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Introduction

This paper will deal with relations between Italy and the European Communities in a historical perspective. It will take into consideration both exogenous and endogenous variables. As regards the exogenous, relations with the United States are of particular relevance. As for the endogenous, the focus will be on the way political parties have perceived the process of European integration. Here, one can distinguish three periods: from the origins to the late 1970s; from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s and from the mid 1990s to today. The first period was characterized by the opposition of the left to European and Atlantic integration, on the basis of *ideological* contraposition; the second witnessed a shared consensus by all political parties on integration – especially European; in the latest period, domestic political divisions at times lead parties to oppose European integration.

The end of WWII

At the end of WWII the leaders of the main Italian parties – the Christian Democrat Alcide De Gasperi, the Communist Palmiro Togliatti and the Socialist Pietro Nenni – united to form a coalition government, lead by De Gasperi, which lasted from the end of 1945 to June 1947. The greatest institutional problem it had to confront, in 1946, was the future of the monarchy.

On June 2, 1946, the monarchy was abolished by a popular referendum; the new Republican Constitution was then promulgated (January 1, 1948).

However, Italian domestic developments were also to be influenced by events taking place on an international level. Already prior to the formal end of hostilities, Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt had met in order to try to outline possible post-war scenarios. The most celebrated meeting of the three leaders took place in Yalta, February 4-11, 1945. During that conference, an agreement was reached: the *Declaration on a Freed Europe* stated that every European state would have to hold free elections and proceed to establish democratic governments. In the years 1946-48, the Central and Eastern European countries evolved into “popular democracies”, i.e. communist-led satellite states, orbiting around the USSR. Unable to reach an agreement with the USSR on the future of Germany, the United States, France and Great Britain decided to create a German state in the three western zones of occupation. The Russian response was quick: on the night of June 23, 1948, all commercial traffic into Berlin was blocked. Thus, for almost a year, the city was supplied by a gigantic air-lift, organized by American forces. In May 1949, the blockade was finally lifted, and the division of Germany into the Western Federal Republic of Germany and the Eastern Democratic Republic of Germany was formalized.

On September 19, 1946, at the University of Zurich, Winston Churchill spoke of the need to unite Europe: “we must re-create the European family in a regional structure called, it may be, the United States of Europe. The first step is to form a Council of Europe” (Salmon and

Nicoll, 1997: 26-28) – yet Churchill only thought of a United States of Europe as limited to the continent.

Churchill was not the only one calling for a united Europe. Of the different voices claiming that this would solve the continent's problems, the Italian one was particularly loud. From the little island of Ventotene, where he had been confined by the Fascist regime, Altiero Spinelli (1907-1986) wrote – along with Eugenio Colorni and Ernesto Rossi – the *Ventotene Manifesto* (1943). The authors affirmed that it was “ [...] the time for new men: for the MOVEMENT FOR A UNITED AND FREE EUROPE.” (Spinelli, 1991: 37). In September 1946, Spinelli, together with Alexander Marc, Henry Brugmans, and Henry Frenay founded the *Union Européenne des Fédéralistes* in Paris: the subsequent Congress of Montreux (August 1947) was the first great manifestation for European integration in the post-war period, reuniting federalist and Europeanist movements from all over Europe (Gerbet, 1983: 57). Europe-wide organizations were created in those years by different political parties and movements: the *Confédération Européenne de l'Agriculture* (1945), the *Nouvelles Équipes Internationales* (NEI, 1947), the *Mouvement pour les États-Unis socialistes d'Europe* (1947), the *Union Parlementaire Européenne* (1947), the *Conseil des Fédérations Industrielles d'Europe* (1949).

All of these and other pro-European movements met at The Hague, March 7-10, 1948, at the Congress for the foundation of the *European Movement*. Under the presidency of Winston Churchill, approximately 800 pro-Europeanists participated: the delegations included both political and intellectual leaders such as François Mitterrand, Salvador de Madriaga, Denis de

Rougemont, Paul Van Zeeland, Paul Ramadier, Paul Reynaud, Alcide De Gasperi, Olivetti, Ignazio Silone, Bruno Visentini, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Léon Blum, Anthony Eden, François-Poncet Sr., Walter Hallestein, and Harold MacMillan (Gerbet, 1991, 371-375). The Italian delegation, however, was formed more by intellectuals than by politicians.

The process of European integration then developed in three successive waves: economic, with the Marshall Plan and the creation of the European Organization of Economic Cooperation (OECE); diplomatic and military, with the Brussels Pact and the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty; political, with the Council of Europe and the European Communities.

The Marshall Plan

The reconstruction process was not an easy one for Europe. Substantial aid arrived from the Marshall Plan, announced by Gen. George Marshall at Harvard on June 5, 1947. Sixteen countries participated in the economic conference, which was held from July 12 to September 22, 1947, to determine Europe's needs: France, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Turkey. Czechoslovakia, whose government had expressed an interest in participating in the conference, was forced by Stalin to retract its request. On April 16, 1948, at the Château de la Muette in Paris, a convention was signed which gave birth to the OECE, the organization which – in accordance with specific US requests – took charge of managing the Marshall Plan. The United States, in fact, was aiming to force the European countries to decide together about where and how to use the funds and support; in the end, indeed, the US

wanted Europeans to cooperate in creating an internal market – a condition particularly dear to the US Congress.

The Italian government's reaction to the Marshall Plan was quick and positive. The plan was to be useful from a number of different points of view. First of all, it would improve the dramatic economic situation, thus positively influencing public opinion, also in view of approaching legislative elections. Also, the Marshall Plan and OECE represented Italy's first chance to be reinstated in the international diplomatic game, on equal footing with other countries (Varsori, 1998: 52). Furthermore, Italy seized the occasion to propose that a customs union be established with France. The treaty was signed on March 26, 1949. In principle, the customs union was then to be enlarged to the Benelux countries (and to be called Fritalux, or Finebel), but, in the end, the union was never to see the light of day (Gerbet, 1983: 85-86).

The North Atlantic Treaty

On March 17, 1948, the UK, France and the Benelux countries signed the Treaty of Brussels, a defense treaty that was to last fifty years. Soon after that, the idea of a defense system between Europe and the United States started to be developed. With the utmost discretion, negotiations began among the UK, the US and Canada at the Pentagon (the so-called Pentagon Talks). The group was subsequently enlarged to include France, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Before the draft of the treaty was completed, other European countries became interested in what was to become the North Atlantic Alliance: Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Italy. The latter formally introduced its official candidature on January 1, 1949.

France strongly opposed Norwegian membership, while it supported Italian participation – seen as a guarantee for better strategic protection of Corsica and Algeria. Great Britain, on the other hand, opposed Italian participation due to the country's fragile economic and political situation. The British suggested that Italy should belong to a Mediterranean pact, separate from the North Atlantic system.

For the United States, Italy represented a serious problem. First of all, from a geographic point of view, it was not an Atlantic country. Secondly, Italy was thought to contribute very little, in terms of military resources, to Western European security. On the other hand, as far as politics were concerned, the US saw Italy's exclusion from the North Atlantic Alliance as potentially dangerous. Given its former enemy status, if Italy were not to maintain close ties to the other European countries it might assume an isolationist position. Moreover, given its solid communist background, Italy might easily be influenced by the Soviets. Therefore, in the end, despite several reluctant American Senators, a decision was passed to allow Italy to join as one of the founding members of the North Atlantic security system. As part of a comprehensive deal, Norway too became an integral part of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The Council of Europe

The creation of the Council of Europe in 1949, in accordance with the political initiative of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, was the most important political result of action undertaken by the European Movement. The German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer defined it "the most important event since the end of the war." This view was shared by the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Carlo Sforza. The United States, Belgium and Luxembourg all sided with the French initiative as well, while the British seemed somewhat hostile towards the

proposal. A group of 18 representatives (5 English, 5 French, 3 Belgian, 3 Dutch, and 2 from Luxembourg), called the *Comité d'études pour l'Union Européenne*, began its work on November 26, 1948 to study the various possible proposals. On March 28, 1949 the Committee was enlarged to include five more countries: Italy, Ireland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The name "European Union", proposed by Shuman, with the support of Italy and Belgium, was rejected by the British and by the Scandinavian countries because they feared it could mean "European Federation", a supranational political-institutional structure which Euro-skeptical countries would never have accepted.

