

LSE Research Online

[Piers Ludlow](#)

Not a wholly New Europe: how the integration framework shaped the end of the Cold War in Europe

Book section

Original citation:

Originally published in Ludlow, N. Piers (2016) *Not a wholly New Europe: how the integration framework shaped the end of the Cold War in Europe*. In: Bozo, Frédéric, Rödder, Andreas and Sarotte, Mary Elise, (eds.) *German Reunification: A Multinational History*. Cold War history. [Routledge](#), Abingdon, UK, pp. 133-152. ISBN 9781138960909

© 2017 The Author

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68382/>

Available in LSE Research Online: November 2016

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's submitted version of the book section. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

Not A Wholly New Europe:
How the integration framework shaped the
end of the Cold War in Europe

Abstract

Although often rhetorically presented as a ‘new Europe’, post-1989 Europe was deeply affected by the trajectory of the Western European integration process prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The fact that the European Community of the late 1980s was booming, its ambitions and dynamism at a historical high, did much to shape the manner in which most Western European countries, and France and Germany especially, responded to the geo-political earthquake of 1989-90. ‘More Europe’ – i.e. greater integration - became the collective response to the potential challenges ahead – a trend which not only explains why Franco-German relations so rapidly discovered their equilibrium after the momentary uncertainty of November 1989, but also why Thatcher so quickly became isolated on the German question. The dynamism of the integration process further encouraged the US to continue their longstanding support for European unity, and exercised a magnetic pull on the newly emerging governments of post-Communist Europe. But this outcome had serious implications for Russia, since there was a fundamental incompatibility between EU-based integration and the type of pan-European structure which might have enabled post-Soviet Russia to feel that it had an ongoing stake in the European game.

The Berlin Wall fell at a time when the European integration process was advancing very rapidly. Most of the existing literature on the end of the Cold War in Europe does acknowledge this fact, albeit often as little more than a piece of contextualising detail. Some authors, to be fair, do go rather further suggesting that November 9, 1989 and its consequences had an important impact on the integration process itself, notably increasing the speed with which Europe progressed towards its pre-existing objective of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). But relatively few of those to have written about the end of the Cold War have gone very far in examining the possible chains of causality that run in the other direction – in other words the ways in

which the status of the integration process affected the end of the Cold War. It is this gap that the current chapter intends to address. In doing so it will suggest that a great deal of the rhetoric of total flux that characterised both public discourse and private diplomacy in the course of the 1989-90 period was in fact deeply misleading. Much was undeniably changing in Europe as the forty year long East-West conflict came to its abrupt and dramatic end; but much else remained the same. And the fact that the centrality of the integration process and the importance of its internal dynamics were among the key things that remained the same, would have vital consequences for the behaviour of several of the key actors in the months and years that followed.

The existing historiography

There has long been a tendency for the separate historiographies of Europe in the Cold War and the European integration process to ignore one another.¹ A number of younger scholars, it is true, have begun to reverse this trend. For the 1970s in particular we are beginning to have a literature that explores in some depth the interconnections between the East-West conflict and the changing shape and nature of Western Europe.² There are a handful of cases where a similar attempt has been made to investigate the linkages in the 1980s also.³ And it is also a case that some of the more detailed studies of European decision-makers and the end of the Cold War make clear the way in which their central protagonists were preoccupied with *both* the sudden transformation of Eastern Europe and the ongoing process of radical change underway in the Western half of the continent.⁴ But more often than not it is the

¹ N. Piers Ludlow, ed., *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, Cold War History Series (London: Routledge, 2007), 1–3.

² Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Maria Gainar, *Aux origines de la diplomatie européenne: les neuf et la coopération politique européenne de 1973 à 1980* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2012); Aurélie Elisa Gfeller, *Building a European Identity: France, the United States, and the Oil Shock, 1973-1974* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009); Angela Romano, “Untying Cold War Knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the Long 1970s,” *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 153–73; Angela Romano and Federico Romero, “European Socialist Regimes Facing Globalisation and European Co-Operation: Dilemmas and Responses – Introduction,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 21, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 157–64.

³ See for example Kiran Klaus Patel and Kenneth Weisbrode eds., *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴ Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l’unification allemande: de Yalta à Maastricht* (Paris: O. Jacob, 2005); Antonio Varsori, *L’Italia e la fine della guerra fredda: la politica estera dei governi Andreotti (1989-1992)* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2013); Andreas Rödter, *Deutschland einig Vaterland: die Geschichte der Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: Beck, 2009); this is also true of several

parallelism of such changes and such preoccupations that comes across more strongly than their causal links. Much of the US centred literature on the end of the Cold War meanwhile, shows only a passing interest in the integration process, tending instead to portray Kohl's European partners as hesitant and scared obstructions to German unity, ultimately swept aside by a diplomatic push for unification dominated by Bonn and Washington. The European Community dimension of the issue figures little in Zelikow and Rice's account; it is marginal in Hutchings; and peripheral in Bush and Baker's recollections.⁵ Mary Sarotte's *1989* is a solitary and honourable exception to this trend.⁶

In most other sub-periods, writing about European integration history has been equally culpable of disregarding the Cold War. Strangely, however, this problem does not apply to the end of the Cold War. Rather the reverse is true indeed, with a proliferation of literature centred around the question of whether the acceleration of the integration of Western Europe that occurred during the 1989-1992 period was primarily a consequence of the geo-political earthquake that altered the European landscape during these years, or instead had more to do with internal, Western European dynamics.⁷ Related to this broader debate, has also been the controversial, and at times highly polemical discussion, of whether Germany gave up the *Deutschmark* (DM) and accepted to move towards EMU as the price for its partners' (and especially France's) acquiescence in German unification. This is a case advanced by several serious studies.⁸ But it also something that has been picked up within German domestic politics by those who regret the passing of the DM.⁹ Other

chapters in Frédéric Bozo et al., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁵ Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); Robert L Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989-1992* (Washington, D.C.; Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1998); James Addison Baker and Thomas M DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: Putnam, 1995).

⁶ M. E Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁷ See for example the special issue of the *Journal of European Integration History*, 19.1 (2013)

⁸ Kenneth H. F Dyson and Kevin Featherstone, *The Road to Maastricht: Negotiating Economic and Monetary Union* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Marsh, *The Euro: The Politics of the New Global Currency* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁹ See e.g. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/the-price-of-unity-was-the-deutsche-mark-sacrificed-for-reunification-a-719940.html>

scholars by contrast reject any notion of straight exchange or deal.¹⁰ Regardless of the line taken, however, this debate does focus closely on the existence or not of strong links between what happened as the Cold War came to its end and the simultaneous and subsequent development of European integration. Any causality running the other way, however, has been much less discussed.

