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A SECRETARIAT FOR EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

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FOREWORD

This brief study was prepared at the request of the Liberal and Democratic Group of the European Parliament, which has kindly agreed to permit its publication in the Political Series of Research and Documentation Papers.

It is hoped that the study will serve to inform Members of the European Parliament and others who are concerned with the initiative taken by Parliament on European Union and with the inter-governmental conference convened by the Council on the amendment of the Treaties and on European Political Cooperation.

The study was prepared by Mr D. Millar, Head of the Political Division of the Directorate General. Any opinions expressed are not those of the European Parliament as an institution except where so stated.

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A SECRETARIAT FOR EUROPEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

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PART I

A SECRETARIAT FOR POLITICAL COOPERATION

Fouchet Plan

1. Following bilateral talks between President de Gaulle and the leaders of the other Member States in the European Community during 1960, a Summit Conference was held in Paris in February 1961. A committee of senior officials was set up to consider political cooperation between governments, under the chairmanship of Mr Christian Fouchet, French Ambassador in Copenhagen. Following a further Conference in Bonn in July, in November 1961 the French Government presented to the 'Fouchet Committee' a 'Draft Treaty establishing a Union of States.'
2. This draft was criticised on several grounds, principally by the Dutch and German Governments, and as a result in January 1962 the French Government presented a revised draft Treaty. On this occasion the other five governments also presented an alternative draft. Both sides were in agreement that the aim of the Union should be 'to reconcile, coordinate and unify' inter alia foreign policy and defence policy; but the version of the Five specified that the particular objectives of the Union should be 'a common foreign policy' and a 'common defence policy'. The Council of the Union, composed of the Heads of State or Government, was to be assisted by a 'Political Commission', which should prepare the deliberations of the Council and of the (version of the Five) Committees of Ministers, which both sides agreed should include a 'Committee of Foreign Ministers and a Committee of Ministers of Defence and the Armed Forces'.
3. The French delegation proposed that the Political Commission should consist of 'representatives appointed by each Member State' assisted by staff and departments. The delegations of the Five proposed that the Political Commission should consist of 'senior officials appointed by each State'. It thus appears that the French Government of the time foresaw that the Political Commission could be composed of political representatives, such as ministers, while the Five declared for

staffing at official level. The Five also proposed that the Council should appoint a Secretary General and staff independent of the Member States; this was not agreed to by France.

4. Thus the genesis of a Political Secretariat is to be found in the Fouchet Plan, which foundered on the fundamental disagreement between the French approach based on 'inter-governmental cooperation' and that of the Five based on supra-national institutions of a European Union.

#### Proposals for a Secretariat

5. An early initiative as regards the EPC Secretariat was taken in the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament in 1977 by Mr Erik Blumenfeld, Rapporteur on European Political Cooperation. In his original draft resolution for the Committee he had included a proposal that a European Political Cooperation Office be created, 'to service political cooperation activities on a continuing basis; this planning staff to work on the instructions of the Foreign Ministers, using the administrative facilities of the Secretariat of the Council.' Mr Blumenfeld also asked the Governments of the Member States to ensure that the EPC Office should serve as a link between the European Parliament and the Foreign Ministers. Owing to strong opposition in the Committee, Mr Blumenfeld's proposal in this sense was never put to the House, although his other proposals were adopted in a Resolution on 19 January 1977<sup>1</sup>.

6. In July 1979 the Head of the Department of European Organisations at the Belgian Foreign Ministry, Mr Phillipe de Schoutheete, gave a lecture at the Catholic University of Louvain on EPC. Having discussed its evolution, one of his conclusions was:

'it is clear that a new step forward in the field of political cooperation would mean making substantial changes to the present mechanisms, and a light administrative system to help and back up the Presidency's work would need to be set up. This is a difficult and delicate question, but in the long run there is no way of avoiding it one way or the other.'

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C36/32, 13.2.1978.

This is a remarkably frank statement for a senior civil servant to make and was duly noted in circles concerning themselves with the development of EPC.

7. Later in that year, in fact on 2 October 1979, at the ceremony for the awarding of the Stresemann medal in Mainz, Mr Tindemans, President of the European People's Party, outlined a series of proposals for a 'coherent foreign policy' in Europe. One of Mr Tindemans' conclusions was that 'we will not be able to escape the question of a political secretariat' as 'it is impossible to ask a Presidency which changes every six months to ensure that everything runs smoothly and that a concerted diplomatic policy is implemented.' In addition Mr Tindemans declared that political cooperation required a body to think out problems in the longer term, and proposed that a such a body be set up. In his view, its first task would be 'to think over the major problems of security and defence.'

