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Conclusions

Session of the European Council

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Dossier of the Group of the European People's Party

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Elections of the European Parliament by Direct Universal Suffrage

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European Union – Summary of the European Council Meeting

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Conclusions

Homage to Jean Monnet

The European Community, which is now more than 25 years old, is already, notwithstanding its shortcomings and its imperfections, a remarkable achievement at a time when hopes of deepening the prospects of European Union are beginning to take shape.

For the positive balance sheet at the end of this first stage and on the eve of progress towards political union, we are heavily indebted to the boldness and breadth of vision of a handful of men. Amongst these, Jean Monnet has played a major part, whether as the instigator of the Schuman Plan, as first President of the High Authority or as founder of the Action Committee for the United States of Europe. In all these roles, Jean Monnet has resolutely attacked the forces of inertia in the political and economic structures of Europe in an endeavour to establish a new type of relationship between States, bringing out the solidarity already existing between European States and translating it into institutional terms.

Monnet was a realist, and although he first concentrated on economic interests, he never abandoned his vision of achieving a wider understanding between the individuals and peoples of Europe which would extend to all fields of activity. There has sometimes been a tendency to lose sight of this objective amongst the vicissitudes of European construction, but it is an objective which has never been disavowed. Now more than ever it should guide us in lifting us above our task of daily management which will then acquire its true perspective and consistency.

Jean Monnet recently retired from public life. Having devoted the greater part of his talents to the European cause, he deserves from Europe a very special mark of gratitude and admiration.

It is for these reasons that the Heads of State or Government, meeting in Luxembourg as the European Council, have decided to confer on him the title of Honorary Citizen of Europe.

Economic, monetary and social situation

The European Council asked the Council (Ministers of Economic and Financial Affairs) to examine the Commission's communication on economic and monetary action and to take the ap-

propriate decisions or, if need be, report to the next meeting of the European Council. The European Council found that the Member States' governments should respect a certain discipline concerning money supply, budget deficits, production costs, including incomes, and payment balances in order to attain a high degree of convergence of economic policies.

Election of Parliament by direct universal suffrage

The European Council confirmed the conclusions reached at its last meeting, particularly in respect of the date of the first election. The outstanding problems were reviewed but no decision was reached on the complement of the House.

European Union

The European Council tentatively discussed the Tindemans Report.

Declaration by the European Council on the entry into force of the Convention

The Heads of Government, meeting in Luxembourg as the European Council, welcome the entry into force today of the Convention signed in Lomé on 28 February 1975.

They would express to the Heads of State and the Governments of the countries which have signed this Convention and to the peoples they represent, their profound conviction that the co-operation which has been brought about by means of the Lomé Convention constitutes an exemplary undertaking serving to reinforce close cooperation between industrialized and developing countries.

The European Council reaffirms the Community's will to contribute through this initiative to finding a solution to the major problems of balanced economic development between the partners to this Convention.

Declaration on Rhodesia

The Nine countries of the European Community reaffirm the principles set out in the ministerial statement of 23 February 1976 and in particular the right of the Rhodesian people to self-determination and independence. They therefore deplore the fact that recent events have made a peaceful transfer of power to the majority more difficult in Rhodesia.

The Nine vigorously support the objectives laid down by the British Government on 22 March and the efforts it is making to achieve them.

They appeal solemnly to the Rhodesian minority, which at present is opposing a system of majority rule, to accept a rapid and peaceful transition to such a system.

They confirm that they will continue to apply strictly the Security Council decisions concerning Rhodesia.

5. Institutional questions — European policy

European policy

Election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage

2501. The European Council, meeting in Luxembourg on 1 and 2 April, devoted much of its proceedings to the problem of the election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. The Heads of State or Government confirmed the conclusions they reached at their last meeting in December 1975¹ and that the elections would be held for the first time in May-June 1978.

The European Council agreed that polling should take place over a weekend, meaning between Thursday morning and Sunday evening; the count will not start until Sunday night. This solution was adopted to respect the different national traditions; while the continental countries generally vote on a Sunday, polling day in the United Kingdom is traditionally a Thursday.

Regarding the British and Danish reservations concerning participation in the first elections in 1978, Mr Wilson, without making a formal commitment, declared that the British Government would do all it could to ensure that the British members of the European Parliament were elected on the same date as their Community colleagues. The Danish Prime Minister, Mr Jørgensen, said he would ask the Folketing to ratify the choice of the date for the first elections. The Danish Government stipulated, however, that the Folketing might designate the Danish representatives in the European Parliament in 1978, with the understanding that the country would elect its representatives by direct universal suffrage in the second elections.

As regards Parliament's title, the European Council agreed not to change the title of 'Assembly' which appears in the Treaties, but confirmed the current usage whereby this institution is called 'European Parliament'.

The European Council did not find an answer to the question—referred to it by the Council (Min-

isters of Foreign Affairs)²—of Parliament's complement of seats and how the seats were to be allocated between the Member States. No agreement could be reached on any of the proposals put forward³ or on the compromise proposed by the French President, Mr Giscard d'Estaing, which would have retained the present complement and seat allocation. The European Council therefore referred the matter to the Council of Foreign Ministers requesting them to try and reach an agreement. Otherwise the European Council would take a decision at its July meeting.

