

Annex

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1984-1985 Session

Report of Proceedings  
from 24 to 27 July 1984

Europe House, Strasbourg

Contents

<b>Tuesday, 24 July 1984</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Opening of session, p. 1 — Address by oldest Member, p. 3 — Election of President, p. 6 — Address by President, p. 12 — Agenda, p. 18	
<b>Wednesday, 25 July 1984</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Approval of Minutes, p. 20 — Tribute, p. 21 — Election of Vice-Presidents, p. 22 — Urgent procedure, p. 23 — Time-limit for tabling amendments, p. 24 — European Council of Fontainebleau, p. 24 — Election of Vice-Presidents (contd), p. 35 — European Council of Fontainebleau (contd), p. 36 — Election of Vice-Presidents (contd), p. 38 — Tabling of motion for a resolution, p. 39 — Number and membership of committees (vote), p. 41 — European Council of Fontainebleau (contd), p. 41 — Election of Vice-Presidents (contd), p. 44 — European Council of Fontainebleau (contd), p. 45	
<b>Thursday, 26 July 1984</b> .....	<b>68</b>
Approval of Minutes, p. 68 — Urgent procedure, p. 70 — Election of Quaestors, p. 71 — Irish Presidency: Council statement, p. 71 — Election of Quaestors (contd), p. 76 — Irish Presidency: Council statement (contd), p. 76 — Sakharov, p. 109	
<b>Friday, 27 July 1984</b> .....	<b>116</b>
Membership of Parliament, p. 116 — Votes, p. 116 — Adjournment, p. 124	

## NOTE TO READER

Appearing at the same time as the English edition are editions in the six other official languages of the Communities: Danish, German, Greek, French, Italian and Dutch. The English edition contains the original texts of the interventions in English and an English translation of those made in other languages. In these cases there are, after the name of the speaker, the following letters, in brackets, to indicate the language spoken: *(DA)* for Danish, *(DE)* for German, *(GR)* for Greek, *(FR)* for French, *(IT)* for Italian and *(NL)* for Dutch.

The original texts of these interventions appear in the edition published in the language spoken.

## SITTING OF TUESDAY, 24 JULY 1984

### Contents

1. <i>Resumption of the session (First sitting of newly elected Parliament):</i> <i>Mr Pannella; Mr Chambeiron . . . . .</i>	1	<i>Sir Henry Plumb; Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf; Mr de la Malène; Mr Cervetti; Mr Le Pen; Mr Pannella; Mr Klepsch . . . . .</i>	6
2. <i>Address by the oldest Member, Mrs Thome-Patenotre . . . . .</i>	3	4. <i>Address by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Pierre Pflimlin:</i> <i>Mr Andriessen (Commission) . . . . .</i>	12
3. <i>Election of the President:</i> <i>Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz; Mr Le Pen; Lady Elles; Mrs Castle; Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf; Mr Klepsch; Mr Le Pen; Mr Arndt; Mrs Veil;</i>		5. <i>Agenda:</i> <i>Mr Arndt; Mr Fich; Mr von der Vring; Mr Arndt; Mr Fich; Mr Klepsch . . . . .</i>	18

IN THE CHAIR: MRS THOME-PATENOTRE

*Oldest Member*

*(The sitting was opened at 10 a.m.)*

#### 1. *Resumption of the session*

*(First sitting of newly elected Parliament)*

**President.** — I declare resumed the session of the European Parliament adjourned on 25 May 1984.

I should like to remind Members that the seats allocated to them in the Chamber are merely provisional.

For the purpose of preparing electronic votes, seats had to be allocated before the political groups were definitively set up.

Furthermore, the outgoing Bureau of the European Parliament felt that it was for the newly elected Bureau to decide on the definitive seating arrangements in the Chamber, having consulted all the political groups.

I would stress therefore the provisional nature of the seating arrangements in the Chamber.

All the documents relating to the election of Members will be forwarded to the Committee on the Verification of Credentials, which will be set up pursuant to Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure.