8. In the same month the Committee of Three (or 'Three Wise Men') presented their report on European Institutions to the European Council. In Chapter 3, under the heading 'the Role of the Presidency', the Three Wise Men drew attention to the fact that 'no permanent secretariat exists for EPC work, and the Commission's role is much more limited than under the Treaties'. They then pointed out the particularly heavy burden which the six-month Presidency imposes, even on the largest States. They concluded 'it is clear that any improvements in EPC administration would make it easier for each State to shoulder the tasks of the Presidency as a whole, and would serve the general aim we have in view', which was to strengthen the Presidency.

9. The next stone to be added to the foundations of a secretariat for EPC was laid by Lord Carrington, then Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, in a speech to the Ubersee Club in Hamburg in November 1980. In the course of a wide ranging survey of the Community and EPC he said

'I have no doubt that Political Cooperation must have the support of an experienced foreign policy staff, perhaps seconded temporarily from Member States, which would enable it to give a stronger lead to the Community. This staff need not be large in number, but they will need to be of high quality'.

Lord Carrington also announced that he had proposed within EPC a procedure for convening meetings automatically within 48 hours if any Three of the then Nine Member States believed there was a crisis which required rapid consultations.

Obviously if the Nine were to coordinate their response to crisis situations in the most efficient way, some sort of EPC Secretariat or staff would be, if not essential, then extremely useful.

10. But it was not only Lord Carrington who was in favour of some sort of staff for EPC, because in May 1981, at Saarbrücken, Mr Genscher, the German Foreign Minister, again floated the idea of an EPC Secretariat. The matter was discussed at a meeting of the Nine at Venlo in The Netherlands, a meeting held under the so-called Gymnich formula. The decision at Venlo was to turn down the idea of a new European bureaucracy, the Press reporting at the time that the French Foreign Minister was in the fore-front of the opposition to the proposal. It was at this meeting however that the Nine decided to include questions of security in discussions on European Political Cooperation.

11. Meanwhile the Political Committee of the European Parliament had been active, and brought before the House in July 1981 a draft Resolution, for which the Rapporteur was Lady Elles, on EPC and the Role of the European Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The Resolution, adopted by a very large majority, called on the Foreign Ministers to submit to the European Council within the next six months a third report on EPC, which should include proposals for 'the creation of a permanent Secretariat to ensure continuity in the work of EPC', answerable to the Foreign Ministers and able to provide Parliament through the Political Committee with full and up-to-date information. The Elles Report went on to make several other proposals for the evolution and development of EPC and for closer relations between it and the Parliament.

12. At a further weekend meeting of the Ten Foreign Ministers, this time at Brocket Hall, near London, Lord Carrington, as President-in-Office of the Foreign Ministers, put forward a paper consisting of different options for improving EPC. One of the options involved the transfer of senior Government officials from other Member

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<sup>2</sup> OJ C 234/67, 14.9.81

States to the country holding the Presidency, to which there was agreement in principle. One of the other options in Lord Carrington's paper was that it might be possible to give responsibility for coordinating policy in the area of security to officials from defence and other national ministries. This took up some proposals recently put forward by Mr Genscher. However, when this proposal came before the Ministers, it was objected to by the Irish Foreign Minister and further discussion was closed.

#### The London Report

13. On 14 October 1981, the Foreign Ministers issued the third report on EPC, as requested by Parliament's Resolution of July, in which they agreed that it was possible to discuss in EPC 'certain important foreign policy questions bearing on the political aspects of security.' The Ten Ministers also agreed, in what has become known as the London Report on EPC, that

'henceforth the Presidency will be assisted by a small team of officials seconded from preceding and succeeding Presidencies. These officials will remain in the employment of their National Foreign Ministries, and will be on the staff of their Embassy in the Presidency. They will be at the disposition of the Presidency and will work under its direction.'

The Ten also noted that, should he wish to do so, the President-in-Office 'may delegate certain tasks to his successor; he may also request his predecessor to finish tasks which are close to completion when the Presidency is handed over.'

14. These important decisions introduced the concept of a small team of officials which, because they are drawn from three Presidencies, have become known as the Troika. The Troika concept was also henceforth to be applied according to the London Report where the Presidency was meeting with representatives of Third countries; if necessary, and if the Ten agreed, the Presidency could be in these circumstances accompanied by representatives of the preceding and succeeding Presidencies. Thus although the original suggestion by Lord Carrington and Mr Genscher for a Secretariat for EPC could not find sufficient support among the Ministers, at least the Troika approach was launched in October 1981, and has proved to be not only



useful but helpful to the Presidency in seeking to coordinate ever more closely the foreign policies of the Ten, and to set out in as many areas as possible a common foreign policy.

