Cooperation Agreements (Brazil, North Yemen).

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9. It might be thought that the most important and innovative "Cooperation Agreement" which the Community has concluded - the Lomé Convention - would provide the opportunity for a political dialogue on a large scale. There are, however, obstacles in the way of this. The request for political dialogue must come from the third countries themselves. It cannot be forced on them against their will. Because of past history, the ACP countries would be particularly sensitive to any suggestion that a political dialogue was not on a basis of complete equality, as the misunderstanding over the suggestion that Lomé III should incorporate the idea of a "policy dialogue" has shown. Furthermore, the ACP countries are a disparate grouping of States with widely varying political views, which would not find it easy to reach common positions for a political dialogue.

Differentiation

10. It is an interesting feature of the instruments available in the Community for the pursuit of foreign policy objectives that they are more accommodating to differentiation in the position of Member States than are the consensus decisions required for policy statements by the Ten. This is not a question of "variable geometry", for all Member States continue to take part in Community decision-making, but shows a way of setting to one side consensus difficulties by allowing Member States to modulate their participation in different actions.

For example, when Community economic measures were applied to the Soviet Union following the imposition of martial law in Poland, a specific measure was adopted exempting Greece. Again, when economic measures were taken with regard to Argentina after the invasion of the Falkland Islands, Italy and Ireland were able at a later stage to withdraw from them by virtue of Article 224 EEC. Of course, the partial application of these measures was less effective than if they had been applied by all partners, but nevertheless Community action remained possible and continued to make a political impact, whereas the rules of EPC would in the same circumstances have precluded common action.

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Similarly, as regards aid to Central America, it could be difficult for some Member States to give aid bilaterally to El Salvador, while others would have similar difficulties with regard to Nicaragua. The fact that aid can be given by the Community (on a regional basis), allows Member States to distance themselves from particular aspects of the action and in part to disengage their direct responsibility.

Drawbacks

11. There is, however, a drawback to greater exploitation of the Community by EPC for foreign policy purposes, which is that the Community itself is not yet strong enough to bear the weight. This has implications for EPC in general and also specific disadvantages.

12. The only qualification for membership of the Ten is membership of the Community. There is no exclusive natural affinity among the Ten, as opposed to some other grouping, on strategic or political grounds. This means that if the Community does not carry weight, EPC is not credible. One might argue that the degree of credibility of the one is in direct proportion to the degree of credibility of the other.

13. Two examples can be given of more practical consequences. The first concerns the pressure on Foreign Ministers' time. It has frequently happened recently that time allotted to discussion of EPC subjects has had to be used for Community subjects instead because of the intractability of Community problems which could not be solved in the time originally set aside for them. Both EPC Ministerial Meetings under the Irish Presidency in the second half of 1985 suffered this fate because the time was needed to continue discussions on enlargement. This has serious consequences, because the mechanics of EPC require the formation of convergent positions through discussion at the political level. If discussions are curtailed, convergence suffers.

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Similarly, for eighteen months (between the Stuttgart and Dublin European Councils), the European Council was not able to adopt EPC conclusions because of lack of time or because failure to agree on internal matters would have made it absurd to express in public opinions on external matters. This meant not only that the outside world and the Ten themselves were deprived of a reference point for the foreign policy of the Ten, but also that there was no internal pressure within the Ten to review and redefine their positions on the questions of the day.

14. Secondly, the Community's budgetary situation (the need for additional own resources; the new rules for budgetary discipline; the generally unfavourable economic situation) places limits on the extent to which recourse can be had to Community financial actions for foreign policy objectives. The more money which can be spent, the greater the impact in terms of foreign policy. For example, the additional sum of 20 mio ECU in the 1985 draft Budget intended for use as aid to Central America, referred to above, is not negligible, but the effect in foreign policy terms would have been more impressive if it had been possible to make available, say, ten times as much. Similarly, whatever political decision is finally taken on a contribution from the Community budget to the Polish Church scheme for agriculture, the restrictions on the budget exclude any but a token contribution to help finance the pilot stage of the scheme. Significant assistance to the later full scale implementation of the scheme is financially unthinkable.

Strengthening the external dimension of EPC

15. The intensity of Political Cooperation among Missions of the Ten in third countries is commonly underestimated. This is understandable, since it takes place further away from interested observers and is by its nature less likely to produce public results than EPC in the capitals of the Ten. There is, however, a considerable amount of activity in the form of formal cooperation meetings, working lunches, démarches to the host government and common or coordinated actions in the host countries.

The increase in this activity dates to some time before the London Report, of which a specific section is devoted to the subject.

16. Since then, there has been further discussion on how to reinforce this cooperation. In May 1984 the Political Committee issued a series of directives to Missions in third countries indicating areas in which cooperation should be strengthened.