Pursuant to Rule 6 (3), until such time as a Member's credentials have been verified or ruling has been given on any dispute, the Member shall take his seat in Parliament and on its committees and shall enjoy all the rights attaching thereto.

In accordance with Article 11 of the Act of 20 September 1976 concerning the election of the representatives of the Assembly by direct universal suffrage, I have received from the competent authorities of all the Member States official notification of the election of 432 Members, the Netherlands having declared 24 Members elected and Luxembourg 5.

**Mr Pannella.** — (FR) Madam President, I wish to speak on a procedural motion.

*(Mixed reactions)*

In accordance with Rule 11 of our Rules of Procedure and Article 11 of the Act concerning the election of

**Pannella**

the representatives of the Assembly, I feel that we must make use of the provisions of Article 11 by referring this question as a matter of urgency to our Committee on the Verification of Credentials, because the Parliament of the Netherlands seems to me to be gravely at fault. This is a precedent which our Parliament must tackle, because if it comes to the worst, we could see certain national parliaments committing carefully considered political actions having a bearing on our Assembly. It is on the basis of Article 11 that I ask that this matter should be referred to the Committee on the Verification of Credentials.

**President.** — Mr Pannella, I have taken note of your remarks.

As you have pointed out, pursuant to Article 11 of the Act concerning the election by direct universal suffrage of the Members of the European Parliament, the Assembly can only take note of the results declared officially by the Member States.

Unfortunately, both the Netherlands and Luxembourg have officially declared elected 24 Members and 5 Members respectively and have postponed to a later date the announcement of the names of the 25th elected Member for the Netherlands and the 6th elected Member for Luxembourg. When it has been set up, the Committee on the Verification of Credentials will certainly examine this situation.

The political groups have informed me of their names and of the composition of their respective Bureaus. This information will be forwarded to the newly elected Bureau and will be recorded in the minutes of today's sitting.

The agenda for this part-session will be established after the election of the President.

In accordance with decisions taken by the political group chairmen on 19 July last, a *revised* draft order of business has been distributed.

In agreement with the political group chairmen, the sitting will be suspended for at least two hours between the official declaration of the election of the new President and the first ballot for the election of the Vice-Presidents.

In agreement with the political group chairmen, the deadline for tabling any motions for resolutions with request for urgent debate, pursuant to Rule 57, has been fixed for 8 p.m. this evening. When the President has been elected, the House will decide on the deadlines for tabling amendments to these motions.

I have received from the Council, pursuant to Rule 57, a request for urgent debate on a proposal for a regulation concerning measures to cover the requirements of the 1984 financial year (Doc. 1-362/84).

The vote on whether this request for urgent procedure is to be agreed to or rejected will be held after the election of the President, in principle therefore tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. I must, however, warn the House that if urgent procedure is agreed to, the debate on this matter cannot be held until Thursday and consequently the proceedings of our Parliament could be prolonged until Friday at 2 p.m.

Pursuant to Rule 12, nominations for the office of President must be submitted, with the consent of the candidates, by a political group or at least 10 Members.

I propose that the deadline for submitting nominations for the first ballot be fixed at 10.15 a.m. Nominations are to be submitted to the oldest Member. As soon as the names of the candidates are known, I shall proceed to draw lots to choose the four tellers.

**Mr Chambeiron.** — (*FR*) Madam President, under your august chairmanship this second European Parliament elected by direct universal suffrage enters upon a new period of office at a time when many countries, particularly in the Community, are celebrating with particular solemnity the events of 40 years ago which were to liberate the peoples of Europe from the Nazi tyranny and pave the way for an era of freedom, democracy and peace.

(*Mixed reactions*)

The Community institutions have set themselves the objectives of strengthening democracy, promoting cooperation between the peoples and defending human rights.