Draft Act on European Union

15. Hard on the heels of the London Report came the draft Act on European Union proposed by Mr Colombo, the Italian Foreign Minister, and Mr Genscher, the German Foreign Minister. The Act was presented to the European Parliament in November 1981 and was a proposal for a series of steps towards European Union.<sup>3</sup> The Draft Act contained a formal proposal for a Secretariat of EPC in the following words -

'7. The European Council and the councils shall, where matters pertaining to the European Communities are concerned, be assisted by the Secretariat of the Council and, in the field of foreign policy, security policy and cultural cooperation, by an expandable Secretariat of European Political Cooperation.'

While it is true to say that Mr Genscher had been preparing proposals for a move towards European Union for at least a year, and had been collaborating for all this time with Mr Colombo in putting together a series of proposals, the force of their proposal for an EPC Secretariat was substantial, coming as it did only one month after the London Report.

16. We now know that by November 1981 Italy, the Federal Republic, Belgium and the United Kingdom at least were in favour of an EPC Secretariat; the country which was most strongly opposed at that stage was France.

17. In January 1983 the European Parliament adopted a Resolution, put forward by Mr Haagerup on behalf of the Political Committee, on European security and EPC<sup>4</sup>. The Resolution dealt with these subjects in general terms and included no discussion of an EPC Secretariat.

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<sup>3</sup> Bulletin of EC, No. 11, 1981, point 3.4.1, Part II, para. 7.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 42/74, 14.2.1983.

18. The Genscher/Colombo Draft Act, in a mutilated form, eventually saw the light of day on 19 June 1983 as the Solemn Declaration on European Union, made by the European Council at Stuttgart<sup>5</sup>. The Solemn Declaration, while seeking to ensure the re-enforcement of EPC, made no reference to the need for a Secretariat to assist in achieving this aim. It confirmed as an objective, however, that of the adoption of joint positions and joint action, 'including the coordination of the positions of Member States on the political and economic aspects of security.'<sup>6</sup>

## PART II

### The Draft Treaty, the Dooge Report and the Milan Summit

19. Article 67 of the Draft Treaty on European Union adopted by Parliament in February 1984 states that as regards international relations -

'the European Council shall be responsible for cooperation; the Council of the Union shall be responsible for its conduct; the Commission may propose policies and actions which shall be implemented, at the request of the European Council or the Council of the Union, either by the Commission or the Member States.'

Although the Council of the Union is thus to be responsible for conducting cooperation between the Member States on international relations, neither the Draft Treaty nor the Reports and Resolutions on which it was based make any specific mention of a Secretariat responsible for carrying out such cooperation.

20. However the Report to the European Council in March 1985 by the Ad Hoc Committee for Institutional Affairs (the Dooge Committee) states in Part II, Section C that several measures could be considered initially which might allow progress to be made towards finding a common voice<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Bulletin of EC, No. 6/1983, point 1.6.1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, point 1.4.2. (Danish reservation)

<sup>7</sup> A reservation by the Greek Member of the Committee was entered on the following paragraph.

The Report proposes the strengthening of EPC structures by

'the creation of a permanent political cooperation Secretariat to enable successive Presidencies to ensure greater continuity and cohesiveness of action; the Secretariat would to a large extent use the back-up facilities of the Council and should help to strengthen the cohesion between political cooperation and the external policies of the Community;'<sup>8</sup>

21. On 28 June 1985, on the first day of the European Council meeting in Milan, the French President, M. Mitterand and Chancellor Kohl of the Federal Republic, submitted a draft Treaty on European Union to their colleagues. Article 10 of this Draft Treaty deals in some detail with political cooperation and reads as follows -

**'Article 10, paragraph 1:**

The Presidency of political cooperation will be held by the signatory state which has the Presidency of the Communities. It will be assisted by a general secretariat of the Council of European Union which will be permanently based in the main centre of Community activities.

**Paragraph 2:**

A Secretary General of European Union will be responsible for running the general secretariat. He will have the task of over-seeing political cooperation and will be nominated by the Council of European Union for four years.

**Paragraph 3:**

The other Members of the general secretariat will be appointed for a period of two years by the Foreign Ministers of the Signatory States.

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<sup>8</sup> Report, Part II, section C, (a) (1)

Paragraph 4:

The Secretariat will have as its main task to assist the Presidency by ensuring the continuity of political cooperation between the Signatory States and its coherence with the Community's positions.'