17. This activity is important because it means that the Ambassadors of the Ten engaged in it have a greater consciousness of EPC and acquire the habit of thinking together and seeing themselves as a group. It also sharpens the profile of the Ten in the eyes of the host country.

The Delegate of the Commission regularly takes part in these meetings. This is particularly important in ACP countries, where the Community is often an important aid donor, and where the Commission's representative is consequently more highly regarded by the host government than he might be in other countries.

18. The question may be asked whether, in the present difficult economic circumstances, there is not scope for extending this type of cooperation by searching for ways of administrative cooperation with the specific object of cutting costs by sharing facilities or services and by avoiding duplication of work. It is not a question of setting up "European Embassies" with all the adverse reactions that notion causes in some parts of public opinion, but rather practical collaboration in areas like consular services, where a positive image of practical European cooperation can be presented to the tax-payer.

Response to expectations on the part of third countries

19. Increasing interest has been shown in EPC by third countries, especially since the London Report, as evidenced by the number of requests for formal contacts which have been made. In addition to the United States, there are now formal arrangements for conversations with Japan, China and India, as well as the rather different cases of Spain and Portugal and ASEAN. This interest shows that the Ten are increasingly perceived as a coherent grouping by the outside world.

The London Report made special provision to respond to this interest, a section being devoted to the organization of relations with third countries. Moreover, cooperation among the Ten is increasingly obliged to develop in line with pressure of this type exerted on it from outside. The organization of the various contacts, whether through formal meetings or informal briefings of Ambassadors, takes time and requires an effort from the Presidency, which especially the smaller countries have difficulty in providing without additional support. At the same time, the Ten are more frequently faced with the need to take up common positions in order to respond to a specific enquiry or to prepare for a meeting. This pressure from outside provides an incentive for a development in substance of the positions of the Ten which is not organically present in the institutional organization of EPC.

Technological advances

20. Finally, a word about the possibility of profiting from advances in modern technology. When Political Cooperation began, there was no means by which the participants could communicate directly and securely among themselves. This led to the setting up of the Coreu network, over which some 5,000 messages are exchanged annually. This technical facility has had an important effect on the frequency and intensity of consultations.

The cypher telegram is, however, out-of-date in concept when compared with the most recent techniques of telecommunications. There is reason to hope that progress in the technical aspects of data transmission may be matched by improvements in security, an aspect which has hitherto been relatively neglected. It is reasonable to expect that these new technical possibilities will have a similar qualitative effect on cooperation among the Ten as the introduction of the Coreu network did at the time. The habits of easy contact among Foreign Ministries, one of the most important achievements of EPC, can only profit from this.

Some Concluding Remarks on the Future of
European Political Cooperation

by
Geoffrey Edwards

European Political Cooperation (EPC) has generally been regarded as a success, not least by a succession of European Foreign Ministers. In the space of fifteen years, some well-publicised differences between Greece and its partners notwithstanding, the coordination of foreign policy by the ten Member States of the European Community has advanced enormously. The London Report of 1981 may still appear limited in scope when confronted with the example of the nation state. Yet against the background of the Luxembourg Report of 1970, the progress made has been highly significant. Many officials and academics now talk of a 'European reflex', even if common or coordinated action by the Ten does not always emerge from their consultations.

What has been particularly impressive for many has been the fact that EPC has developed during a period of sometimes intense preoccupation within the European Community with internal affairs, in particular the absorption of new members and the Community's budget. Somehow, even though the Governments and indeed the Ministers involved have been the same, EPC has escaped the effects of the Community's creeping sclerosis. The interdependence of the Community and EPC must sooner or later be felt, but up to now the extent of agreement in EPC has often stood in marked contrast to the wranglings within the Community.

Moreover, the development of EPC has taken place against a background of increasing East-West tension and growing Euro-American difficulties. Both factors demanded closer cooperation on the part of the Ten if EPC was to win any credibility at all. The role of the United States has often been of critical importance, both through American acts of commission and of omission. The United States has frequently encouraged closer cooperation among its European allies, particularly in support of its own policies. However, on other occasions the United States has caused its allies to cooperate because it has failed to act or it has acted in a way that in the Ten's eyes runs counter to their interests. This pattern, perhaps, supports the argument that even important EPC policies have been largely reactive.

Whether reactive or not, EPC policies have commanded more attention from other governments as their scope has been broadened. Governments wish to know, perhaps need to know, what Europe's reactions are going to be before they take their own decisions. They may also seek to influence European policy in their own interests, or at least ensure that their interests have not been ignored or overlooked. The largely ad hoc development of relations between EPC and other governments is well drawn out in Elfriede Regelsberger's paper. But, as Regelsberger also makes clear, third-country interest in EPC has increased even though its

role is clearly recognized as complementary or supplementary to that of the Member States.