As far as the European Parliament is concerned, its membership has been decided by universal suffrage, our common electoral system, and it is quite obvious that we must accept its verdict. However, that does not oblige us to remain indifferent to certain opinions that we heard expressed during the election campaign and which, having been given a certain measure of institutional validity in our Chamber, could nurture in the minds of our citizens some doubt as to Parliament's resolve to remain the vigilant defender of the values on which this Community is based.

That is why I venture to suggest that this House, by observing one minute of silent recollection, should express its resolve — at a moment when we are entering on the second term of office of the Parliament elected by the peoples of the Community — to be faithful to the ideals of democracy and liberty for which 40 years ago Europeans fought, suffered and died . . .

(*Prolonged applause from the left*)

**President.** — Mr Chambeiron, I have taken note of your statement, but the election of the President, to

## President

which we are now about to proceed, obliges me to withdraw the floor from you.

### 2. Address by the oldest Member

**President.** — Bonjour, Guten Tag, Good morning, Buongiorno, Goedendag, Goddag, Kalimera,

Ladies and gentlemen of the European Parliament, Dear colleagues,

I am well aware of the extent of the honour which is not mine by rights. Our Greek colleague, Mr Nikolaos Gazis, is unfortunately ill and has had to decline to give the inaugural speech which is the prerogative of the oldest of our number.

I am however very proud to have this opportunity to impart to you without constraint a little of my experience and some of my hopes.

But first I would like to pay homage to all our colleagues who worked, from 1979 to 1984, in the first directly elected European Parliament and to its two Presidents, Mrs Simone Veil and Mr Pieter Dankert. I would also like to greet President Gaston Thorn and his colleagues and the President of the European Council, Mr FitzGerald.

I would also like to pay tribute to the memory of Mrs Louise Weiss, a great and famous European, who gave this inaugural speech in 1979 and 1982.

*(Applause)*

She is no longer with us but it is impossible to forget her action and commitment on behalf of Europe. Notice that women, whether they are in the chair for one day or for a much longer period, do not hold back when it comes to the construction of Europe. Through them I would like to salute with gratitude all the women of Europe, particularly the large number of them who play an active part.

*(Applause)*

In my capacity as International Vice-President of the European Movement I would like, finally, to thank from the bottom of my heart all the European activists of our respective countries. Often working in difficult and humble conditions, theirs has been a long and selfless fight for the Europe in which they believe. The election of our European Parliament by universal suffrage, a fundamental stage in the construction of Europe, is something which we largely owe to them. Let us not forget this. Let us listen to them. Let us associate them with our work.

I referred just now to my personal history: although my long career in Parliament and constant commit-

ment as a European activist are inseparable, I will attempt to avoid over-indulgence in my memories. I have always been a European. I was ten years old when my father fell at Verdun in 1916. As member of parliament for Rambouillet, he was one of those parliamentarians who had decided that their place was in active service. As an adult, whenever I saw these lines of crosses on which names of various origins were engraved, I felt the need to do everything I could to help build a united Europe which would prevent a return to fratricidal confrontations of this kind.

I was in contact with, or knew well, those we call the pioneers of Europe: Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak, Alcide De Gasperi, Carlo Sforza, Jean Rey, René Mayer, Joseph Bech, Guy Mollet, Walter Hallstein, to mention only those who are no more.

In May 1948 I attended the historic Congress of the European Movement in the Ridderzaal in The Hague. There I sat and looked at the backs of necks so well described by Denis de Rougemont 'this very wide red neck is Ramadier, this placid blond neck is van Zeeland, and this non-existent neck is Paul Reynaud (. . .) a white plump neck sticking out of a black dress coat, Winston Churchill . . .'.  
 Anecdotes aside, three years after the Second World War, the Europeans had at last met to lay the foundations of a real European construction. And I remember the proposal by Paul Reynaud that there should be a European Assembly elected by universal suffrage with one representative for each million inhabitants.

In the same year the Marshall plan created the necessity for *entente* between the European countries. The first step was the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation whose first Secretary-General was Robert Marjolin. But the imagination and energy of Jean Monnet gave birth to bolder and very original projects which were crystallized in the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, followed four years later by the Messina Conference and subsequently by the Rome Treaties.