22. This Franco-German Draft Treaty on European Union effectively included most of the points which appeared in a British text on European Political Cooperation which had been circulated some days before the European Council meeting in Milan. The situation as regards the Franco-German and British drafts is that on 22 July 1985 the Ministers of Foreign Affairs instructed the Political Committee to draft up by 15 October the text of a Draft Treaty on the basis in particular of the Franco-German and British drafts concerning political cooperation with a view to a common, foreign and security policy.

PART III

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Dooge Report and the Franco-German draft

23. The Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, which is to meet in Luxembourg on 9 September, has the dual task of revising the Treaty, and of drawing up a draft Treaty with a view to establishing a common foreign and security policy. The Franco-German and British drafts are therefore the basis for discussion and have officially supplanted, as regards foreign and security policy, all previous proposals, texts and reports<sup>9</sup>, although the latter may certainly be prayed in aid by one or more Member States.

24. This situation implies several steps backward from the Draft Treaty and the Dooge Report, in the following respects:

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<sup>9</sup> Council Conclusions on Institutional Matters, 22 July 1985. Agence Europe, 21-22 July 1985. See also Annex for text of Franco-German draft.

- (1) By the Milan drafts the European Council is to become the 'Council of European Union', the proceedings of EPC are to be placed under its general direction, and a General Secretariat of European Union, headed by a Secretary General will oversee EPC.
- (2) By the Milan drafts the 'foreign policy of the European Communities' and 'policies agreed in the framework of EPC' are described as distinct types of activity managed by different bodies.

25. The Dooge Report states that 'the objective of EPC must remain the systematic formulation and implementation of a common external policy' (i.e. Community affairs and EPC together)<sup>10</sup>.

26. Thus the Dooge Committee wish a common external policy, including the Community development and external economic relations policies and EPC, and propose that this is achieved through a common secretariat (that of the Council of Ministers).

27. The Dooge proposals present enormous advantages to Parliament as, by placing general responsibility for a common external policy upon the Council of Ministers, as did the Draft Treaty, they safeguard existing accountability to Parliament by the Foreign Ministers and provide for increased accountability as EPC becomes inextricably involved with activities under the Treaty, which the Commission and Council have accepted as being open to Parliamentary scrutiny and supervision. No such safeguards exist in Article 9 of the Franco-German draft, which goes no further towards Parliamentary accountability than the London Report 1981 and the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart 1983<sup>11</sup>.

28. As regards security, the Dooge Report goes considerably further towards developing and strengthening consultation on security problems as part of EPC than does the Franco-German document. The former proposes, for example, that efforts should be stepped up to draw up and adopt common standards for weapons systems and equipment<sup>12</sup>, while the

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<sup>10</sup> Dooge Report, Part II, section C. The Danish representative entered a reserve on this section.

<sup>11</sup> See Annex

<sup>12</sup> Dooge Report, Part II, Section C, (b). Reservations were entered in general by the representative of Ireland and on two specific points by that of Greece.

Latter mentions security matters only in the most general terms (Article 8) and makes no mention of 'defence' as such. The permanent EPC secretariat proposed by the Dooge Committee would be apt to extend and deepen collaboration on security matters; that proposed by the Franco-German draft, whose staff would be changed every two years, would be responsible only to the Heads of State. It would probably have as much difficulty in securing implementation of EPC decisions by the 'Council of European Union' as the existing Council Secretariat has experienced in achieving execution of the 'decisions' of the present European Council.

### Conclusions

29. Will the inter-governmental conference mark 'the end of an auld sang' as regards a secretariat for EPC? The answer must almost certainly be in the negative, particularly if the European Parliament stands by its Draft Treaty and the Dooge Report.

30. This paper traces in outline the development of Parliament's thinking, and of Government thinking about a secretariat for EPC. By adopting, by 237 votes in favour, 31 against, and 43 abstentions, the Draft Treaty on European Union, the Parliament adhered to a maximalist position in regard to the direction and management of EPC, a position represented since 1961 by the proposals of the Delegations of the Five on the Fouchet Plan and by those of Mr Blumenfeld in his report of 1978<sup>13</sup>, and of Lady Elles in her Report of 1981<sup>14</sup>.

31. A less far-reaching view on an EPC secretariat has been put (as has been seen above) successively by the First, Second and Third Reports by the Foreign Ministers on EPC, by the Committee of Three, by Lord Carrington as Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, by the Genscher/Colombo Draft Act, by the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart and by the Franco-German Draft for Milan.

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<sup>13</sup> Report on EPC (Rapporteur: Mr Erik Blumenfeld), Doc. 427/77. Explanatory Statement, paras. 22-30.

<sup>14</sup> Report on EPC and the role of the European Parliament, Doc. 1-335/81 (Rapporteur: Lady Elles), Explanatory Statement, Chapter 9.