A time of uncertainty

A prominent theme within both contemporary commentary about 1989 and retrospective analysis is the sense that everything was changing so fast that nothing could be relied upon to remain as it had been before. Needless to say this impression of flux was for many a cause of celebration and hope. President George H.W. Bush's famous proclamation of a 'new world order' was just the single best known of many public and private assertions of how much change the end of the Cold War order implied.¹¹ It could easily be flanked, however, with any number of further optimistic statements from statesmen and analysts across Europe, hailing the collapse of the old barriers and the vast array of exciting new prospects for movement, dialogue, trade, and exchange that were opened up by the collapse of Communism.¹² The promise of a new and wholly different Europe was at hand and for vast numbers of people this was a reason for genuine pleasure and anticipation.

Alongside this surge in optimism though, there was always another rather darker strand of rhetoric, which painted this very same possibility of widespread change, not as a cause for joy or celebration, but instead as a source of danger and instability. Amongst the most talked about examples of this rather more pessimistic reading of 1989 and its potential consequences were two tête-à-tête meetings between François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher, first in December 1989, then in January 1990. In the course of the first meeting, held in Strasbourg on the margins of the European Council, both leaders were open about their anxieties, the British Prime Minister exclaiming, 'If we were not careful, reunification would just come about. If that were to happen all the fixed points in Europe would collapse.' A little later Mitterrand would strike a similarly gloomy note, saying according to the British

¹⁰ Harold James, *Making the European Monetary Union: The Role of the Committee of Central Bank Governors and the Origins of the European Central Bank* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹¹ For the text of Bush's speech: <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/pal10.htm>

¹² For a flavour, see 'The Future of Europe: A Debate' in *International Affairs*, 66/2, April 1990.

record at least, that '[h]e was fearful that he and the Prime Minister would find themselves in the situation of their predecessors in the 1930s who had failed to react in the face of constant pressing forward by the Germans.'¹³ And just over a month later, the same two leaders swapped another series of Cassandra like observations about the implications of rapid change, this time over lunch at the Elysée. Once more Thatcher defined unification as a development that 'would confront us all with a major problem'; and once again Mitterrand resorted to historical analogies, this time evoking memories of 1913.¹⁴ In the public arena too, various commentators warned ominously of the reawakening of some of Europe's old demons and sought to pour cold water on the hopes of a freer more stable continent now that the Iron Curtain had collapsed.¹⁵ All was indeed changing, but not necessarily for the better.

This same sense of possibility, both good and bad, was the background for the debate about the 'architecture' of the 'new Europe', extensively analysed by Mary Sarotte.¹⁶ Central Europe was not perhaps a green-field site – there was just too much complex and potentially painful history buried just below the surface, as the break-up of Yugoslavia would soon demonstrate, for that particular metaphor to be appropriate – but the rapid dissolution of all of the various structures of international Communism, from the Warsaw Pact to Comecon, inevitably conveyed the impression that this was a brown-field site where planning permission could easily be obtained for any number of new institutional and organisational developments. The proliferation of architectural plans for Eastern European or Pan-European entities that ensued, both publicly and behind the closed doors of foreign ministries, was thus a seemingly logical response to the exciting new possibilities that appeared to be opening up.¹⁷

¹³ Patrick Salmon, *German Unification 1989-1990: Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 164–165. The accuracy of the British record, at least in so far as it captured what the French President said, has been strongly questioned by Frédéric Bozo who has had access to the French minutes of the same meeting. That Thatcher at least was pessimistic seems beyond doubt, however.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 215–219. Mitterrand used the same 1913 parallel with Bush: Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 201.

¹⁵ According to his most recent biographer, Kohl was particularly upset by a piece in the London Times entitled "Beware a Reich Resurgent", Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl: eine politische Biographie*, 2012, 557. The reference would appear to be to a piece by Conor Cruise O'Brien which appeared in *The Times*, 31.10.1989.

¹⁶ Sarotte, 1989.

¹⁷ To take just one public example Adrian G. V Hyde-Price, *European Security beyond the Cold War: Four Scenarios for the Year 2010* (London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Royal Institute of International Affairs; Sage Publications, 1991).

There was always, however, a tension, if not an outright contradiction, between this apparent *tabula rasa* in Eastern Europe and the very rapid process of institutional development well underway in the Western half of the European continent. That same Strasbourg Council meeting, on the margins of which Mitterrand and Thatcher met to exchange the anxious comments cited above, was after all just the latest in a long string of top-level European encounters when the leaders of the European Community gathered to debate, discuss, and to attempt to direct, the astonishing burst of speed that the integration process had put on since 1985-86. The exact reasons for this Western European ‘acceleration of history’ need not detain us here.¹⁸ But what does matter in the context of a discussion of the end of the Cold War is first that this process of rapid advance was well underway by 1989, second that no apparent end was in sight, and third that most of the governments of Western Europe, with one key exception, were delighted with the acceleration that had occurred. The ‘Eurosclerosis’ of the early 1980s had been replaced by the surging ‘Euro-optimism’ of the decade’s end. The mood was well captured – and further stimulated – by the increasingly confident rhetoric of Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission and the person most often seen as the embodiment of the relaunch of the integration process. In October 1989, for instance, Delors made a speech at the College of Europe in Bruges which not only trumpeted the growing achievements of the integration process, but also presented European unity as the vital response to the wave of change sweeping the eastern half of the continent. It was European unity, Delors claimed that was in part responsible for drawing the gaze of Eastern Europe towards the West; but it was only through further unity that the West would be able adequately to respond, whether to the imperative to assist the transformation underway in the Communist bloc, or to the need to allow the German people to rediscover their unity.¹⁹

Also of some relevance are two further characteristics of the European integration process. The first was that ever since its inception, the task of binding together an initially limited number of Western European countries, had been

