

SPECIAL EDITION



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

ACTIVITIES



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EUROPEAN COUNCIL
of 2 and 3 December 1988
in Rhodes

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

RHODES, 2 and 3 DECEMBER 1988

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The European Council examined the prospects for the future development of the European Community and its place in the world on the basis of the experience acquired to date in the implementation of the Single European Act. Particular attention was given to the progress made in establishing the single market and developing accompanying policies to strengthen economic and social cohesion, bearing in mind at the same time the beneficial changes which have taken place in the world and especially in East-West relations. The European Council notes with particular satisfaction that the decisions adopted with a view to making a success of the Single European Act, which are now being implemented, have already contributed to the creation of favourable conditions for the smooth, steady and dynamic development of the Community as it moves towards 1992.

On the eve of the European elections in 1989, the European Council emphasizes the indispensable role of the European Parliament in the process of European unification. It welcomes the constructive contribution of the European Parliament to the attainment of the objectives of the Single Act, which is a positive factor for co-operation between the institutions in future.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE ACT: STOCKTAKING

Establishment of the large market

The European Council took note of the report submitted by the Commission under Article 8b of the Single Act. The European Council notes with satisfaction that at the half-way stage towards the deadline of December 1992 half of the legislative programme necessary for the establishment of the large market is already nearly complete.

This confirms, if such confirmation were necessary, the irreversible nature of the movement towards a Europe without internal frontiers in accordance with Article 8a of the Treaty and bears witness to the will of the Community bodies to complete the task by the deadline set. The European Council notes that the process of completing the internal market has already created a new dynamism in the European economy by contributing to economic adjustment and an increase in growth rates.

The European Council would point out that the creation of the large market forms a whole and that maintenance of an overall approach is one of the conditions for success. It is therefore necessary to make progress in a balanced and co-ordinated fashion in all areas (free movement of goods, services and capital, free movement of persons) and to ensure that the appropriate harmonization or approximation is carried out where necessary.

The pace of work must be stepped up in future, because if account is taken of the time needed to transpose Community law into national legislation the Council in fact has only two years in which to meet the 1992 objective.

The European Council expects the Council rapidly to complete adoption of the texts completing the internal market in the priority areas identified by the European Council last June: public contracts, banking and financial services, the approximation of technical standards and intellectual property. At the same time, the European Council urgently appeals to the Council to step up its efforts in all areas where progress has not been so rapid. This applies particularly to transport and energy, animal and plant health controls and the free movement of persons. The European Council is aware that, in the latter area, the achievement

of the Community's objectives, especially the area without internal frontiers, is linked to progress in intergovernmental co-operation to combat terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking and trafficking of all kinds. This co-operation will be stepped up in order to achieve rapid and concrete results which will enable the Community, for its part, to take the necessary measures to turn Europe into a tangible reality for its citizens. To this end each Member State will appoint a person responsible for the necessary co-ordination.

With regard to the approximation of taxation in accordance with Article 99 of the Treaty, the European Council expresses the wish that the contacts taken up with Governments at the initiative of the Commission, and its proposals, will permit a convergence of views and it calls on the Council to speed up its work so that tax measures, to the extent that they are necessary for the establishment and operation of the internal market, can be adopted in accordance with the timetable set.

Social dimension

The European Council considers that progress in implementing the provisions of the Single European Act on the completion of the internal market must be accompanied by progress in implementing its provisions on social policy, in particular Articles 118a and 118b, and by the strengthening of economic and social cohesion.

The Presidency drew the European Council's attention to the memorandum which it had circulated on this subject before the beginning of the Presidency.

Completion of the Single Market cannot be regarded as an end in itself; it pursues a much wider objective, namely to ensure the maximum well-being of all, in line with the tradition of social progress which is part of Europe's history.

This tradition of social progress should be a guarantee that all citizens, whatever their occupation, will have effective access to the direct benefits expected from the Single Market as a factor of economic growth, and as the most effective means of combating unemployment.

The European Council notes that a start has already been made on applying the Single European Act and the guidelines deriving therefrom.

The European Council welcomes the progress made with the framework Directive on health and safety at the workplace and calls on the Council to complete the establishment of this important aspect of the Community's social action without delay.