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EUROPEAN UNION : DRAFT TREATY PROPOSED BY FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY

MILAN (EU), Friday 28 June 1985 - The draft Treaty proposed by France and West Germany on the eve of the Summit, which was the subject of the positions and comments reported in the previous pages, is as follows (unofficial translation):

Preamble. The signatory States

- determined to continue the work undertaken on the basis of the Treaties instituting the European Communities and transform without further delay the body of relations between their States into a European Union;

- aware of the responsibility incumbent on Europe to speak as often as possible with one voice and with cohesion in order to defend its common interests more efficiently, better safeguard peace and specifically uphold the principles of democracy and respect of the law, to which they are attached;

- convinced that gradual unification of Europe as decided in the Stuttgart Declaration will make a free and diverse contribution to reaffirming its independence and maintaining the major balances in the world;

- resolved to implement European Union, from the basis on the one hand of Communities functioning according to their own rules, and on the other of political co-operation among the signatory States, and to provide it with the necessary means for action;

- having decided to name, as of the next meeting, the European Council "Council of European Union", and create a general secretariat to act alongside it, have agreed the following:

Article 1. The objective of the signatory States is the gradual implementation of a European foreign policy.

Article 2. 1) The signatory States undertake to:

- consult and inform each other, in a regular manner, on all major foreign policy matters which are of interest to all.

- achieve a broad degree of identity of viewpoints and harmonise their positions with a view to joint action in international relations.

2) Consultations of this type will take place before the signatory States set their definitive positions.

3) The determination of joint positions will constitute a point of reference for their policy. In order to expand on this field of action, they will continue to gradually identify the principles, interests and objectives they share.

Article 3. The proceedings of political co-operation are to be placed under the general direction of the Council of European Union. The Foreign Affairs Ministers will meet at least four times each year. They will also consult each other on matters of foreign policy on the occasion of meeting of the Community Council of Ministers.

Article 4. The signatory States will ensure the highest possible degree of coherence between the foreign policy of the European Communities and policies agreed in the framework of European political co-operation. To this end, the Commission will take part in all political co-operation meetings.

In order to guarantee this coherence, the Presidency will make sure that the interaction between Community affairs and those of political co-operation materialises in the form of multiple joint action.

Article 5. 1) In international institutions and at important international conferences in which the signatory States take part, the latter will attempt to achieve joint positions in accordance with Article 2 of this Treaty.

2) The signatory States will attempt to achieve joint positions even in the case of international institutions or important international conferences in which not all of them are represented. Those which are represented in bodies of this type will fully take into account positions already adopted in the context of European political co-operation.

Article 6. On each occasion on which they deem it appropriate, the signatory States will harmonise their contacts with third countries and regional groupings.

Article 7. 1) By means of mutual assistance and information, the signatory States will work to intensify co-operation between their accredited foreign representations in third countries and in international organisations.

2) The signatory States will examine the possibility, where this is not already the case, of joint representation in international economic organisations.

Article 8. 1) The signatory States are agreed that closer co-operation on European security matters constitutes an essential contribution to the development of a European identity in relation to foreign policy. They reaffirm that they are prepared to increase co-ordination of their positions on political and economic aspects of security.

2) Those of the signatory States who wish to co-operate more closely in the field of security will do so within the Western European Union, in respect of the role incumbent on the Atlantic Alliance and of their specific situation and strategy within the latter.

3) The signatory States consider this co-operation to be an element of the process of European unification, and feel that this conception may extend beyond the composition and current framework of the Western European Union.

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4) The signatory States are determined to foster the technological and industrial conditions necessary for their security and they will work to this effect both individually and, where indicated, through the common cooperation bodies.

Article 9: The signatory States wish to stress the importance of the European Parliament's participation in political cooperation. They give an undertaking to fully apply and develop, as far as possible, the provisions for relations with the European Parliament as contained in the London Report and the Solemn Declaration on European Union. Special informative meetings on the activities of political cooperation in Europe could be organised notably by the Presidency whenever the need arises.

Article 10: 1) The Presidency of Political Cooperation will be held by the Signatory State which has the Presidency of the Communities. It will be helped by a General Secretariat of the Council of European Union which will be permanently based in the main centre of Community activities.

2) A General Secretary for European Union will be responsible for the running of the General Secretariat. He will have the task of overseeing political cooperation and will be nominated by the Council of European Union for four years.

3) The other members of the General Secretariat will be appointed for a period of two years by the Foreign Ministers of the signatory States.

4) The Secretariat will have as its main task helping the Presidency by ensuring the continuity of political cooperation between the signatory States and its coherence with the Community's positions.