¹⁸ Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Cornell University Press, 1998); Nicolas Jabko, *Playing the Market: A Political Strategy for Uniting Europe, 1985-2005* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); N. Piers Ludlow, “From Deadlock to Dynamism: The European Community in the 1980s,” in *Origins and Evolution of the European Union*, ed. Desmond Dinan (Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁹ Jacques Delors speech at the College of Europe, October 17, 1989. Available at <https://www.coleurope.eu/speeches/older>

presented rhetorically and conceptualised by its advocates, as a process of unifying Europe, of *construction Européenne*, with no overt geographical limitation within that continent. Robert Schuman for instance had introduced his famous scheme in May 1950 for what would become the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) with the claim that France was acting as ‘le champion de l’Europe unie’ and with a deliberate allusion back to the Briand Plan of 1929-30 which had been addressed to all European members of the League of Nations.²⁰ The fact that only six countries had initially taken part in the ECSC and later the EEC – a minority within Western Europe, let alone within Europe as a whole – had in no way diminished this somewhat overblown self-understanding, nor had the reality that the policy scope of the early Community structures was narrow in the extreme. Instead integration had always been viewed as something that should, could, and indeed must, expand its scope both geographically and in policy reach in order to accomplish its fundamental task. This in-built expansionist tendency had further made co-existence between the European Communities and many of the other institutional structures that littered the European landscape systematically uncomfortable, as entities from the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), through to the Council of Europe, had discovered in the course of the 1950-1989 period.²¹ There was hence no *a priori* reason to assume that integration would forever remain a purely Western European phenomenon. The mere presence, furthermore, of an expansionist and successful set of institutional structures within the western half of the continent, was always likely to affect the scope to build new entities, either in the East alone, or spanning the whole of Europe. To resume the metaphor above, the ambitious architectural plans already being implemented by the Ten existing EC member states, were bound to have an impact on what would be possible to build elsewhere in Europe. The brown field plot was flanked by a construction site upon which a great deal of building was already underway, and its development would inevitably be affected by the ongoing work next door.

Second, since the 1970s in particular, the institutions of the European Community and the majority of member states involved with it, had also begun quite

²⁰ The text of the Schuman Declaration can be found at http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_fr.htm

²¹ For an intelligent discussion of both the EC/EU’s co-existence with other bodies, and its expansionist tendencies, see Kiran Klaus Patel, “Provincialising European Union: Co-Operation and Integration in Europe in a Historical Perspective,” *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 04 (2013): 649–73.

explicitly to associate integration with the spread and consolidation of democracy.²² The first testing ground for this ‘democratic mission’ had been southern Europe, where an acute awareness of the practical difficulties of expanding the Community in the 1970s and early 1980s to three rather poorer countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal, especially at a time when Western Europe as a whole was struggling with economic underperformance, had been more or less counterbalanced by a very strong belief that the three countries *had* to be allowed to join so as to preserve and strengthen their fledgling democratic systems and to honour the innumerable promises that had been made towards them by Western European politicians in the early stages of the Greek and Iberian transition processes.²³ By 1989, therefore, the European Community had already had a direct experience of seeking to assist in a complex process of democratic transition. And with the economies of Greece, Spain and Portugal booming, not least because of the influx of both Community money and direct investment attracted by EC membership, Brussels was rather proud of its achievements in this regard.²⁴

It is true of course that the Community itself was not immune from that generalised sense that all was changing and that nothing could be taken for granted discussed above. At the more tendentious end of the speculations about Europe and European integration’s future, were those commentators who argued that the European Community had been a product of the Cold War system, and now that this system had come to an end, so too should the EC itself.²⁵ Rather more substantive, were the anxieties about how unification and the end of Germany’s status as a vulnerable front line state in the Cold War, would affect the European vocation of the Federal Republic. The mere possibility that Bonn might be replaced as the capital city by Berlin, provoked a wave of concern that a Berlin Republic might not be the

²² A first significant step in this direction had been taken with the Declaration on European Identity, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 12, December 1973. It was followed by the Declaration on Democracy, adopted by the European institutions in April 1978. *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 3, 1978.

²³ The best analysis of the Greek case is Eirini Karamouzi, *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War, 1974-1979* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); for Spain see Matthieu Trouvé, *L’Espagne et l’Europe: de la dictature de Franco à l’Union européenne* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008)

²⁴ For a favourable Spanish government assessment of the first three years of EC membership – and a view which would have been shared by many in Brussels, see http://www.cvce.eu/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/15bb0adb-1ff0-4299-b0aa-a9563ce40459/Resources#5415f5e8-2a93-44ba-8a90-891f8b3a92e9_fr&overlay

²⁵ Delors referred to such claims in his speech to the European Parliament presenting the Community’s programme for 1990. The full text is available at <http://aei.pitt.edu/8600/>

same, pacific, and cooperative country that the Bonn Republic had been.²⁶ Still others evoked the problems of imbalance that might afflict the EC when confronted with the new colossus, in both population and economic terms, which Germany now seemed likely to become. One of the secrets of the early Community's success had been the way in which Germany's Cold War-induced amputation had meant that the fiction of equality between France and Germany, and indeed amongst all four of the EC's larger member states, had not been too much of a stretch to maintain. West Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom really were quite close to one another in terms of population and geographical size, thereby justifying the way in which they each enjoyed the same number of votes in the Council of Ministers, the same number of European Parliamentarians, and the same number of Commissioners. A reunified Germany by contrast would have to be acknowledged as a much larger entity than any of its EC partners, with a corresponding impact on the balance of power within the Community's institutional framework. That this soon to be enlarged country at Europe's heart, had also grown into an economic powerhouse whose success and power within the European Community was already a cause for concern to some of its European partners well before the Berlin Wall came down, only aggravated the apprehension about what reunification might do to the EC system.²⁷ Could integration really cope with a Germany which grew even more powerful and economically successful? Kohl himself acknowledged the power of such anxieties when talking to US Secretary of State James Baker in December 1989: 'Schon jetzt sei die Bundesrepublik Deutschland wirtschaftlich Nummer eins in Europa. Wenn jetzt noch 17 Mio. Deutsche dazukämen, sei das eben für manche ein Alptraum.'²⁸

The Community's collective response to these anxieties, however, was deeply revealing. Existential fears certainly existed, and as the government records slowly come out over the next decade or so, we will probably read more and more accounts of European leaders pooling their apprehensions about how Germany's altered position and status might upset the EC system and maybe even endanger the whole

²⁶ William E. Paterson, "From the Bonn to the Berlin Republic," *German Politics* 9, no. 1 (April 1, 2000): 23–40.

²⁷ The most obvious example of French and other concerns about excess German power occurred in the 1980s debate about monetary integration, see Daniel Gros and Niels Thygesen, *European Monetary Integration from the European Monetary System to Economic and Monetary Union* (London: Longman, 1998).