How many meetings did we hold in the 1950s in the four corners of our regions, in school playgrounds and little halls which were not always full, followed by long waits in draughty stations?

We had to talk about Europe.

We had to show a divided Europe was nothing in the face of the power of the continent States, the one reaching from the Nemen to the Island of Sakhalin, and the other from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

We had to convince public opinion of the need for people who had hardly finished tearing each other to pieces to seek reconciliation and unity. One of my

We had to convince public opinion of the need for people who had hardly finished tearing each other to pieces to seek reconciliation and unity. One of my

## President

greatest joys was the signature of the Franco-German Treaty which sprang from the joint volition of Chancellor Adenauer and General de Gaulle.

In 1958, as a member of the European Assembly in Strasbourg, I remember animated discussions within the Liberal and Allies Group chaired by René Pleven and attended by Gaetano Martino, the instigator and organizer of the Messina Conference, Walter Scheel, who was to become the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Maurice Faure, who was so active in the formulation of the Rome Treaties and — a still very young — Gaston Thorn, whose European future was already discernible. It was the time when the European Community was becoming aware of the need to give the developing countries the cooperation of industrialized Europe and was drawing up the policy which was to lead to the Yaoundé and Lomé Treaties. At that time the Community was going through a period of particularly strong expansion which made it a leader in world trade and enabled it to attain a considerable improvement in its standards of living with a very high employment level. But this expansion was threatened: the first sign of alarm was the removal of the gold convertibility of the dollar and consequently the oil price rises. The question at the time was whether Europe would be solid enough to resist the enormous economic upheaval which was disrupting our society and was aggravated by the sudden discovery of Japan's industrial power and competition from new industries, particularly in the Asian countries.

The radical technological changes dating from hardly ten years ago and Europe's vulnerability as regards energy supplies and the monetary problem are the causes of unemployment and inflation, which are dramatic problems that Europe must overcome. Here I would like to interpose rapidly that the classical solution of deflation, which generates a drop in purchasing power and thus social troubles, is not necessarily the best and only way of fighting inflation.

And is it not a strange and ominous paradox to see our Europe on the one hand full to overflowing with millions of unemployed and the developing countries on the other hand being encouraged to cherish hopes which only too often prove empty? On the one hand once prosperous factories which are now shut down and the destruction of agricultural produce and on the other impoverished countries without resources where hunger is rife.

In the future, and perhaps earlier than we think, there will have to be a review of the world monetary system if we are to allow everyone legitimate access to the benefits accruing from this new technological revolution.

At the same time, despite the seriousness of the difficulties involved, which make European construction

more urgent than ever, the ship of Europe has kept on course and withstood the storms.

Of course there are still many acute problems. There are blockages but some of them were very recently removed at Fontainebleau and we should congratulate the European Council and its President on this. There is the temptation to take protectionist measures, which no State has, however, really succumbed to so far. On the contrary, in each of our countries the politicians in power reaffirm that it is only with a united Europe that we have any chance of overcoming the crisis.

Let us remember the Horatii and Curiatii families and let us not repeat the successive single combats which deprived the Curiatii family of a victory which they should not have allowed to slip out of their hands. None of our countries can battle along on its own, either in the economic sphere or in that of defence.

In reality there has even been some progress. Our Europe has grown. It will grow even more. And I welcome the idea that our Assembly will soon be opening its doors to members from Spain and Portugal.

*(Applause)*

Their presence will be a sign of the solidarity and understanding between the family of free and democratic countries which is unfortunately not so large in our contemporary world.

On the other hand Europe must never forget that on the other side of the Iron Curtain there are nations which share the same culture and same traditions and with which it has historical links. We must not forget them. Europe cannot be a closed, forbidden world; it must be a vast symbol of hope.

*(Applause from the centre and the right)*

However, the progress of Europe has by no means been confined to enlargement.

The present European Monetary System, though incomplete, has made it possible, in many cases, for sudden and serious currency fluctuations to be avoided.