The Charter of the *Council of Europe* was signed in the palace of Saint James in London on May 5, 1949 by ten member countries. For Italy, it was a diplomatic success to be included in the negotiations (unlike what had happened with the North Atlantic Treaty, when it was barely accepted as a founding member). In domestic terms, Christian Democrat leader and Prime Minister De Gasperi also needed membership in the Council of Europe to gain support for membership in the Atlantic Pact. The decision to firmly link Italy to the Western world was in fact essentially the decision of a small group of leaders, led by the prime minister together with his Foreign Minister Sforza.

Both the Communist and Socialist parties opposed membership in the North Atlantic Treaty. The Socialists asked for a popular referendum – which was denied – and its leader Pietro Nenni affirmed that, with the signature of the Treaty, "the Third War had been launched" (Scirocco, 2003:158). The Communist party was, at the time, totally subjugated to the USSR PCUS. But even the left fringes of the Christian Democrats, led by Giuseppe Dossetti and

Giovanni Gronchi, were in favor of keeping an equidistant relation between the two superpowers: the US and the USSR. They thus favored a neutral, non-aligned Italy and opposed the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty.

As the Communists and the Socialists were definitely expected to vote against the treaty (Capperucci, 2003), De Gasperi desperately needed all of his party's votes in parliament. In this light, he used Italy's inclusion in the Council of Europe in order to "sell" Atlantic integration to his own party. In signing the North Atlantic Treaty (April 4, 1949), De Gasperi also underlined its political rather than military aspects. The founding treaty of the Council of Europe was signed soon afterwards (May 5, 1949). At the same time, the Italian government also negotiated a commercial agreement with Moscow. These ambiguities were to have an impact on Italy's foreign policy, however (Varsori, 1998: 74), as we shall see in the following paragraphs.

From the Schuman Plan to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

Since the creation of the first government of the new Federal Republic of Germany, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer never ceased to complain about limitations imposed by the Allies. He was committed to fully recuperating the sovereignty of Germany. In particular, he lamented the presence of the Allied Commission of Control, pointed to the International Ruhr Authority's strain on the German economy, and complained about France's control over the Saar region. At the end of WWII, Saar had in fact become an autonomous region, and had created an economic union with France. All the coal produced in the region was to be handed over to the French – a fact that raised the level of tension between the two countries.

The American High Commissioner in Germany, John McCloy, on behalf of the American government, supported a French-German rapprochement within a European framework. Therefore, on the occasion of a meeting between Schuman, Bevin and Acheson, in Washington, in September 1949, the French foreign minister was asked to draft a project for a common policy towards Germany, in which the questions of Saar and Ruhr were to be addressed. Yet the winter passed without any improvements in French-German relations and without any proposals from Schuman.

In April, Jean Monnet, then General Commissioner of the *Plan de modernisation et d'équipement*, took the initiative. He delivered a note to Bernard Clapier, Schuman's assistant, containing a proposal that he had prepared during the previous weeks with the help of a team of young lawyers: Paul Reuter, Pierre Uri and Etienne Hirsh. In the note, he affirmed that the only possible solution was to organize Europe on a federal basis. It was an old idea of his. Already on August 5, 1943, Jean Monnet (1976: 319-320) – then member of the provisional exiled French government – had written in his diary in Algeria: “there will be no peace if the [European] states are rebuilt on the basis of national sovereignty [...it is necessary that] the European states form a federation [...]”(1976: 427). Monnet suggested that France should propose that the whole production of French and German coal and steel be placed under the rule of an independent international authority, open to the participation of other European countries.

Schuman appreciated the idea and, after having obtained Adenauer's assent (thanks to the good office of a common friend, Judge Robert Mischlich) – officially presented to the press

(at 6 p.m. on May 9, 1950, at the Quai d'Orsay in the *salon de l'Horloge*) what was to be known as the Schuman Declaration. At the same time, in Bonn, Adenauer officially announced his country's acceptance of the proposal to journalists gathered for the occasion. In all, six governments welcomed the proposal and began negotiations: Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg as well as France and Germany.

For Italy, this was an important political and economic opportunity. It would help the country's difficult reconstruction of its democratic and economic systems. Furthermore, De Gasperi – aware that the Eastern markets were closed to Italy – chose to pit the Italian economy against the most competitive and difficult markets: the Atlantic and Western European ones. According to Mario Telò (1996: 144-149), “De Gasperi was convinced that, in order to balance domestic instability, a strong counterweight of international dimensions was needed [...]; Sforza saw linking Italy to Europe as the country's only hope to emerge from defeat. Italy's future development depended on Europe and the West. For Italy to succeed in being more than a simple satellite of the United States [... it needed ...] to intelligently combine the three dimensions of De Gasperi's action: bilateral relations – especially with the US; bilateral diplomacy within international organizations; and commitment to new supranational organizations, linked to European integration.”

Nevertheless, many people in Italy opposed this plan, both for political and economic reasons. According to Ambassador Achille Albonetti (1960: 133) difficulties derived from the fact that Italy “paid tribute to other countries for raw materials for the iron and steel industry and that domestic production in Italy cost more than elsewhere.” The Italian ambassador in Paris,

Pietro Quaroni, opposed the proposal, convinced that the plan would favor French interests alone, thus threatening the Italian coal and steel industry. Nor did he trust Schuman's engagement in defending Italian industry. Quaroni also suspected that Monnet was a neutralist and that this might work against the Christian Democrats' pro-Atlantic positions. In the words of Paolo Emilio Taviani – then head of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) delegation – “unlike La Malfa – who said Europe first, then the North Atlantic Treaty – we Christian Democrats said yes to Europe, but following the North Atlantic Treaty. We were convinced that we needed America on our side.” (Roussel, 1996: 562).

The Socialists continued to oppose any kind of European integration – in total isolation from other European Socialist parties (Scirocco, 2003: 179). According to the Italian party's leader, Pietro Nenni, there was a need for a “national” foreign policy not guided by ideological constraints, but rather by the exclusive definition of the national interest (Scirocco, 2003: 144).

As for the Communists, the party's international political choices were subordinate to and coordinated by the USSR's foreign policy (Guiso, 2003: 207). The Communists' political discourse in this phase was centered on the need to preserve “Italian interests” – most notably geopolitical ones – against the transatlantic monopolies (Guiso, 2003: 219).

Industry and, in particular, heavy industry – with the notable exception of FIAT – was against the ECSC for fear of the liberalization that would follow. The trade unions viewed things

differently: the Catholic trade union (CISL) was in favor of European integration and the leftist one (CGIL) looked upon the European Communities with some interest.

In the end, the decision to join the ECSC essentially belonged to the government, or, more precisely still, to De Gasperi and Sforza. The Treaty of Paris, which created the European Coal and Steel Community, was signed on April 18, 1951, with Italy as a founding member. The High Authority, presided by Jean Monnet, was established in Luxembourg on August 10, 1951.