²⁸ Hanns Jürgen Küsters & Daniel Hofmann, ed., *Deutsche Einheit: Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1998), 638.

integration process. Thatcher will almost certainly not prove to be the only Cassandra out there, but instead very much in line with most of her fellow European Council members. This helps explain Chancellor Kohl's painful recollections of the debate at the Strasbourg Council in the course of which he supposedly felt himself and his country to be in the dock.²⁹ But just as has more recently been the case in the crisis over the future of the Euro which has unfolded from 2009 onwards, agonised internal debate complete with dire speculation about the approaching abyss was swiftly followed by two very powerful reflex responses on the part of most of Western Europe's leaders, the first to hang on with grim determination to all that had already been achieved, and the second to answer the new challenges with further integration rather than retreat. More Europe not less was the instinctive policy solution reached for by Europe's political elites in 1989-90 much as it has been when confronted by serious crisis more recently.³⁰ As Mitterrand put it with a degree of hyperbole during his head to head meeting with the German Chancellor in January 1990, for the first time in a thousand years there was an answer to the problem posed to France by the presence of 80 million Germans next door, and that answer was the greater unity of France, Germany and Europe.³¹ And the capacity of Europe's leaders to deliver 'more Europe' as a solution to the challenge of German unification was greatly aided by the fact that in the late 1980s European integration was already set on a path of policy expansion and appeared to be moving along this path with considerable speed.

The integrating Western Europe of 1989-90 was not therefore the type of neighbour which the self-appointed architects of the new Europe could easily ignore as they sought to construct either structures within the newly liberated Eastern half of the continent or overarching pan-European frameworks. Instead each of the realities listed above would have a significant effect on the evolution of events in the period that followed. In understanding what was and wasn't built in the aftermath of 1989 it matters immensely that the political leadership of virtually all of the states in the western half of the European continent was deeply committed to an integration process that seemed to be going from strength to strength, which had already demonstrated over the preceding four decades that it had pronounced expansionist tendencies in both geographical and policy-related terms, and which prided itself on

²⁹ See the analysis of Strasbourg below.

³⁰ For details of how this happened in France, see Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification Allemande*, 196-199.

³¹ Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 686.

the recent successful absorption of another European region that had freshly emerged from autocratic rule. And equally important was the further reality that, to the extent that Western Europe's leaders felt threatened or anxious about the degree of change in their international environment and potentially to the internal balance of the EC, their instinctive response was not merely to protect what they had achieved but also to seek to push ahead further and faster with their experiment. The notion of a *fuite en avant* – or flight forwards - has been a recurrent one within integration history, but it has seldom applied more strongly and more significantly than in the exhilarating, but also anxiety-inducing days, weeks and months that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Framing the European debate

In no single country was the importance of the European factor more apparent than within the Federal Republic itself. Kohl's pedigree as a strong pro-European was well-established long before 1989.³² Indeed the strength and effectiveness of the German Chancellor's relationships with both Mitterrand and with Delors had been absolutely central to the whole story of European integration's *relance* since 1985.³³ It was therefore always likely that West German policy in the run-up to reunification would be presented in a fashion that stressed the compatibility of rapid movement to German unity *and* simultaneous advance towards European unity. That point seven of Kohl's 'Ten Point Plan' presented to the Bundestag on November 28, 1989 reaffirmed the Federal Republic's commitment to the centrality of the integration process was therefore no surprise. Revealingly Kohl continued: '[T]he EC must not end at the Elbe; rather, it must also maintain openness towards the East. Only in this sense – for we have always understood the Europe of twelve to be only a part and not the whole – can the European Community serve as the foundation for a truly comprehensive European unification. Only in this sense is the identity of all Europeans maintained, asserted, and developed. This identity, ladies and gentlemen,

³² Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl*, 397–418.

³³ Carine Germond, "Dynamic Franco-German Duos: Giscard-Schmidt and Mitterrand-Kohl," in *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, ed. Erik Jones, Anand Menon, and Stephen Weatherill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 193–205; N. Piers Ludlow, "Jacques Delors (1985-1995): Navigating the European Stream at Full Flow," in *An Impossible Job? The Presidents of the European Commission, 1958-2014*, ed. Jan Van der Harst and Gerrit Voerman (London: John Harper Publishing, 2015), 173–96. See also the very friendly tone of their discussions immediately prior to the fall of the Wall: Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 443–447.

is based not only in the cultural diversity of Europe, but also, and above all, in the basic rights of freedom, democracy, human rights, and self-determination.³⁴

In explaining his position, Kohl tended to present himself as the heir of Konrad Adenauer, grounding his whole approach to *Deutschlandspolitik* on the Federal Republic's secure western alignment, including therefore European integration.³⁵ This had some historical justification and certainly made party political sense. But in many ways a more suggestive precedent was that of Willy Brandt, who had accompanied his own radical eastern policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with a western policy designed to demonstrate that Bonn remained as committed as ever to its European partners.³⁶ Brandt too spoke eloquently about West Germany's commitment to Europe partly so as to soothe his western allies' fears about where his *Ostpolitik* might lead. And Brandt also matched pro-European rhetoric with concrete policy steps and proposals, committing his country to a bold new push for European monetary integration and an effort to coordinate European foreign policy positions, each of which foreshadowed some of the steps taken in the 1989-91 period.³⁷

Statements like that which Kohl made to Bush in December 1989 denying that his 10-point plan constituted any form of alternative to European unity were thus straight out of a tactical manual that might have been drafted by his left-of-centre predecessor – a point which rather underlines the basic argument about how impossible it is fully to explain German or other European policy making without frequent references to the wider European framework.³⁸

The broader domestic debate about Germany's identity that accompanied the unification process also highlighted the importance of the Federal Republic's European vocation. This is something that others have analysed in much more depth

³⁴ http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=117

³⁵ For a specific example, see Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 638. On Adenauer's policies, see Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer: Der Aufstieg, 1876-1952* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1986); Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer: Der Staatsmann, 1952-1967* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1991); Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004).

³⁶ Andreas Wilkens, "New Ostpolitik and European Integration. Concept and Policies in the Brandt Era," in *European Integration and the Cold War. Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, ed. N. Piers Ludlow (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 67–80; Wilfried Loth, "Détente and European Integration in the Policies of Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou," in *European Integration and the Cold War. Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, ed. N. Piers Ludlow (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 53–66.

³⁷ The best collection of essays on European integration and the attempted relance of the Brandt era is Jan van der Harst, *Beyond the Customs Union: The European Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening and Completion, 1969-1975* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2007).