2502. Parliament did not hide its disappointment over the outcome. The Bureau took a position on 5 April in the following statement handed to the Council the following day by a Parliamentary delegation:

'The European Parliament had firmly hoped that in spite of the various technical problems anticipated in different countries, a final decision would be taken at the European Council in Luxembourg on the election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage with regard to the outstanding questions, and in particular the allocation of seats among the Member States.

Our reasons for this hope were threefold:

1. The European Council is fully familiar with the problems involved; it has stated its position on several occasions and has already decided unanimously in favour of holding elections by direct universal suffrage in 1978.
2. The proposal put forward by the European Parliament (Patijn report) provided a basis for discussion which everyone considered reasonable and which could of course be adapted if necessary.
3. The European Council had to pronounce on the three main items on the agenda if it was not

¹ Bull. EC 11-1975, point 1104.

² Bull. EC 3-1976, point 2426.

³ Bull. EC 3-1976, point 2405 and Table 7.

to seriously compromise its own credibility, which had hitherto remained intact.

The fact that it nevertheless did fail is extremely serious.

1. Its failure to reach a final decision on direct elections calls into question the institutional development laid down in the Treaties, accepted by all the Member States and supported by an overwhelming majority of the peoples of Europe.

2. The fact that the issue involved, though extremely important, is purely institutional and not directly affected by considerations of national competition calls further into question the European Council's ability to provide a solution to the other difficult economic, monetary and social problems which it is having to face as a result of the current crisis.

3. Ultimately therefore doubt is cast even on the ability of the European Council to effectively fulfil its mandate, namely to devote itself to the major problems which the ordinary Councils of Ministers prove unable to solve.

If this impression were confirmed, the conclusion would be that, in spite of the political stature and the greater independence of its members, the European Council, meeting more frequently, will experience the same difficulties as the ordinary Councils of Ministers and the structural weaknesses will eventually prevail over the qualities of these individuals.

In conclusion, the European Council, meeting in Luxembourg, in spite of the gallant efforts of its President, Mr Gaston Thorn, and the political eminence of its members, will leave the European Parliament and the peoples of Europe with nothing but a feeling of profound disappointment.

They call upon the Council of Foreign Ministers, which has been instructed to deal with the remaining differences of opinion, to make every effort to settle as soon as possible the outstanding problems in the hope that the European Council

itself will take this to heart and, at the July Summit, succeed in rekindling our hopes.'

2503. The results of the meeting of the European Council were also the subject of a major debate in the House during the sitting of 7 April.¹

At the close, the following Resolution was adopted concerning the election of Parliament by direct universal suffrage:

'The European Parliament,

— recalling the draft Convention on elections by direct universal suffrage to the European Parliament which it adopted on 14 January 1975,²

— recalling the resolution on direct elections to the European Parliament which it adopted on 11 March 1976,³

— recalling that at its meeting of 10 December 1974, the European Council itself decided that elections by direct universal suffrage should be held in 1978,

1. Regrets the failure of the European Council to respond to its resolution of 11 March 1976, which called upon it to take on 1 and 2 April 1976 the final decision to hold direct elections on the basis of the draft convention;

2. Nevertheless welcomes the decision of the European Council to confirm that elections by direct universal suffrage should be held in May or June 1978;

3. Emphasizes strongly its opinion that the final decision on the draft convention should now be taken in the shortest possible time in order to enable suitable arrangements to be made in Member States for elections to be held in May or June 1978;

4. Affirms its opinion that the principles adopted in the draft convention as the basis for determining the number and distribution of seats re-

¹ For the debate, see point 2402.

² OJ C 32 of 11.2.1975.

³ OJ C 79 of 5.4.1976.

main valid and strongly urges the Council of Ministers to base their decision upon them;

5. Urges that, in view of the delay in arriving at a decision on the draft convention, the European Parliament should now be consulted under the concertation procedure as discussions in the Council of Ministers proceed.'

European Union

2504. At the meeting of the European Council in Luxembourg on 1 and 2 April, the Heads of Government held a preliminary exchange of views on the report by the Belgian Prime Minister, Mr *Tindemans*, concerning European Union.¹ After the meeting, the President of the Council, Mr *Thorn*, told the press that not one delegation had criticized either the substance or the approach of the Tindemans Report; in point of fact everyone had appreciated its realism.

The Foreign Ministers and the Commission were asked to consider the report in detail and prepare the decisions which the European Council will have to take before the end of 1976. They were instructed to draw up practical proposals for all possible decisions which might be taken by the European Council, assuming that the Foreign Ministers themselves are unable to take the decisions. The European Council agreed unanimously to complete the examination of the Tindemans report by the end of 1976 at the latest.

On the appointment of the next President of the Commission, Mr Thorn confirmed that the formula proposed in the Tindemans report had been warmly received in the European Council. Mr Tindemans had proposed that the appointment should be made by the European Council at its second meeting in 1976; the person chosen would then be presented to the European Parliament and would participate with the Member States in appointing the other Members of the Commission.

¹ Supplement 1/76 — Bull. EC.