The EDC and the end of Alcide De Gasperi

Already during negotiations relating to the Schuman Plan, a new concern had emerged: German rearmament. The United States suggested the creation of an integrated, operative structure – NATO, or North Atlantic Treaty Organization – within the sphere of the Atlantic Alliance. Within this context, a German army could participate under direct American control. The French rejected this proposal, and were thus obliged, under increasing American pressure, to find an alternative for German rearmament. France's solution, born from the ideas of Monnet and the French Prime Minister René Pleven, was announced by Pleven at the French National Assembly on October 24, 1950. The Pleven Plan proposed the creation of a European army, to be placed under the control of a European Ministry of Defense. The soldiers coming from various countries – including Germany – would be integrated in a European army at a level of the smallest unit.

On February 15, 1951, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg met in Paris to start the talks. The Netherlands joined on October 8, while the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Norway and Denmark sent observers. As for the Italian position, in the summer of 1951, De Gasperi received a memorandum from Spinelli, who was convinced that the construction of a European army had to be accompanied by the creation of a supranational political organism. He saw this as the first step to realizing the United States of Europe. De Gasperi, who was also in charge of foreign affairs at the time, fully shared these ideas, which became the guidelines for Italian action: Italy accepted the creation of a European Defense Community (EDC), provided that it would be instrumental in establishing a European political community. The result of De Gasperi's initiative was the addition, in the EDC treaty, of Article 38: this stated that, once the EDC was established, its parliamentary assembly would be responsible for elaborating a project for the birth of a political community, to be examined by the member states. The new treaty, founding the European Defense Community, was signed on May 27, 1952, the day after the signing of the Bonn Agreements, which returned to Germany its sovereignty rights in the defense realm.

According to Mario Telò (1996: 194-195), the only period in which Italy had a propulsive role at the European level was between the years 1951 and 1953. De Gasperi, who was deeply involved in the project, declared to the Christian Democrats in Naples in 1954: "Political collaboration among the countries of continental Europe represents the indispensable premise on which to build international relations of economic and social cooperation. Without these, Italy will never resolve its fundamental problems." In other words, De Gasperi's overarching

belief was that without European solidarity, Italy could not safeguard its own interests at an international level.

Between 1953 and 1954, the EDC Treaty was ratified by Germany and by the Benelux countries. In Italy, the treaty was approved by the competent commission in Parliament, despite opposition from both right wing and left wing parties. However, the Italian Parliament did not vote for the treaty's ratification, preferring to wait for the French vote. The new Pella government – which took over after the 1953 elections – assumed a more nationalistic stance, trying to link the EDC question to that of Trieste, which had still not been given back to Italy. The following Mario Scelba government was not capable of changing this political stance. According to Sergio Pistone (1982: 153), the Italian Parliament's refusal to ratify the EDC Treaty had a negative impact on French public opinion. Meanwhile, as Robert Schuman was replaced by Georges Bidault at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Pierre Mendès-France's new government, French public opinion was divided between the *cedistes* (favorable to ratification) and the *anticedistes* (opposed). Eventually, the treaty failed to be ratified at the National Assembly on August 30, 1954.

The problem of German rearmament thus remained unresolved. A new initiative was launched – this time from the British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden. In 1954, it was decided that Germany would enter NATO, that Italy and Germany would join the Brussels Pact, and that the Western European Union would subsequently be created. It was also agreed that Germany would not develop atomic weapons and that two British divisions would be stationed in Germany.

In Italy, the end of the European Defense Community also symbolized the end of De Gasperi's political life. In supporting the EDC and the progressive creation of a federal project he was, once again, ahead of his own party. His fellow Christian Democrats were still digesting the Atlantic choice at the time, and were not ready for the EDC Treaty. The old leader died just a few months after the failure of the EDC Treaty.

The European Economic Community and the Euratom

Jean Monnet was convinced that collaboration on atomic energy could revive European integration. The Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henry Spaak was also convinced of the need to revive the integration process: on April 2, 1955 he wrote to Konrad Adenauer and to his French and Italian colleagues, Antoine Pinay and Gaetano Martino, proposing to extend the competences of the ECSC to additional sectors, such as transportation and atomic energy. Jan Willem Beyen – the Dutch foreign minister – proposed, on April 21, 1955, at the Mouvement Européen meeting, to create a supranational community, which would supersede an economic union. This was followed up with the so-called *Benelux Memorandum*.

The reactions of France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy were very prudent. Monnet – who, meanwhile, had created a “Committee for the United States of Europe”, gathering the leaders of European political parties and trade unions – invited the ECSC foreign ministers to convene an intergovernmental conference with the aim of drafting, in collaboration with the ECSC institutions, the international acts necessary to further European integration. The Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Martino succeeded in gaining support for a

conference to be held in Messina. Italy's interests in a possible nuclear community and in a prospective common market were strong enough for it to want to join the negotiations, but the country demanded that certain Italian needs be taken into consideration. Primarily, it felt that the principle of free circulation be applied not only to goods, but also to labor and capital. This first objective corresponded to the traditional Italian need to favor emigration for its laborers, while the second one revealed the government's special regard for Italy's South: it hoped that financial resources would flow throughout the peninsula, thereby contributing to the nation's overall development.

At the Messina meeting (June 1-3, 1955), the foreign ministers of the six ECSC member states established that it was time to take new steps towards the creation of a European framework, and that these new steps needed to be taken predominantly in the economic sector. In particular, progress was called for in creating a common market and partial integration in the field of atomic energy. Naturally, divergences existed: the Germans, the Italians and the Dutch, for example, favored general economic integration, while France supported sector-by-sector integration. An intergovernmental committee, chaired by Spaak, was thus created (Spaak Committee). The committee's report (*Spaak Report*), was presented to the ECSC foreign ministers on April 21, 1956. Negotiations then began. The country showing the most resistance was France. In particular, Mendès-France feared that the Italians would "export" their unemployment to France, something that Robert Marjolin (1986: 287) defined as a "vision apocalyptique". From Italy's perspective, given the country's poverty levels, the main preoccupation was indeed how to take advantage of this new initiative. The French thus posed a number of reservations, though they understood that, if they wanted

Euratom accepted at their conditions, they had to accept its linkage with the common market, a key criteria for other countries. In the end, international events ended up providing the necessary impetus for the conclusion of negotiations: the invasion of Hungary (November 4, 1956) and the nationalization of the Suez Canal (July 20, 1956). On March 25, 1957, the treaties creating the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom were signed in Rome (hence the name Treaties of Rome).

In Italy, the invasion of Hungary also had a lasting effect on domestic politics. The Socialists (PSI) sharply criticized the USSR's intervention and broke their alliance with the Communists for good. Although they criticized the government for the way it handled the negotiations and thus abstained on the EEC, the Socialists voted in favor of Euratom (Scirocco, 2003). The change in the PSI's approach to foreign policy then allowed the party to join the majority supporting the government in 1958 and to formally enter the government in 1963. From then on, the Italian Socialists would remain pro-European.

From six to nine: the first enlargement

The United Kingdom initially participated in the works of the Spaak Committee but then abandoned it, believing that the idea of a common market would fail. Instead, it promoted the European Free Trade Association (EFTA, January 4, 1960). Yet, in the years 1958-62, the process for the creation of a customs union proceeded well, helping the growth of intra-community exchange. The most controversial issue was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), on which French and Italian interests clashed. On June 30, 1960, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt (a former Dutch Minister of Agriculture) listed a number of

principles which were necessary for the CAP to function. Nevertheless, it took eight years to implement them, with interminable meetings known as the “agricultural marathons”.

In the meantime, in the spring of 1958, following the Algerian crisis, General Charles De Gaulle was called to lead the French government. He accepted on the condition that a new Constitution be prepared. The new Constitution, approved by referendum in September 1958, marked the beginning of the V Republic, of which De Gaulle was elected the first president in November.