³⁸ Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 602. See also Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 198–199.

than is possible here.³⁹ But what matters for the purposes of this chapter is simply to observe that Germany's European track-record was one of the key pieces of evidence advanced by those seeking to prove that post-1945 Germany had changed fundamentally, had rid itself entirely of its earlier expansionist ambitions, and could hence be trusted to unite without endangering itself or its neighbours. Flanking moves to German unity, with policies designed to further European integration, was not simply tactically astute vis-à-vis the FRG's main international allies. It was also an approach that played well domestically, calming fears that an end to West Germany's aberrant postwar status might also signal the end of the country's distinctively cooperative approach to international and European affairs. Being a good European, was also an indication of being a good German, to put it slightly flippantly.

The context of successful European integration also shaped the response of Germany's partners within the EC. Understandably, much has been made – in the German-language literature in particular - of the level of hostility towards reunification which Kohl initially encountered from European leaders with whom he believed he had established a strong working rapport.⁴⁰ The Chancellor's own memoirs thus observe, 'Es gab in diesen Wochen und Monaten Äußerungen, bei denen ich mich fragte, ob man zwanzig Jahre umsonst miteinander gearbeitet hatte.'⁴¹ And nowhere was the contrast between German expectations of understanding and the reality of the cool, even frosty, response of Kohl's European colleagues more stark than at the Strasbourg Council referred to earlier. For it was on the occasion of this European Summit that Kohl found himself rounded upon not just by Thatcher (whose opposition was largely predictable and whose relationship with the German Chancellor was already highly strained not least because of clashes over integration priorities) but also by fellow Christian Democrats and former European allies, like Ruud Lubbers, the Dutch Prime Minister or Giulio Andreotti, the Italian leader. To make matters worse, furthermore, Kohl received no assistance whatsoever from Mitterrand who was presiding, seeing only Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish Prime Minister and Charles Haughey, the Irish Taoiseach, rallying to his cause.⁴² Kohl

³⁹ Rödder, *Deutschland einig Vaterland*.

⁴⁰ Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler, 1991).

⁴¹ Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen* (München: Droemer, 2004), 1015.

⁴² Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl*, 561–563.

would retrospectively describe the meeting as the most unpleasant multilateral encounter that he had ever been involved in.⁴³

Uncomfortable though it may have been for the German leader, however, the pattern of behaviour at Strasbourg was in no sense incompatible with an integration process that had been proceeding, and would continue to advance, at a highly rapid pace. The history of European integration is littered with bruising summits and fraught multilateral exchanges.⁴⁴ Strasbourg in that respect was no major departure from the norm, although it is true that the Federal Republic was much less used to finding itself in a position of relative isolation than countries like France or Britain – the traditional bad boys of the integration process⁴⁵ - might have been. Nor have multiple decades of close cooperation put an end to anxious calculations about power balances and status within a European context. Quite the reverse, indeed, with assessments about the relative power, influence and standing of each European nation having become more important than ever within a multilateral framework where quite so much was jointly at stake. As a result, there was nothing remotely shocking about a situation in which the leader of a country that was already the most powerful member of the European Community but which appeared to be in the process of rapidly becoming much more powerful found himself facing anxious and periodically hostile questioning from his European counterparts. That everyone in the room, Felipe Gonzalez apart, was also old enough to have some personal recollection of the Second World War naturally added a further edge to the encounter. (And it may also be of some relevance that Gonzalez and Haughey both came from countries that had not participated in World War II.) Even without the historical overtones, however, it would have been surprising had a development like German reunification with all that it might mean for the internal balance of power of the EC, *not* been greeted with a degree of anxiety, apprehension and disquiet when the Community first met in full multilateral session only days after Kohl's Ten Point Plan. The fact that the Chancellor had chosen not to inform any of his European partners in advance about his Ten Point Plan (nor the US for that matter) only made the situation worse.

⁴³ Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 1011.

⁴⁴ For a vivid description of one earlier fraught Council, see Roy Jenkins, *European Diary, 1977-1981* (London: Collins, 1989), 528–532.

⁴⁵ On France's love/hate relations with the European Community, see Michael Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007: The Geopolitical Imperative* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007). For Britain's even more difficult trajectory, John W. Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1999* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

Nor should a dispassionate observer find the position of the French President particularly surprising. Leaving to one side the ongoing historiographical dispute about Mitterrand's real feelings about German reunification, it made perfect tactical sense for the chair of the session to allow the German Chancellor to be put under extreme pressure over the issue of unification, given that the French wanted and needed German concessions on the other main point of business at the summit, namely the timetable of monetary union.⁴⁶ A few days prior to the European Council meeting, Kohl had talked confidently to Bush about the prospects for advance on the question of EMU, but the gap between the timetable he envisaged and the much faster progress hoped for by the French remained significant.⁴⁷ For Kohl to be 'softened up' over reunification, would facilitate the French position in the arm-wrestling ahead over the starting date of the intergovernmental conference on EMU. No politician with Mitterrand's tactical acumen would have let such an opportunity slip. There is thus a strong element of naïveté (faux or otherwise) about some of the German recollections of and recriminations about the European Council meeting.

Where the integration process really made a difference though was in what happened next. First of all, the Strasbourg meeting, while clearly unpleasant for Kohl personally, did not place any obstacles in Germany's path to unification. On the contrary, the Twelve not only publicly acknowledged Germany's right to unify, provided it happened in a democratic fashion, but also charged the European Commission with the task of beginning to investigate the practical implications of what would amount to a *de facto* enlargement of the Community.⁴⁸ Even at the height of their collective anxieties about German unity, in other words, the Twelve were realistic enough to know that they could not prevent one of their number from moving ahead towards reunification and that they should instead begin to prepare for the consequences. Second, within weeks rather than months the general thrust of the debate amongst the Twelve shifted from alarm and apprehension about the consequences of greater German power, to a much more forward-looking discussion about how best to adapt the European Community structures to cope with a reunified Germany at its heart. This shift was eminently logical. Kohl's tormentors at

⁴⁶ Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande*; Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl*.

⁴⁷ Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 195. The gap between the rival French and German timetables is very apparent from Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 596–598.

⁴⁸ N. Piers Ludlow, "A Naturally Supportive Environment? The European Institutions and German Unification," in *Europe and the End of the Cold War. A Reappraisal*, ed. Frédéric Bozo et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 161–73.