Moreover, the institutions, created thanks to the inspiration of Jean Monnet, for whom obstacles were an incitement to greater effort, have made much progress:

- the Court of Justice, strengthened by its own wisdom, now enforces Community law in each of our countries,
- our Parliament itself is elected by direct universal suffrage, though the demand for a *uniform* electoral system has not yet been met. Thanks to the firm line taken by Simone Veil on the Community budget when she was

## President

President of our Parliament, each of our national governments was given clearly to understand that Parliament intended to make full use of its rights and that it was a force to be reckoned with in the future.

Furthermore, increasing numbers of people in positions of authority have been calling for a common defence policy. What sweet music this is in the ears of one who still has painful memories of the failure of the plan for a European army which I continue to believe would have changed many things.

One day in August 1954, when I was a member of the Senate, I was sitting with the late Raymond Cartier in a café opposite the headquarters of a leading Parisian daily newspaper. When it was announced that the National Assembly had declared this issue inadmissible for debate, I remember bursting into tears. I was still a young woman and had yet to lose my illusions!

Today, I would go further and say that the security of Europe must be internal as well as external. The internal security of the individual and the external security of our peoples are indissociably linked and there can be no doubt that a certain form of terrorism is now seeking to destabilize democratic Europe. The European Parliament has asserted this several times, but I would again urge that such terrorism must be our number one enemy for it is Europe's number one enemy.

*(Applause)*

At the risk of shocking some of you, I feel unable to refrain from mentioning a problem which is one of the most important of our time. I refer to pacificism and the peace movements which are active in each of our countries. Of course we are all pacifists, but there is a certain form of pacificism which failing to place the defence of peace and the defence of liberty on the same footing, is likely to play into the hands of a power which forbids any form of criticism both within its own boundaries and within those of the countries it controls.

*(Loud applause from the centre and right)*

While there is no doubting the sincerity of many of these pacifists, a large number of whom are young people, other individuals are secretly pursuing far less worthy ends, playing on fear and anxiety, which have never been wise counsellors.

*(Applause from the centre and the right)*

Despite the progress Europe has achieved, the people in our countries do not have sufficient practical awareness of the complexity of its problems or of its usefulness. The European Community has too often been the scapegoat for our difficulties, even those which are directly due to the domestic policies of our countries.

But if the European message has too often been misunderstood, we must also take some share of the blame ourselves, because a purely economic Europe which concerns itself exclusively with commercial interests — tomatoes, wine etc. — can secure the commitment only of those directly concerned by such matters but not that of the general public. How can we expect to have the support of our peoples, and our young people in particular, when all they are offered is a commercial Europe which seems to have abandoned its role as a force for equilibrium and peace in the world?

We must take great care to ensure that a chasm does not open up between Europe and the peoples of which it is composed, for their support is essential if we are to progress further.

The conquerors' Europe, that of sovereigns and dictators, is a thing of the past; the Europe now emerging is one of free and truly democratic peoples but it is still vital that they should want it and not sink into complacency, as long as they still have the economic and social resources for action.

In this context I firmly believe that one of the common policies needed is a policy on communications, for example by television and satellite, as a means of spreading the idea of European identity more effectively.

And one of the ideals I would particularly like to see attained is the introduction of thorough and systematic teaching from the earliest age, of the languages spoken within the European Community; this would help overcome the language barrier and facilitate exchanges between the new generations and also the twinning of towns. Much has already been done in this latter regard, but there is still room for an improvement in mutual understanding.

Generally speaking, any move that will help make European citizenship a reality must be encouraged. When I was mayoress of Rambouillet I used to have a little plaque hanging up in my office bearing the words 'Just do your job and let them say what they like'. Well that was wrong, it is better to do your job and make sure they know about it.

Let us make sure that the people of Europe know about the practical measures that have been taken to change their everyday lives.

Let us help them to realize all the things that would not have been possible without Europe. That is all too often forgotten!