Contrary to initial pessimistic expectations, De Gaulle soon took the necessary steps towards implementing the common market. Still, he had a personal vision of Europe and of France’s role in it. His “Europe Européenne” or “Europe des États”, made up of national states, was to hold a leadership position at least equal to the United States and the Soviet Union on the international scene. In this light, a plan was elaborated by the European Commission with a view to relaunching political cooperation among the EEC member states, called the Fouchet Plan. The first draft was presented on November 2, 1961 and a redraft in January 1962. The Italian government initially felt it was a modest proposal, yet nevertheless considered it a good first step. Despite the fact that Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani was far from enthusiastic about the Fouchet Plan, the Italian foreign ministry worked hard to improve it and to foster consensus on a compromise text. In particular, Italy wanted any treaty to contain provisions for the direct election of the European Parliament and to give it control over defense expenses. Italy also wanted to have the new treaty ratified at the same time as British membership – which it supported – to avoid failing in the Parliament. In September 1962,

Italy further stated that it would not support any plan towards political union "until the British problem was resolved," a position also supported by the Foreign Minister Giuseppe Saragat during his visit to London in January 1964 (Ferraris, 1996: 155-157). In 1961, the British conservative government, lead by Harold Macmillan, had in fact introduced a request to join the EEC.

Soon afterwards, in 1962, the Kennedy administration in the United States launched the "Grand Design" – the idea of cooperation between an enlarged European Community and the United States, including a multilateral nuclear agreement and common customs tariffs. However, the US also offered to let the British and the French install Polaris missiles on their territory. France rejected the offer and decided to become a nuclear power on its own. Charles De Gaulle then used the US proposal as an excuse to abruptly end membership negotiations with the United Kingdom, offering instead an association agreement. Macmillan, of course, took this as an offense, as it posed the UK at the same level as Greece and Turkey. Italy, disagreeing with De Gaulle, chose to keep supporting UK membership.

Eventually, the crisis culminated over the Common Agricultural Policy. A Commission's proposal under examination called for the establishment, by July 1967, of a CAP common market, to be financed with tariffs and customs rights, which the community would administer as its own resources. On June 14, 1965 the Council began to discuss the issue. The French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Mourville, who was chairing the meeting, opposed the Commission's proposals, and eventually dismissed the meeting on June 30. On July 1, France announced its refusal to collaborate with Community institutions. Consequently, the French

representatives refrained from participating in the Council's working groups as well as in the COREPER meetings, giving birth to the so-called "empty chair crisis".

Also on July 1, Italy assumed the EEC Presidency. Emilio Colombo (the treasury minister was also the acting foreign minister, due to Amintore Fanfani's health problems) tried to find an agreement with France. At the heart of the problem lay French opposition to the qualified majority voting system (QMV). This system was to become the decision-making rule in the Council starting January 1, 1966. Colombo invited France to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers and then, in a bilateral meeting held in France on December 8, 1965 finally managed to convince Couve de Morville to join a January 29 meeting of the six foreign ministers in Luxembourg (Ferraris: 1996: 163). There, in the absence of the Commission, an agreement was reached on the question of qualified majority voting. This so-called Luxembourg compromise allowed member states to ask for unanimous decisions rather than QMV should a "vital interest" be at stake: in practical terms, this meant that, from that moment forward, consensus became the decision-making rule.

1967 was a year of change in Europe. Kiesinger became the German chancellor, with Willy Brandt as foreign minister. The colonel's coup d'état in Greece froze the association agreement between the EEC and Greece. The labor party won the elections in Great Britain and Harold Wilson became the new prime minister. Wilson soon re-introduced the UK candidature for EEC membership (May 2, 1967); however, despite the Commission's positive view, De Gaulle again vetoed Great Britain's entrance (November 27, 1967).

Only after De Gaulle resigned (April 27, 1969) and George Pompidou was elected (June 15 1969) did things start to move again. Pompidou, in fact, proposed a *Triptyque* to the summit meeting in The Hague (December 1-2, 1969). The *Triptyque* consisted of three principles: completion, deepening, enlargement. Completion of the common market by January 1, 1970, with particular attention to the CAP's financing with Community resources; the deepening of the Community, especially in the field of economic and monetary policy; and enlargement to Great Britain and other countries, under the condition that the Community would adopt a common position before the beginning of negotiations.

Consequently, on April 22, 1970 the Treaty of Luxembourg was signed, according to which the Community was to acquire its own resources by 1975 and the Parliament's powers were to be slightly expanded. The Summit also commissioned a report to Pierre Werner – prime minister of Luxembourg – on economic and monetary union. The report, published on October 17, 1970, proposed to create a European Monetary Union (EMU) within ten years and a common system for the national central banks. The plan was never carried out. The only concrete results were the “monetary snake” (April 24, 1972) and the subsequent European Monetary System (EMS, March 13, 1979). The Bali accords, which were at the foundation of the EMS, created a margin for the fluctuation of currency of $\pm 2.25\%$, but allowed a more flexible $\pm 6\%$ for the weaker Italian and British currencies.

From the Europe of nine to the Europe of ten (1973-1981)

The 1970s are considered a period of stagnation for the process of European integration. They were also difficult years for Italy. The country's domestic weaknesses heavily influenced the consideration of its European partners, which touched an all-time low.

On July 2, 1970, the new European Commission entered into force with the Italian Franco Maria Malfatti as its president. In his speech to the European Parliament (September 16, 1970), Malfatti expressed his hopes for the Commission to once again serve as the engine of European integration. However, less than two years later, Malfatti resigned to stand for political elections in Italy. Despite the fact that other commissioners had also resigned before time (Ralf Dahrendorf, for instance, had left to take up a university post), Malfatti's departure was seen as an example of the Italians' lack of trustworthiness, undermining the role of Italian commissioners to come (Perissich: 2008: 175). France eventually used this argument to strip Italy of the agriculture portfolio (Ferraris, 1996: 224).

On October 27, 1970, the Davignon Report was approved, introducing proposals for cooperation in the field of foreign policy, or European Political Cooperation (EPC). Italy insisted on including security and defense in EPC, thus clashing with France (Ferraris 1996: 220). The infective nature of European cooperation in the field of foreign policy was confirmed, however, by Henry Kissinger in his "New Atlantic Paper" (1973). The US Secretary of State affirmed here that the United States had global responsibilities, while Europe's interests were only regional. In pronouncing 1973 as "the Year of Europe" (April 23, 1973), Kissinger meant that the US should base its rapport with Europe on bilateral relations. This approach was not welcomed in Europe. Italy, in particular, claimed that Europe needed to speak with a single voice (... by speaking with a single voice, Europe can dialogue

with US bilaterally, “infective nature of european cooperation”). However, when talks with the US took place, Italy was represented by two diplomats – Ambassadors Roberto Ducci and Roberto Gaja – rather than by a political representative, due to the collapse of the government. This considerably undermined Italy’s role, as Ducci himself recalls in his memoirs (quoted in Ferraris, 1996: 223-224).

In October 1973, the third Arab-Israeli conflict erupted. The first repercussion in Europe was an increase in oil prices: Italy was hardest hit as it was also suffering at the time from internal difficulties due to terrorism. For the first time, Italy blamed the European Community for its economic difficulties which, in turn, offered a sort of justification for the country’s lack of respect for EEC deadlines and obligations. This was made possible by the Communist’s changing attitude vis-à-vis the Communities: they no longer wanted to reject the EEC outright, but rather to refund (Ferraris, 1996: 224-225).