Strasbourg were, Thatcher apart, politicians like Lubbers or Andreotti whose international careers had been built on a platform of solid pro-European sentiment.⁴⁹ It was therefore entirely natural, even predictable, that once through the initial phase of shock and anxious foreboding, they should instead redirect their attentions to the question of how to respond constructively to the challenge posed by Germany's altered position. Apart from anything else, if they were to safeguard the integration process from which they already gained much, it made no sense to allow a long-standing rift to develop with the Community's most important member state and with the strongest figure in the European Council. And it was equally natural and predictable that their collective answer to the question of how to respond should be to push ahead further and faster with integration. If one of the aims of European unity had always been to establish a framework within which Germany could rebuild its strength without directly threatening its neighbours, the best response to a significant increase of German power, was a corresponding strengthening of the European framework.⁵⁰ Nor was this an unrealistic aspiration, given that much of the groundwork had already been laid both for a significant increase in monetary integration – a crucial driver behind which had always been that of coping with the dominance of the German economy – and a more generalised push for stronger European structures.⁵¹ It should hence come as no real surprise, that less than two months after the painful Strasbourg encounter, Kohl and Mitterrand met again at Latché, Mitterrand's private country residence, and reaffirmed their unity of views about the importance of Franco-German relations, further European unity, and German unification.⁵² A bilateral love-in rapidly followed the multilateral spat.

The European factor also helps make sense of Thatcher's unfortunate trajectory on the issue of German reunification.⁵³ The British leader's initial reactions after all were not particularly out of line with those of many of her European counterparts. She was certainly tactless, almost to the point of being offensive at

⁴⁹ For more on Italy's reappraisal of the situation, Leopoldo Nuti, "Italy, German Unification and the End of the Cold War," in *Europe and the End of the Cold War. A Reappraisal*, ed. Frédéric Bozo et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 191–203.

⁵⁰ The best description of how France originally arrived at this conclusion remains, Raymond Poidevin, *Robert Schuman: Homme d'état, 1886-1963* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1986).

⁵¹ The extent of work towards monetary integration that had already been accomplished can be gauged from James, *Making the European Monetary Union*.

⁵² Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 682–690.

⁵³ Patrick Salmon, "The United Kingdom and German Unification," in *Europe and the End of the Cold War. A Reappraisal*, ed. Frédéric Bozo et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 177–90.

Strasbourg, but then so were others at the same meeting.⁵⁴ But where she and her temporary allies parted company was once Andreotti, Lubbers and the rest turned towards a European solution to the German problem, since for Thatcher ‘more Europe’ was even less palatable than ‘more Germany’. Within a space of months, therefore, Thatcher slid from being an outspoken member of a strong majority within the European Council, to a forceful and defiant but almost entirely isolated minority of one. Intriguingly, however, many of her diplomats and ministers executed the same manoeuvre as Thatcher’s European counterparts and convinced themselves that ‘more Europe’ was indeed the solution to a larger Germany, thereby turning their Prime Minister’s position on German unification from an external liability into one additional factor in the increasingly stormy relationship between the Iron Lady and her party and government.⁵⁵ Much of the British elite were thus in step with the rest of Europe, even as their embattled Prime Minister diverged from the norm.

Finally, in terms of internal European dynamics, the integration context mattered because of the role in Europe’s collective response that it afforded to Jacques Delors. The European Commission would inevitably have had a part to play in the process of German reunification, because of the need, in effect, to bring what would soon become the *neue Bundesländer* into the EC – a step which would have multiple legal implications, both within Germany and internationally.⁵⁶ In different circumstances and at a different time, however, such a role might have been purely technical, a low-key sorting out of fiddly legal and commercial issues well outside of the media spotlight. Such was the Commission President’s personal status and stature by 1989, however, that a purely behind the scenes contribution was never likely. Instead, Delors quickly gained attention by becoming one of the first prominent European politicians to speak enthusiastically about unification.⁵⁷ He also wrote personally to the Federal Chancellery making clear his support for Kohl’s approach.⁵⁸ More significant still was his role within the European Council. Within Europe’s

⁵⁴ Kohl recalls her saying (in English presumably!) ‘Zweimal haben wir die Deutschen geschlagen! Jetzt sind sie wieder da!’ Kohl, *Erinnerungen*, 1013.

⁵⁵ John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher: Volume 2 the Iron Lady* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003), 596 ff. George Robert Urban, *Diplomacy and Disillusion at the Court of Margaret Thatcher: An Insider’s View* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 118–159.

⁵⁶ David Spence, “The European Community’s Negotiations on German Unification,” in *German Unification in European Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Heisenberg (London: Brassey’s, 1991).

⁵⁷ Ludlow, “A Naturally Supportive Environment? The European Institutions and German Unification,” 162–165.

⁵⁸ Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 577.

most senior decision-making body, Delors had become a key figure, lacking the legitimacy and political clout of the key national leaders, but making up for this disadvantage with an extraordinary mastery of the subject matter of each Council discussion.⁵⁹ To the extent, therefore, that the European Council became the environment where Western Europe's leaders developed that collective response to German reunification described above – i.e. to contain the new Germany by building a new, more integrated Europe – *and* convinced themselves that such a solution could actually be carried out fast enough to be effective, Delors played a central role in this process. In its final shape and form, the Maastricht Treaty is often regarded as constituting something of a defeat for the Commission President, who had hoped to go rather further and faster in both policy and institutional terms.⁶⁰ But in trying to explain the dynamics of how the European Community exploited the shock of 1989 to add a further major burst of acceleration to a process of integration that had already been advancing with some speed, the contribution of Delors to the collective determination, confidence and even hubris of Europe's leaders is impossible to overlook.

The external dimension

The strength and vitality of the integration process also affected the calculations of countries outside of the EC. The US approach for example was undoubtedly coloured both by a longstanding American belief that integration would make Europe a more stable place in general, and would help address the revival of German power in particular, and by the hope that were the European Community institutions encouraged to play a role in the transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, they and not the US would likely end up covering most of the costs. As Hutchings puts it in his explanation of why it had been Bush who first suggested that the responsibility of chairing the newly created G-24 committee designed to coordinate Western aid towards Central and Eastern Europe be handed over to the European Commission: 'Our view from the beginning was that the West Europeans should assume the principal financial assistance burden; it seemed right that the recipients of Marshall Plan aid should take the lead in extending its benefits eastwards, fulfilling the Marshall Plan's original pan-European-vision. Beyond these lofty considerations was

⁵⁹ Ludlow, "Jacques Delors (1985-1995): Navigating the European Stream at Full Flow", 185-187.