We must look the facts in the face and take a long cold look at the situation. The turnout at the election of 17 June 1984 was, on the whole, rather poor and reflects a certain disappointment among the general

## President

public in Europe. We have five years before us in which to restore its faith.

For we all have an historic role to assume. To fulfil it we must pursue clear objectives and show unrelenting determination.

As for clear objectives, in my capacity today as oldest Member and, for these brief moments, your President, I would like to make a few suggestions. Modesty forbids me to speak in the affirmative so I shall put them to you in question form.

- Do you not think that it is time for Europe's leading nations to reach genuine agreement, for the sake of greater efficiency and lower expenditure, on a common defence policy?

*(Cries from the left)*

- Do you not think that new European research policies should be introduced, especially in the field of advanced technologies (data processing, energy, communications, the conquest of space, etc.)?
- Will we have to go through another scandal like that of the Mont Blanc tunnel before we make up our minds to get rid of the red tape which hampers the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital?

*(Applause from the centre and the right)*

- How long will we have to wait before Europe's internal frontiers are abolished for European citizens, who will all soon have the same passport? This very morning I saw a long line of cars and trucks on the bridge at Kehl.
- Is it not time for the ECU to become a proper European currency?

*(Applause)*

- Do you not consider that many major issues such as wage levels and shorter working hours can only be settled at European level?
- Is not the harmonization of social security systems in fact one of the preconditions for attaining a genuine internal market and a greater degree of justice?
- Do you not conceive of the possibility of a common foreign policy, for which so many of the peoples of the world are hoping? Should not this policy be an independent policy, provided that it safeguards the special relationship we have with the United States of America?

The time has come for a *political Europe*, a Europe of equal peoples. This means a return to the still too fragile rule of majority voting, the setting up of a permanent secretariat for the European Council and practical action to implement not only the Colombo-

Genscher plan, but also the important idea of a treaty on European Union adopted in February of this year by our Parliament. This treaty constitutes real progress. We are convinced that only a political Europe can get us out of our present rut, with day-to-day business being dominated by horse-trading and a narrow view of short-term advantage and economic profitability. Our Parliament, with its draft treaty for European Union, has given Europe new hope and must for that reason be closely involved in the Member States' exercise of their power to propose and take decisions, for example by taking part in the two *ad hoc* committees set up at Fontainebleau and also in the appointment of the next Commission of the European Communities.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that it is high time that the role of our Parliament, which now has the experience of a first term behind it, was expanded. It is incumbent upon the oldest Member to speak with restraint. But there can be no doubt that one day the European Parliament will be called upon to pass legislation in certain areas where solutions can be found only at European level. It is by its dedication to its task, by the respect it is able to inspire and, by the imaginative approach it is able to adopt, that our Parliament will convince each of our governments that a wider role is both necessary and justified.

I hope our British friends won't take it amiss if I take the old saying 'wait and see' and change it to 'see and act', a motto which we Europeans must now make our own if there is to be effective and swift progress towards European Union; we no longer have the time to wait.

The more international tension deteriorates, the more important it is for Europeans to unite. Even if there is disagreement on matters of secondary importance, this cannot be allowed to prevent or hamper the attainment of the principal aims I have just outlined, whether it be political union, the common foreign policy, security or agreement in the field of social affairs.

The cause of Europe has indeed many aspects, many of them indissociably linked. In conclusion, therefore, I would urge that we might be guided in our action by this counsel of Jean Monnet:

'Do not dissipate your energies, do not allow too many ideals to occupy your minds. Choose one cause for yourselves and devote your lives to it. It is the only way you will be able to move mountains'.

*(Loud applause)*

### 3. Election of the President

**President.** — The next item is the election of the President of the European Parliament.

**Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz.** — (DE) Madam President, I should like to confirm personally that I am a candidate for election.

**President.** — I shall take note of that, Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz.

I have received, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Rules of Procedure, the following nominations which I shall announce in alphabetical order:

Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz, Mr Dankert, Lady Elles, Mr Le Pen, Mr Pajetta, Mr Pflimlin and Mr Spinelli.