The Italian domestic situation was further complicated by US President Richard Nixon’s decision to recall the dollar’s convertibility into gold. The EEC member states first tried to protect themselves through the “European Monetary Snake” created March 7, 1972, but this was not enough for Italy. Once the European Monetary System (EMS, 1978) came into vigor, Italy faced more difficulties and was forced to ask for partial derogations. Such weaknesses in its system were stigmatized by Italy’s European counterparts – especially by Germany – which called it the European Cinderella (or the “sick one”). Similarly, within the CAP debates, Italy was disadvantaged by the lack of a global agriculture strategy and by its patchwork domestic agriculture organization. Italy counted just one success in this period: it

succeeded in establishing the European Regional Fund in 1973, thanks to British support, and despite the German refusal to fund it until Rome should prove capable of using the financing in an efficient way (Ferraris 1996: 120).

Italy was thus in a weak position when it assumed the EEC presidency on July 1, 1975. Its objectives were to speed up the process of European political union and to develop better relations with the Mediterranean area. In general terms, Italian action during its 1975 presidency was weak and unimpressive. The only positive note was the decision – taken during the Rome European Council (December 1-2, 1975) – to have the European Parliament elected directly by the citizens (Ferraris, 1996: 231-232). Yet, when Emilio Colombo – in his capacity as European Parliament President – announced the date of the forthcoming elections to the plenary, on March 24, 1977, the only other Italian present in the room was Altiero Spinelli; the others were all in Rome for the elections of the new Italian President... (Ferraris, 1996: 233 and Spinelli, 1978: 831). Nonetheless, as we shall see in Chapter 4, the direct elections of the European Parliament were to have an important effect on Italy's domestic and European policies.

Last but not least, again during the 1975 Italian Presidency, when the EEC was not invited to the summit of the most industrialized countries (Rambouillet, November 1975), the nine members tried to convince Italy to participate not in an individual capacity, but as EEC representative. Worried that this could constitute a dangerous precedent, Italy refused.

From Euro-sclerosis to the return of European integration

The long "Euro-sclerotic" period ended by the mid 1980s. In the first semester of 1980 Italy again held the Presidency. The agenda looked difficult: not only was it complicated by the question of the British rebate (Margaret Thatcher's famous "I want my money back"), but it also contained the negotiation of the 1980 Community budget and a partial revision of CAP. On the question of the British rebate, the Italian position – also supported by France – was to rebalance it through the creation of new policy areas. This approach was rejected by Germany and Britain.

Despite intense consultations organized by the Italian government in preparing for its presidency, Italian action was less effective than hoped due to the domestic crises of the Cossiga I government (which eventually led to the Cossiga II government). These difficulties led Prime Minister Francesco Cossiga to postpone the meeting of the European Council scheduled for April 27-28, 1980 (Ferraris, 1996: 323). After a first refusal on the part of the British prime minister to accept any compromise, an agreement was finally reached after a twenty-hour marathon meeting on May 30, 1980. This reduced the British contribution while giving the Commission a mandate to review the common policies in view of their more balanced future development (Ferraris, 1996: 324).

Soon afterwards, the political geography of the European member states changed. In 1981, François Mitterrand was elected President of France on the basis of a communist-socialist majority, and on October 1, 1982, the Christian Democrat leader Helmut Kohl became Chancellor of Germany. Thanks to these two leaders, Franco-German relations remained at the heart of the European integration process. On the contrary, France's relations with Italy –

whose government, for the first time, was headed by a leader from a party other than the Christian Democrats, Republican Giovanni Spadolini – were at a particularly low point at the time. Rome was accusing France of being too protectionist, while Paris was unhappy about Italy's strong links with the US (Ferraris 1996: 325). Relations improved later, however, in particular with the assumption of power by the Italian Socialist leader Bettino Craxi (1983). On the other hand, the arrival of the Christian Democrats in Germany immensely improved the country's relations with Italy. Italian and German Christian Democrat leaders would periodically meet to discuss European politics – usually at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's villa in Cadenabbia. In the mid 1980s and through the early 1990s, indeed, Italy ended up at the core of the European process, playing an important role.

When France first assumed the presidency of the Community (first half of 1984), Mitterrand was determined to make good use of it. First of all, negotiations for the EEC membership of Spain and Portugal were given new impetus. Still, it was thanks to the Italian presidency (first half of 1985) that the last remaining problems were solved and that the accession treaties were finally signed (June 12, 1985, taking effect on January 1, 1986). In particular, it took the negotiating skills of Giulio Andreotti – then Minister of Foreign Affairs – to disengage the deadlock on fisheries and fishing quotas which were preventing the signing of the accession treaty.

Secondly, France took a number of steps to facilitate what was to become the Single European Act of 1987. On February 14, 1984, the European Parliament approved Altiero Spinelli's *Draft Treaty*. In addressing the European Parliament, François Mitterrand affirmed

that the *Draft Treaty* was a starting point towards further reforms, along with the *Stuttgard Stuttgart Declaration*, a document elaborated in 1981 by the German and Italian Foreign Ministers Hans Gert Gensher and Emilio Colombo. At the European Council in Fontainebleau, two ad hoc committees were created: the "Doodge Committee" was in charge of studying the problem with institutional reforms, while the "Adonnino Committee" (chaired by an Italian Member of the Parliament) was in charge of outlining prospects for the development of a European identity. The heads of state and government further agreed to name Jacques Delors the new president of the European Commission, as of January 1985. The Doodge Committee presented its report to the Council on March 19, 1985: it recommended a number of measures to reinforce the European institutions and suggested that an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) be summoned, as an instrument for its adoption. The Adonnino Committee presented its report on "a Europe of citizens" on June 20, 1985.

The Italian Presidency of 1985 and the Single Market

In the first semester of 1985, Italy again held the EEC Presidency. The Christian Democrat leader and Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti declared in his speech to the European Parliament (January 16, 1985) that the aim of the Italian Presidency was to convene an Intergovernmental Conference to reform the EEC Treaty. However, at the European Council in Milan (June 28-29, 1985), the United Kingdom and Greece presented strong resistance. After a tense debate, the Italian Presidency took the unprecedented move to ask for a vote, in which Greece, Denmark and the UK were defeated and the IGC summoned.

The IGC began work on September 9, 1985. Although difficulties emerged – especially as regards the harmonization of legislation – the pragmatic approach proposed by the Commission made it possible to reach a consensus. At the European Council in Luxembourg, December 2-3, 1985, the *Single European Act* was agreed upon. Due to domestic pressures, (coming essentially from the Federalists, led by Altiero Spinelli) Italy declared its discontent with the final result and stated that it would only ratify the treaty if the European Parliament did so, too. Italy therefore was present at the signing of the treaty (February 17, 1987), but did not sign itself until February 28, 1987, together with Denmark and Greece.

In the same year, Italy gained an important victory over the so-called “Delors Package”. The package introduced the idea of a fourth resource for the EEC budget – to be calculated in terms of GNP – which Italy strongly opposed, as it was bound to be penalized. In September 1987, the prime minister – Christian Democrat Giovanni Goria – embarked on a *tour des capitals* to explain the Italian position, and in the European Council (Copenhagen, December 4-5, 1987), he affirmed that Italy could not overlook its objections. Though the Italian government fell once again, Italy managed to hold firm on this issue and finally, thanks to Helmut Kohl, a compromise was reached according to which Italy’s proposal to calculate the fourth resource on the difference between the GNP and VAT revenues was accepted (Ferraris, 1996: 341-342).

On the other hand, however, Italy’s poor implementation record for directives needed to complete the Single Market caused the country difficulties once again. In Italy, some blamed the problem on the EEC for failing to match Italian interests. In response, the new Ciriaco de

Mita government (April 1988), put a great emphasis on Europe and on the need to complete the Single Market. Nonetheless, Italy was forced to request (and succeeded in obtaining) a two-year delay in the liberalization of capital movements (Ferraris, 1996: 243-245).