⁶⁰ Dyson and Featherstone, *The Road to Maastricht*.

the more prosaic fact that we were unwilling to come up with a significant U.S. financial commitment.’⁶¹

As far as European integration was concerned the United States could certainly claim with some justification to have been ‘present at the creation’.⁶² Historians still argue about the extent to which the Marshall Plan did or did not help encourage Western European countries to act collectively, or about the exact US role in and impact on the launch and implementation of the Schuman Plan.⁶³ But what is beyond dispute is that the United States had been an enthusiastic backer of the integration process from the outset, for a cocktail of economic, political and Cold War related reasons, and that a strong residue of this early backing remained within US foreign-policy thinking up until the end of the Cold War.⁶⁴ True, some of the first flush of American enthusiasm had faded over time. And it was true also, that there had been a few unseemly disputes over the years. Some of these had been economic such as the periodic squabbles between the US government and the Community institutions over tariff levels and agricultural protection.⁶⁵ Others had been political and diplomatic, such as Henry Kissinger’s irritation and anger with the early European attempts at foreign policy coordination in the early 1970s.⁶⁶ But the basic belief in Washington that integration was good for Europe, but good also for the United States, irrespective of problems that it might pose to some American exporters, remained in place for all of the Cold War. Hutchings’s account confirms this, while acknowledging the presence of some US misgivings about certain aspects of integration.⁶⁷ The US President furthermore used many of his encounters with European leaders throughout 1989 and 1990 to reaffirm American backing for European unity. He told the NATO summit of December 1989, for instance, that the US supported ‘intensified’ integration of the EC and wanted to seek closer ties with

⁶¹ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 69.

⁶² To quote the modest title of Dean Acheson’s memoirs. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1970).

⁶³ For the two extremes of the debate about the Marshall Plan, see Michael J Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Alan S Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51* (London: Methuen, 1984).

⁶⁴ Geir Lundestad, *“Empire” by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁶⁵ Ross B Talbot, *The Chicken War: An International Trade Conflict between the United States and the European Economic Community, 1961-64* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1978).

⁶⁶ For an analysis of the latter, Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War*; Gfeller, *Building a European Identity*.

⁶⁷ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, 29–31.

the Community.⁶⁸ In the planning of the new Europe, it mattered immensely that the most powerful external actor, the US, was rhetorically and practically committed to the maintenance – and expansion – of the European Community system.

The new post-socialist governments of Central and Eastern Europe were even more directly affected by the success of Western European integration. Had the Iron Curtain come down six or seven years earlier than it did, there might perhaps have been room for doubt on the part of the fledgling democratic regimes as to whether they really wanted to get involved: the European Community of the early 1980s had been a rather lacklustre affair, riven by internal disputes, frustrated by the malfunctioning of its own institutional system, and seemingly incapable of addressing the serious economic malaise that afflicted Western Europe. Delors' predecessor, Gaston Thorn, had made no attempt to hide his disillusionment with Europe's malaise, telling the European Parliament in early 1981: 'Today Europe... is a rather ramshackle house. Its roof has been blown away by disunity. There is no heating, since energy is in short supply. There is no architect, since the generation of founding fathers who supervised the building has passed away. The builder is on the verge of bankruptcy, his resources virtually exhausted... The tenants are at their wits' end.'⁶⁹ The inordinate amount of time that the EC was taking to honour its pledges to expand to include Spain and Portugal would also have been a disincentive.⁷⁰ Having applied to join in the mid-1970s, with strong expectations of becoming member states by 1981 or 1982, the two Iberian countries had instead been kept cooling their heels on the threshold of the EC until January 1986.⁷¹ In 1989-90, by contrast, there was much less scope for uncertainty. The Community was booming, the objective of creating a fully barrier free internal market by the end of 1992 having unleashed all of its pent up potential, and the Spanish and Portuguese had not merely belatedly taken their place within it, but were also enjoying an extraordinary surge in prosperity as a result. For both economic and political reasons, a 'return to Europe' as the slogan put it, could only mean one thing to the emerging governments of Central and Eastern Europe: the earliest possible membership of the European Community. Only this would begin, quickly, to undo the huge gap of living standards that existed between

⁶⁸ Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*, 133.

⁶⁹ Thorn speech to the EP, 11.2.1981 available at <http://aei.pitt.edu/30802/>

⁷⁰ Raimundo Bassols, *España en Europa: historia de la adhesión a la CE 1957-85* (Madrid: Política Exterior, 1995).

⁷¹ Julio Crespo MacLennan, *Spain and the Process of European Integration, 1957-85* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

the two halves of Europe. And only this would undo the enforced separation from the European mainstream that countries such as Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia felt that they had unjustly endured.

This entirely comprehensible determination to join had a number of crucial international implications. For a start it made it very difficult for the existing member states of the European Communities to reject such Central and Eastern European demands. There were many in Western Europe who were filled with apprehension about what a vast expansion of the EC system to encompass much of the former Communist bloc might entail, anxious about the costs, concerned that the institutional system would not be able to cope, and worried that widening might get in the way of the hoped for deepening of the integration process. At the January 1990 Latché meeting between Kohl and Mitterrand referred to above, there was a yawning gap between the German leader's confidence that the newly liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe would take their place within an expanding European Community, and the French president's equally obvious scepticism about whether this could or should ever happen.⁷² The increased urgency with which the Commission threw itself into the negotiation of what would become the European Economic Area (EEA), a wider zone of liberalisation, in which participating countries would be part of the European internal market without being full Community members, was similarly indicative of a desire to stave off, or at very least postpone, a vast expansion in membership.⁷³ And similar thought processes were undoubtedly occurring in multiple member state capitals also. But the prospects of success of such schemes were always very poor. What incentive was there for the newly liberated states of Central and Eastern Europe to settle for half involvement, when the whole point of 'returning to Europe' was precisely to rejoin fully, not to linger in some ante-chamber? Furthermore there were already many in the West also who recognised that an entity such as the European Community that had long considered itself and described itself as 'uniting Europe' could not turn down requests to join from such manifestly European countries as Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia.⁷⁴ The successful precedent of the Community's Southern European enlargement was also

⁷² Küsters and Hofmann, *Deutsche Einheit*, 682–690.