Such a role points to the conclusion that Political Cooperation's impact has necessarily been limited. The criticism has often been made that not only is European policy reactive, it has also been confined largely to declarations of an agreed position. Action, in other words, has been singularly lacking; the instruments of international intercourse, of trade and aid etc., are either in the hands of the European Community or retained by the individual Member States. Such views may underestimate the significance of mutual consultations and cooperation both among the Ten and with third countries, whether on a daily or frequent and fairly informal basis or in more elaborate set-piece meetings. The impact of voices frequently heard in harmony if not in unison can be highly significant.

Nonetheless, the extent of the Ten's unity and cooperation can be overestimated; the limits to consensus have too often been revealed. The reluctance of Greece, Ireland and Denmark to go beyond the vague wording of the London Report, that discussions will take place only on the 'economic and political aspects of security', indicates the limits of agreement. The sometimes highly individualistic policies of the Greek Government on other East-West issues have also shown clearly the weaknesses of EPC.

Two new Member States will also soon need to be absorbed. Although their policies have increasingly converged with those of the Ten, their accession to the Community and EPC will exacerbate a number of more practical problems: the burdens on the Presidency have already become onerous; the timetables of Foreign Ministers are already over-crowded. Circumstances are not particularly propitious for further developments.

And yet, as both Philippe de Schoutheete and Simon Nuttall suggest, there is room for optimism. Even if the scope of EPC discussions is not broadened dramatically in the immediate future, many improvements can be made to Political Cooperation's infrastructure; for example, the establishment of a secretariat, closer coordination of EPC and Community procedures and instruments, and closer relations with third countries. Discussions on institutional reforms may appear to be yet another example of Europe side-stepping the real issues that confront it. However, the increasing debate over the framework within which the institutions might operate could prove of fundamental importance to the construction of Europe. The concept of 'variable geometry', of different but interconnected constellations of European states, has been discussed with growing seriousness. Indeed, the decision of seven Member States to revive the Western European Union in order to consult and perhaps cooperate more

closely on defence issues may prove to be a significant harbinger of such changes.

Pragmatism, however, rather than sudden, radical change, has been the hallmark of European Political Cooperation so far. "More of the same" may be an unexciting prophesy; nonetheless it holds forth new opportunities to be grasped for further development.

Position. Article 19, in other words, has been singularly lacking in the instruments of international intercourse of trade and air etc., are either in the hands of the European Community or reserved by the individual Member States. Such views may underestimate the significance of mutual consultations and cooperation, both at the top and with third countries, whether on a daily or weekly and fairly informal basis or in more formal sessions. The report of voice frequently

Notwithstanding the extent of the framework and cooperation can be overstated. The limits to consensus have too often been revealed. The reluctance of Greece, Ireland and Denmark to go beyond the vague wording of the Lisbon Report, that discussions will concentrate on the economic and political aspects of security, indicate the limits of agreement. The sometimes highly individualistic policies of the Greek Government on other East-West issues have also shown clearly the weaknesses of EPC.

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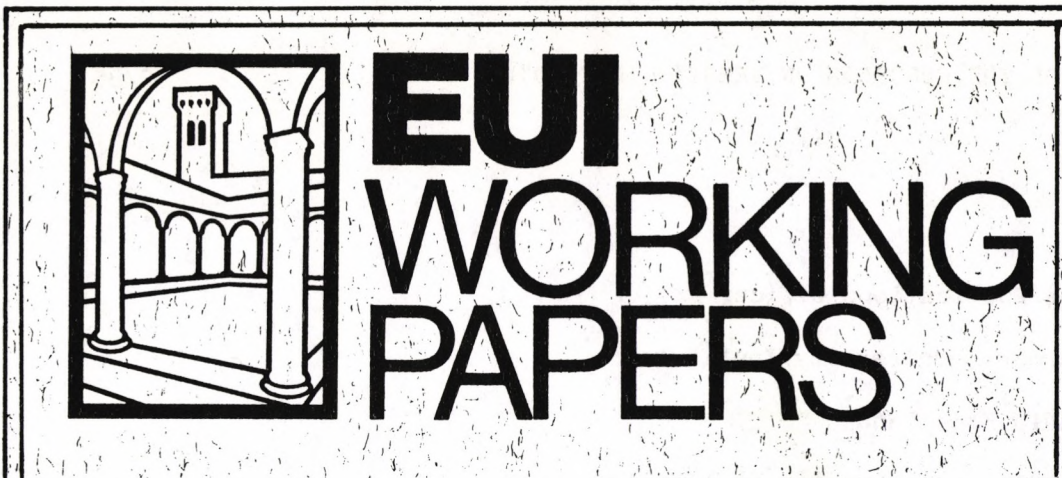
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