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the new European Union

1989 was a year of great change in Eastern Europe. Transformations in that year were to have lasting consequences for all of Europe and for the entire world. Their impact on Italian domestic politics are still being felt today. In June 1989, *Solidarnosc* won the elections in Poland. In the meantime, the iron curtain between Austria and Hungary was removed: during the summer, Eastern Europeans started to flood Western Europe through Austria. In Czechoslovakia the protesters, lead by Vaclav Havel and Dubček, obtained the resignation of the entire Communist party. In December, Havel was elected President of the Republic. In Bulgaria, Živkov was forced to resign in November; the reformist Mladenov took his position and quickly announced free elections before May of the following year. In Romania, opposition forces took control of the entire country by December. Nicolae Ceausescu was captured in his attempt to escape and was immediately tried and shot. However, the event that symbolizes the end of the Cold War remains the “fall of the Berlin Wall”, which took place on November 9, when the doors from East Berlin to West Berlin were finally reopened.

All of these changes inspired hope, but they also aroused fear over the prospect of a reunited Germany. As the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl himself suggested, the solution was to proceed further towards the process of European integration: a larger Germany in a stronger Europe. Once again, Italy was to play a leading role. On November 28, 1989, Kohl presented

a program of ten points to the Bundestag outlining steps to take in reuniting the country. European partners were forced to accept reunification (Di Nolfo, 2002: 1342). Consequently, the European Council in Strasbourg (December 8-9, 1989), while blessing German reunification, decided to summon two Intergovernmental Conferences – one on European Monetary Union (EMU) and the other on political union.

On July 1, 1990 – the day that marked the beginning of the monetary union between the two German republics – Italy again held the EEC presidency. A short time later, Giulio Andreotti was named prime minister. The Italian presidency gave top priority to the preparation of the IGC on EMU. Indeed, Andreotti proposed to hold an informal European Council meeting in Rome (October 27-28, 1990) where, notwithstanding UK opposition, the *Carli Report* on EMU was approved. This eventually led to Margaret Thatcher's defeat and resignation at home (November 28, 1990). She was replaced by John Major. Andreotti and his foreign minister, the socialist Gianni De Michelis, used their personal and political networks to secure a successful formal meeting of the European Council in Rome (December 14-15, 1990). The two IGCs were successfully convened at the end of the Italian presidency, and negotiated into 1992.

While the IGC on EMU, for which most details had been set during the Italian presidency, went smoothly, the one on political union was more troubled. The so-called *Luxembourg Non-paper*, presented by the Luxembourg presidency on April 17, 1992, was short-lived. Likewise, the Dutch *Draft Treaty*, presented by the subsequent presidency, at the beginning of October 1992, was promptly and abruptly rejected. There was fear that no agreement would be reached at the European Council in December: "Never has a European Council had such a surcharged agenda," wrote *The Economist* (December 7-13, 1991, Vol.321, N.7736: 34.) in

reference to it. However, after a suspension and a great push by the French, German, Italian and Benelux leaders, an agreement was finally reached on the Treaty of Maastricht (December 9-10, 1991).

Then, the ratification process was blocked by the Danish “no” (June 2, 1992), in a national referendum. Mitterrand subsequently announced that France too would hold a referendum, to show how the French supported the process of European integration. What he thought would be easy, however, turned into a nightmare. Meanwhile, the Italian lira and the British sterling were attacked by speculators. On September 4, Italy was forced to raise its interest rates, and had to devalue the lira by 7%. On September 13, the Deutsche Bank intervened by lowering rates. On September 17 – three days before the French referendum – it became evident that it would be impossible to avoid a crisis of the European monetary system, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Italian lira and the British sterling. Despite everything, the “yes” prevailed in France (September 20) – though by a tiny margin (51.04% over 48.95%, with 3.37% white ballots). Denmark too, after negotiating a number of opt-outs – notably on EMU – finally approved the treaty.

On May 2, 1999, the European heads of state and of government judged eleven countries to be qualified for Economic and Monetary Union: Portugal, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Austria and Finland. How Italy managed to participate, having previously withdrawn the lira from the process, is a complex and interesting story.

From Maastricht to Amsterdam

New enlargements then began to loom large on the horizon. On January 1, 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden brought the European Union to 15, while Norway, once again, failed to join. In the meantime, the European Council of Copenhagen (June 21-22, 1993) had established a set of criteria for candidate countries to fulfill (the so-called Copenhagen criteria). With more enlargement in sight, it was decided to hold a new IGC: a Reflection Group was hence created, led by the Spanish Minister of European Affairs, Carlos Westendorp.

In light of the upcoming IGC, the Italian government had approved a number of documents, outlining its own key priorities. Firstly, the IGC was to remedy the gaps and insufficiencies in the Maastricht Treaty, and, above all, prepare the ground for forthcoming enlargements of the Union. Secondly, there was the need for a treaty which the public could easily understand and which would strengthen the Union's democratic character, render its institutional mechanisms more efficient, and develop its capacity to play a leading, coherent and responsible role on the world stage. At the parliamentary debate that followed the presentation of the Italian priorities, five resolutions were approved supporting the government's position. However, discussion was only partially devoted to IGC issues: for instance, one resolution (the "Pezzoni Motion") concerned small industry's problems (!); another (the "Dotti Motion") asked for "a stable and authoritative government, provided with the constitutionally requested necessary consensus" (*La Stampa* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, December 8, 1995). The latter request was eventually withdrawn. For the first time, too, debate was tense – a sign that domestic

conditions in Italy had changed. Indeed, the impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall was to be felt profoundly and for a long time to come in Italy.

Italy's old ruling parties were torn away. The transformation of the Communist party continues today. New political actors emerged, like Forza Italia and the Northern League. In March 1994, the right wing coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi (*Polo*) won the elections. For the first time, the Italian government was rather anti-European, and featured a Minister for Foreign Affairs – Antonio Martino – who was a proud member of Thatcher's *Club de Bruges* (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, May 24, 1994). In his first speech to Parliament, Berlusconi declared that Italy was to play “a leading role” in the framework of the European Union – *mi sembra contraddittorio* (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, May 17, 1994). Minister for Agriculture Adriana Poli Bortone affirmed that Italy was “going to play hard in Brussels” (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, July 16, 1994). The Berlusconi I government opposed Slovenia's membership in the EU (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, July 17 and August 31, 1994) and almost created a diplomatic case when the German CDU proposed a “two-speed Europe”, in which Italy was to be in the circle of “late comers” (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, September 3, 1994). In truth, Italy's government was isolated in Europe: none of the member parties belonged to major European political families and a number of European counterparts objected to the presence of *Alleanza Nazionale* (former MSI – inheritor of the fascist party) in the government.

At the same time, with the end of the Cold War, Italy lost its international geopolitical significance. It took a long time for Italy to realize this and to redefine its foreign policy. Indeed, the process continues. Former ambassador and historian Sergio Romano wrote in 1993: “Unhappily, the regime is dying, while the position Italy has occupied for the last 45

years is disappearing entirely. That position was an element in a delicate mechanism whose counterweights were European integration, the United States, the Atlantic Alliance and [...] the Soviet Union. [...] Italy no longer knows what it can reasonably expect and lacks the means to obtain its goals. Italy no longer has a foreign policy because its objectives and its instruments have disappeared, all at once.” (Romano, 1993: 109).