⁷³ *The Annual Review of European Community Affairs 1991*, edited by Peter Ludlow, Jørgen Mortensen & Jacques Pelkmans (London: Brassey's for CEPS, 1991), 300–316

⁷⁴ For one of the earliest plaidoyers for enlargement towards Eastern Europe, Ralf Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: In a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Warsaw* (New York: Times Books, 1990).

being cited as a reason for hastening forward rather than holding back. The road to full membership for the states of Central and Eastern Europe would be a slow and hard one, and as had earlier been the case with Spain and Portugal, the EC (soon EU) would reflect the ongoing hesitations that many still felt about enlargement by moving rather more slowly than many would have liked. That the eventual end point of the process, though, was Community or EU membership was not really in doubt from 1990 onwards.

This in turn had important implications for the various pan-European visions, outlined by Mikhail Gorbachev, but also Mitterrand, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and many others.⁷⁵ If the EC itself was going to expand – and an EC that was in the process of equipping itself with a wide array of new policy instruments and priorities – what room would be left for other, wider European structures? As noted above, the European Community had long developed something of a reputation as an institutional sponge, an entity liable to suck up or absorb policy areas and tasks previously carried out by other institutions. The only consistent exception to this rule has been NATO, where the centrality of the US as the main provider of security had always made any purely European arrangement seem less attractive. Outside of the security field, however, the Community/Union has not been an easy body to co-exist with. This being so, there was a real question mark over whether there would be space for a significant new overarching pan-European entity. Furthermore, the leaders of Central and Eastern Europe had every reason to look at such pan-European schemes with a slightly jaundiced eye. They were well aware that not everybody in Western Europe was overjoyed at the prospect of 25+ member EC/EU. Was there not a danger, therefore, that any pan-European structure suggested was nothing more than a device to render less urgent, if not remove altogether, the need to expand the core European structures? The serious suspicions that would gradually accumulate about Mitterrand's Confederation plan illustrate these fears quite clearly.⁷⁶ Membership in something like the Council of Europe or the newly created Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was all very well if it was clear that it was a staging post on the way to the alignment that really mattered, rather than an

⁷⁵ Andrei Grachev, "From the Common European Home to European Confederation. Francois Mitterrand and Mikhail Gorbachev in Search of the Road to a Greater Europe," in *Europe and the End of the Cold War. A Reappraisal*, ed. Frédéric Bozo et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 207–19; Marie-Pierre Rey, "'Europe Is Our Common Home': A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept," *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): 33–65.

⁷⁶ Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande*, 344–362.

alternative. But constructing anything more powerful than either of these two bodies became next to impossible, as soon as the successor states decided that their future lay within the EC/EU and NATO.

All of this was of course very bad news for the Soviet Union or Russia, as it would soon become. As Mary Sarotte and many others have argued, the failure to establish any strong over-arching Pan-European body was a body blow to those who had hoped to involve Russia more centrally in Europe's future – and a failure that has had unfortunate effects on Russian attitudes and policies towards the West that are still very much with us today.⁷⁷ The implication of this essay, though, is that this failure was an almost inevitable consequence once it became clear that it was to the EC/EU that the states of Central and Eastern Europe had turned as soon as they threw off communist rule. At no stage has anyone, in the West or in Moscow, seriously suggested that Russia itself could join the EC/EU. In the confused and often infuriatingly vague discussions that became very *à la mode* in early 1990s Western Europe about where Europe ended and how large the EC/EU might become, virtually the only point of consensus was that Russia itself lay beyond the realm of possibility. Nor was there any appetite within a former superpower for involvement in an institutional system based upon the partial transfer of sovereignty. And yet if Russia could not be involved, and the EC/EU was to become the key feature of the European architecture leaving scant space for any other, it followed ineluctably that Russia was going to be excluded from the central debate about Europe's future. The dynamism and magnetic attraction of the integration process in the 1989-90 thus played a central role also in the distancing of Russia from a post-communist Europe.

Conclusions

The core argument of this chapter is thus that fewer options were really open in 1989-1990 than appeared to be the case. When the Berlin Wall came down there was undeniably a brief heady moment when all sorts of possibilities suddenly seemed to open up, both exhilarating and frightening. This sense of flux manifested itself in the rhetoric of a new Europe and in the debate about how such a Europe should be organised. But what both that debate, and perhaps still more the historiography about that debate, has tended to underplay is the extent to which the continent's course had

⁷⁷ Sarotte, 1989, 212–214.

already been set *before* the Wall came down. By 1989 Western Europe was moving quickly along a path that led to much closer European integration, encompassing monetary integration, closer foreign policy cooperation and greater levels of cooperation over issues such as border controls, police cooperation etc. In deciding to address the fears awakened by the prospect of greater German power, by constructing a stronger Europe, the Twelve were thus simply redoubling an effort already underway – indeed their very ability to concoct so quickly a recipe for dealing with a strengthened Germany, reflected the fact that the ingredients had already been assembled and the cooking process had long since begun. The shape of the Western European response to the prospect of German unification, including the Federal Republic’s own response, was thus deeply path dependent on the pre-existing integration process. Only Thatcher amongst Western Europe’s leaders of the time dissented, and the inefficacy of her attempt to oppose both German unification and further European integration underlines the potency – and interlinked nature – of both processes.

The dynamic state of the integration process also did much to predetermine the trajectory of countries outside of the EC. So strong was the magnetic pull of the booming Community of the late 1980s, that the post-communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe had few hesitations about making the attainment of EC/EU membership the centre-piece of their international aspirations. Over the years that followed this decision would have a huge impact on the nature of their transition from authoritarian rule to democracy and from command economies to capitalism. But it also had less positive consequences for the fleeting hopes of building a pan-European structure with meaningful powers, able, amongst other things, to keep Russia fully involved in the European game. For the determination of the Central and Eastern Europeans to allow nothing to distract or impede them in their march towards EC/EU membership *and* the expansionist institutional characteristics of the EC/EU itself combined to make all but impossible the establishment of a viable wider-European structure large enough to incorporate the Russians also.

What Sarotte has called the ‘pre-fab’ solution was therefore always likely, however beguiling the other options might have been.⁷⁸ What made an EC/EU centred solution to Europe’s institutional architecture attractive, but also what made it so

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

eminently suitable from the point of view of political leaderships in both halves of the formerly divided Europe, was precisely that European integration was a dynamic and fast moving process, with a track record of success but also able to be expanded and adapted to cope with the new situation that the end of the Cold War brought into being. A new Europe was indeed constructed over the 1989-2004 period, but it was a Europe shaped deeply by a process the essential characteristics and basic trajectory of which, had been set long before the Iron Curtain fell. Within the new, a great deal of the old persisted.