The European Council would give a reminder of the increasing importance attaching to the systematic pursuit of a constructive dialogue between management and labour at Community level, in accordance with Article 118b of the Treaty. The aim of this dialogue should be the active involvement of both sides of industry in completion of the large market.

The European Council meeting in Hanover asked the Commission to carry out a comparative study of Member States' legislation on working conditions. The European Council notes that that study, which should enable the common "acquis" in this area to be identified, is in progress.

As regards implementation of social rights, the European Council awaits such proposals as the Commission might consider useful to submit having drawn inspiration from the social charter of the Council of Europe.

The European Council emphasizes that the Community's action should contribute towards putting the available human resources to the best use and towards the preparation of change and future technical adjustments. Reform of training schemes, including continuing vocational training, will be a determining factor in achieving these objectives.

The European Council requests the Council to examine the above proposals with a view to taking, in the course of 1989, the necessary decisions to guide Member States' action on social matters in relation with the large market.

Associated policies

The European Council recalls that a significant number of Community policies or projects are contributing, directly or indirectly, towards completion of the internal market or are linked to it in one way or another. It accordingly invites the Council to ensure that the necessary progress is made in various sectors covered by the Single Act (structural policies, research and technology, co-operation on economic and monetary policy) in order that, in due course, all the conditions enabling the Community to derive every possible benefit from the large market may be brought about.

In connection with structural policies, the European Council notes with satisfaction that all the legislative texts on the reform of the various Funds

(ERDF, SOCIAL FUND, EAGGF - GUIDANCE), will be adopted by the end of the year, so that they will be operational from 1989.

The European Council calls on the Commission to supplement its analysis of the macro-economic consequences of the internal market as regards its regional impact.

In regard to economic and monetary policy, the European Council is aware that this sector has both a direct and an indirect impact on the completion of the internal market. In this connection, it attaches particular importance to the work undertaken, at its request, by the DELORS Committee on the concrete stages leading towards economic and monetary union and to the conclusions to be drawn therefrom at the forthcoming European Council meeting in Madrid.

Environment

The European Council notes that efforts are actively being pursued at various levels and in different fora with a view to responding to ever-increasing concern over the threats to the environment; in this connection, the Council expresses satisfaction at the important decisions taken by the recent Environment Council.

The European Council considers that protection of the environment is a matter of vital significance to the Community and to the rest of the world, and urges the Community and the Member States to take every initiative and all essential steps, including at international level, in accordance with the fundamental lines of the statement set out in Annex I. The European Council emphasizes the special importance of co-operation in this area with other European countries, i.e. both EFTA countries and East European countries.

Transport infrastructures

The European Council considers that the creation of major transport infrastructures is one method of speeding up the unification of the European economic area.

It has noted with interest the ideas put forward by the Commission on the subject. It requests the Council to consider with the Commission possibilities in this area. In the meantime it calls on the Council to adopt measures before the end of the year within the limit of the appropriations provided for that purpose in the budget.

Islands

The European Council recognizes the particular socio-economic problems of certain island regions in the Community. It therefore requests the Commission to examine these problems and submit, if appropriate, any proposals which it deems useful, within the financial possibilities offered by the Community's existing policies as they have been decided.

Audiovisual

The European Council pointed out that it is extremely important to strengthen efforts, including co-operation, to develop Europe's audiovisual capacity, whether with regard to the free movement of programmes, the promotion of the European high-definition television system or to a policy of encouraging creativity, production and broadcasting so as to provide an opportunity of demonstrating the richness and diversity of European culture. The European Council considers it important that the Community's efforts should be deployed in a manner consistent with the Council of Europe Convention.

The European Council requests the Council to speed up work on the "television without frontiers" Directive. It noted that the Commission will adapt the proposal in the light of the Council of Europe Convention.

The European Council received with great interest the communication from the French Government set out in Annex II, and endorsed the convening next spring of a meeting which will bring together all the parties concerned in the audiovisual sector in the Community, and also outside the Community, and, on the basis of the experience with Eureka, will seek to encourage the emergence of a truly European audiovisual market.

These proposals will contribute to a substantial strengthening of a European cultural identity and will be discussed at Community level, and in co-operation with the other countries in Europe.

II. INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The European Council adopted a statement on the international role of the European Community.