At the European Council in Madrid, it was decided to open the IGC in Turin on March 29, 1996, during the Italian presidency. This time, however, embedded in its domestic problems, Italy's contribution was weaker than in the past two presidencies. The Berlusconi I government had collapsed, to be replaced by the Lamberto Dini government. Legislative elections followed (April 1996), which led to the formation of the Prodi government. These changes did not really modify the Italian position in the IGC. However, Prodi's government expressed – in a Joint Declaration, together with France and Belgium, and annexed to the new treaty– its discontent for the results achieved. In the declaration, the three states affirmed their determination to make greater progress concerning the composition of the Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council and the extended use of the QMV. The Italian parliament's views were similar, as it proceeded to ratify the Amsterdam Treaty with 428 votes in favor, 1 against and 44 abstentions (the Northern League) in the Chamber of Deputies and with the positive votes of all parties but the Northern League in the Senate as well (*Il Sole 24 Ore*, June 4, 1998). The new treaty came into effect on May 1, 1999.

Towards the fifth enlargement: the Treaty of Nice

Many member states shared the concern expressed by Italy, France and Belgium that the challenges of enlargement could not be met by the Treaty of Amsterdam alone. In its meeting in Koln (June 3-4, 1999), the European Council thus decided to summon a new IGC for the beginning of 2000, with the aim of resolving the so-called "Amsterdam leftovers": the organization of the Commission, the reweighting of the votes in the Council, the extension of the qualified majority voting system. The IGC started its work in Brussels on February 12, 2000, under the Portuguese presidency, and progressed quickly. Unfortunately, during the second semester (under the French presidency), difficulties abounded.

All the major actors that had made the treaty possible had left government by this time. Jacques Chirac had replaced François Mitterrand, but did not equal him in negotiating abilities. Gerhard Schröder, with a Socialist-Green coalition, had taken over in Germany, further weakening the French-German couple. Italy was far less pivotal than in the past, despite the fact that former Prime Minister Romano Prodi had been elected head of the European Commission after Jacques Santer's resignation in 1998.

The two European Councils organized by the French presidency in Biarritz (October 13-14, 2001) and in Nice (December 7-9, 2001) were among the least impressively managed gatherings in the history of European integration. Italy, Germany, France, the UK and Spain were in favor of "capping" the Commission at 15 or 20 members. Italy, together with France, the UK, Sweden, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands, was also in favor of a simple reweighting of the votes in the Council. The rest of the member states supported the idea of a double majority. Last but not least, Italy, alongside Germany, France, Belgium, the

Netherlands, Luxembourg and Portugal, was in favor of extending qualified majority as a general rule. Italy also supported the idea of strengthened cooperation, together with Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, Portugal, Austria and Finland.

In spite of these differences and despite many difficulties – and after almost five days of negotiations all told – the Union finally reached an agreement: the Treaty of Nice. On this occasion, the European Council also adopted an Italian-German proposal aimed at opening a detailed debate on the future of Europe, which would involve the Union's institutions, the national Parliaments and civil society.

Towards the new European Constitution

Although the Union had succeeded in reaching an agreement, and signed the Treaty of Nice, member states recognized that the treaty would still not suffice in the face of inevitable problems presented by a much enlarged EU. Alternative means for revising treaties were needed. It was thus decided to summon a Convention, as had been done for the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Once again, Italy's role was to be pivotal, yet not as positive as in the past.

Silvio Berlusconi had regained power in Italy in 2001. He decided to name his Deputy, Gianfranco Fini, as his personal representative to the Convention. As Fini was the leader of the post-fascist party "National Alliance", the Belgian government balked. The Belgians tried to claim that Berlusconi did not need to name a personal representative, and suggested that the

Vice President of the Convention, Giuliano Amato, serve as the representative of the Italian government. Both the prime minister and Senator Amato refused such a reading. Political and diplomatic tension grew, until the question was finally settled with Mr. Fini's confirmation and an official explanation that the Conclusions of the European Council would read differently in the Dutch and Italian versions (!). In the end, the Convention experience proved fundamental in finalizing the conversion – both of Fini personally and of his party – to pro-European values. The EU member states came to accept him and his party as a respected player following this experience, thus proving Berlusconi's nomination a great success.

The Italian members of the Convention were remarkably active during the Convention, in contrast to Italy's tradition of absenteeism in the European Parliament. The most influential Italian member was without a doubt Amato, who had previously also worked on a consolidated version of the EU at the European University Institute. Prof. Amato's role was pivotal, thanks to his ability to reconcile different positions and to his deep knowledge of EU law. He was particularly successful in softening the rather "presidential"/formal style of the Convention's president, Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Despite all these positive factors, Italian domestic politics nevertheless wielded significant influence. Thanks to all these positive factors, Italian domestic politics wielded significant influence) over the beginning of the Convention's work. When the Berlusconi II government was first formed, Ambassador Renato Ruggiero was appointed Foreign Minister. A former top diplomat and secretary general of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and a very close friend of Fiat's President Umberto Agnelli, his nomination was welcomed in Italy and abroad

as a sign of continuity in Italian foreign policy. Domestically, he was perceived as a counterbalance to the presence of anti-European forces in the government.

Unfortunately, however, clashes between the foreign minister and the rest of the government emerged quickly, eventually leading ambassador Ruggero to resign. Upon Ruggero's resignation, Berlusconi temporarily assumed the post of foreign minister himself. He kept the position from January to November 2002. Therefore, as the Convention was launched, Berlusconi was both prime minister and foreign minister. However, by the end of the first year of Convention negotiations, with the Italian presidency approaching and the situation becoming unmanageable, Berlusconi finally named a new foreign minister – the then Minister of Public Works – Franco Frattini. When first named, Frattini was generally perceived to be a Berlusconi yes-man, who would let him continue to run Italian foreign policy from the Presidency of the Council. This, however, proved untrue: a former top student with an impressive (legal) curriculum in the Italian Public Administration, Frattini soon acquired in-depth knowledge of the EU technical dossiers, quickly gained the diplomatic skills needed at the Farnesina, and developed into an excellent and dedicated foreign minister.

Nonetheless, the Italian EU presidency of 2003 started with a major incident. On July 2, 2003, Silvio Berlusconi was attending the Plenary of the European Parliament to illustrate, as custom, the forthcoming Italian presidency. In the course of the discussion, the German MEP Martin Schulz aggressively attacked Italy for its immigration policies and for Berlusconi's failure to end the conflicts of interest between his own business and political activities. Berlusconi in turn overreacted, essentially accusing Schulz of being like a Nazi, creating a

serious diplomatic row with Germany, which gravely endangered the beginning of the Italian presidency (*European Voice*, July 3, 2003).

On July 18, 2003 in Rome, the President of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, presented the "Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe" to the Italian EU presidency. In order to complete the EU reform process, it was now necessary to formally open a conference of government representatives from the member states – another Intergovernmental Conference. Opinion diverged about how to proceed, however. Some members wanted to go back to their national parliaments before launching the final negotiations, but others wanted to take advantage of the positive impetus provided by the Convention. In the end, the European Council asked the Italian presidency to launch the IGC. This suited Berlusconi, as he also wanted the new treaty to be signed in Rome, before the end of the Italian semester. For this reason he put pressure on the IGC negotiations.

Negotiations were not easy. The Italian presidency sought to underscore the continuity between the Convention and the IGC, however, over the summer, the member states had examined the Convention's proposals and it had become clear that several problematic points persisted: these would have to be discussed again, by the IGC. The IGC was followed meticulously by the Farnesina. The same can be said of the concluding European Council as well (Brussels, December 12-13, 2003).

With such careful planning, the first part of the European Council concluded quickly and satisfactorily. It was then time to move on to the IGC. Italy recognized that the main obstacle

remaining was the question of QMV – due, in particular, to the opposition of both Spain and Poland (though Poland was not yet even an EU member state). Its strategy, therefore, was to reach a compromise on this point above all, hoping that the resolution of all other outstanding problems would follow smoothly. Unfortunately, however, all efforts were useless. Faced with a deadlock situation, the Italian presidency was unable to make a balanced proposal, one that would be acceptable to everyone. Italy was left with the arduous task of admitting that it was impossible to reach an overall agreement. The Intergovernmental Conference accordingly issued a statement, declaring that negotiations had failed and asking the Irish presidency to continue consultations.

The 2003 Italian presidency lacked the support of both France and Germany, whose backing had been fundamental in the previous Italian presidencies (1984 and 1990). This, ultimately, led to the failure of the IGC.

Before finishing its term, the Berlusconi government was then trapped in another problem of both domestic and European dimensions. In June 2004, a new European Parliament was elected and a new President of the Commission was chosen: the conservative Portuguese former Prime Minister Manuel Durao Barroso. When the Berlusconi II government was initially formed (2001), one of the party leaders joining the government coalition – the former Christian Democrat Rocco Buttiglione – had accepted a post perhaps below his standing and expertise: that of Minister for EU Policies. Fluent in several languages, Buttiglione in fact had one political ambition – that of becoming European Commissioner. In his mind, the post of EU Minister was a stepping stone towards that goal in 2004. Indeed, Buttiglione got the

Italian government's designation. However, the Italians had not taken carefully enough into consideration the fact that the European Parliament had acquired significant power in confirming the governments' choices, and that it would wield that power as a political instrument.

With the Socialist leader Josep Borell Fontelles leading the protest, the Parliament expressed its disapproval of Barroso's choice to give Buttiglione "Home and Justice Affairs" – a portfolio also including civil liberties. Until then, the Portuguese socialist and brilliant lawyer Antonio Vitorino had been in charge of this portfolio. Buttiglione, on the other hand, was known for his intransigent Catholic stance and for his proximity to the then Pope John Paul II. Questioned about gay rights during the formal hearing by the Civil Liberties Committee in the European Parliament, he eventually mentioned his personal moral sanction of homosexuality. In an absolute first, and with a vote of 26 to 27, the parliamentary committee rejected his nomination to the Commission (October 11, 2004). Borrell hence informed Barroso that the Parliament would veto his Commission should Buttiglione not be removed. Barroso, in turn, told Berlusconi that it was an Italian domestic problem, one that he could not resolve. Once again, Franco Frattini was chosen by Berlusconi to save the day. And, again, Frattini turned out to be an excellent Commissioner, though his legacy was marred somewhat by his departure one year before the end of the term to run for the national Parliament. Soon thereafter he was named foreign minister for a second turn.

The subsequent Prodi II government (2006-2008) – whose first move on the international stage was to withdraw Italian troops from Iraq (*La Repubblica*, June 3, 2006) – sought to

relocate European integration at the center of Italian foreign policy. In so doing, he followed the tradition and the strategic approach of the Christian Democrat governments of the past: he equated the European and the national interests. In an early speech in front of the Italian Parliament (May 18, 2006), Prodi affirmed: “We will be guided by precise choices in our foreign policy: we choose Europe and the integration process as the best environment for developing Italian policy [...] Europe represents the map on which Italy – a country destroyed by war – bet its future. As long as Italy honors this bet, it wins. Naturally, Europe too has its crises, which we do not ignore or underestimate. Indeed, Europe needs us. Europe needs an Italy that dares take up the mantle of its long tradition, that dares to relaunch an integration process – through new initiatives and concrete actions – that offers tangible answers to the demands of millions of Europeans. [...] **We are convinced that the Italian national interest and the European interest are one and the same.** We are convinced that Italy will count – even in relations with its greatest ally – only if it counts in Europe. We will work to put Italy back among the leaders of a new Europe.” (www.camera.it)

The case of the redistribution of seats in the post-2009 European Parliament confirms this ambiguity. Should the Lisbon Treaty enter into force, the number of Italian MEPs will be cut. The recounting that leads to this conclusion, done in the European Parliament, was based on the number of residents in a given country, rather than the number of voters: this means that Italy will have six fewer MEPs than with the previous system. Italy will end up with fewer MEPs than France. Incidentally, the *rapporteur* in the European Parliament was the French MEP Alain Lamassoure, and thus the report took his name. The *Lamassoure Report* was approved by the European Council meeting held in Brussels on June 21-23, 2007, but when

word reached the Italian press, people protested vehemently. Calls were made for Italy to use their veto. There was general outrage again when the European Parliament approved the new provisions in the *Lamassoure Report* (October 11, 2007). Curiously, however, the Italian representatives in Brussels did not seem to take the issue so seriously: on the day of the vote, the only Italian representative present was MEP Riccardo Ventre!

Eventually, a solution was found to assuage the diplomatic egos: one more MEP would be added to the final number (the formula being 750 plus the president), and that extra MEP would go to Italy. However, the real question remains: hadn't the two Italian representatives – Romano Prodi and his Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema – realized what was going on? Had they left the meeting rooms, as rumors suggest, to resolve a domestic political problem? Or were they aware of what was happening, but hoped that it would go unnoticed back home? Whichever of these versions is correct, it certainly does not speak highly for Italian diplomacy in action.

Still, the Prodi II government did produce the first comprehensive reflection on the future of Italian foreign policy: the “Italia 2020” paper. This text was the comprehensive result of work by a number of Italian stakeholders. In it, Europe again plays a central role: the paper questions how best to preserve national interests in an enlarged European Union. The EU policy areas that are identified as most strategic for Italy are EMU, defense, immigration and home security. It clearly calls for more coherent action. As the paper claims: “The effort to build a more coherent image – a concrete and continuative one – for Italy in Europe demands first greater solidity on the domestic level. From many points of view, in fact, European policy is no longer “foreign” or “international”, but rather “intermestic”. If the old theory of “external constraint” (*vincolo esterno*) was based on the assumption – which long held true –

that Italy would derive inner strength from its association with Europe, today that constraint appears inverted: only through greater domestic stability will Italy carry any weight in Europe. Only thus will Italy have the capacity to influence decision-making on policy which, as it is European, is also necessarily domestic.” (MAE 2008: 15)

Two years later, Silvio Berlusconi was back as prime minister, this time with a more comfortable majority than in the past. Today, he is determined to undertake the changes he had been unable to enact during his previous stints in government. To do so, he needs to focus primarily on domestic policy, and is thus delegating Italy’s foreign policy to Franco Frattini, the now experienced foreign minister.

In his speech to the Italian Parliament, to present his program, Berlusconi only briefly mentioned the future of Italian foreign policy and Europe in particular: “Italy’s role in Europe and in the world [...] will serve as a compass for our work, as founders of the European project and as a great Mediterranean nation. We will be called upon to enhance relations between the two shores of our sea and to act as a pillar in the friendly relations between Europe and the United States of America.”

In presenting the specificities of his foreign policy to the Italian Parliament (July 2, 2008) Frattini confirmed the impressions of those who had noticed how strongly his time spent as European Commissioner had impacted the minister’s actions and values. Despite touching upon Italy’s role in the rest of the world – namely as regards transatlantic relations and relations with the Middle East, Russia, and various international multilateral fora – most of Frattini’s speech was devoted to the future of European integration and the role Italy was to play in it. Frattini defined European integration as the first axis around which Italian foreign

policy would revolve, the other being transatlantic relations. He made a point of explaining that these two were not in contradiction with each other. Frattini also used a bipartisan approach to foreign policy, and this has so far met with the approval and support of the opposition.

The new course in Berlusconi's government and in Italy's European policy was confirmed, on July 31, 2008 by a unanimous vote, when the Italian Parliament ratified the Treaty of Lisbon (www.camera.it).