We shall now draw lots to choose four tellers.

They are: Mr Staes, Mrs Peus, Sir Fred Catherwood and Mr Pitt.

The ballot is open.

*(The vote was taken)*

The ballot is closed.

I would ask the tellers to proceed to count the votes.

*(The sitting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.)*

**President.** — These are the results of the ballot:

Members voting: 421

Blank or spoiled ballot papers: 8

Votes cast: 413

Absolute majority: 207

Votes received were as follows:

Mr Pflimlin: 165

*(Applause from the centre and the right)*

Mr Dankert: 123

Lady Elles: 44

Mr Pajetta: 37

Mrs Bloch von Blottnitz: 17

Mr Le Pen: 16

Mr Spinelli: 11

Since no candidate has received an absolute majority of the votes cast, we shall hold a second ballot.

**Mr Le Pen.** — (FR) With your permission I should like to make a statement on the results of this first ballot. First of all, however, as a newcomer in this House,

I wish to convey my greetings to the House both on my own behalf and on behalf of the group of which I am chairman, the European Right Wing Group.

The time has come to make a choice, and politics is after all the art of making reasoned choices. For us there can be no question of seeing this Assembly presided over by a Marxist. On the contrary, it must be presided over by a President who stands for the defence of liberty. I am therefore withdrawing my candidature in favour of Mr Pflimlin.

*(Mixed reactions)*

Indeed I was a colleague of Mr Pflimlin in the French National Assembly, both under the Fourth and Fifth Republics.

One final word, Madam President. I believe that this morning wreaths were laid to mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Chancellor Dollfuss. This was one of the events that led to the Second World War, which ended, as everyone knows, in the Soviet occupation of half of Europe.

As far as we are concerned, we had no wish to be missing when these political bouquets were being handed out, so we brought along our floral emblem, the thistle. And you know how it is with the thistle — he who grasps it gets stung for his pains.

**President.** — Mr Le Pen, this is not the time for political statements. We are now trying to elect a President. I must therefore withdraw the floor from you, while taking note of the statement you have just made.

*(The sitting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 3 p.m.)*

**Lady Elles.** — Madam President, recalling that the people of Europe in the majority voted for moderate centre representatives in this Parliament, I wish to say that it is in their interest that we have a moderate centre President. I am therefore standing down for the election of President of this Parliament, and I ask and urge my group to give their vote to the one centre party candidate, Mr Pflimlin.

*(Loud applause from the centre and from the right)*

**Mrs Castle.** — On a point of order, Madam President. Before we vote we must get one thing clear. This morning, Mr Le Pen announced that he was withdrawing his own candidature and that instead he was endorsing the candidature of Mr Pflimlin. May we therefore, through you, ask Mr Pflimlin whether he accepts this support and this endorsement by Mr Le Pen?

*(Applause from the left)*

**President.** — Mrs Castle, that is not my business today: I am just the *doyen d'âge*. You will discuss political matters afterwards.

*(Applause)*

For the second ballot I have the following nominations: Mr Dankert, Mr Pflimlin and Mr Spinelli.

*(Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf asked for the floor to speak on a point of order)*

The ballot is open.

*(The vote was taken)*

The ballot is closed.

I have four requests for the floor on points of order. I should like to point out, however, that we cannot enter into a debate at this point on the election of the President. It is perfectly in order for the political group chairmen to make political statements, but there can be no question of initiating a debate. I must remind the House therefore that I shall be obliged to interrupt any speaker whose speech does not comply with the Rules.

I must also remind the House that no speech may last longer than three minutes.

**Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf.** — *(DE)* First of all I should like to protest . . .

*(Interruption: Bravo!)*

at the fact that you noted my request to speak on a point of order, which was made in good time before the beginning of the vote, but did not do anything about it. This is a manner of proceeding which I feel should not become customary in any Parliament. I say this, even though this is the first time that I have ever been in a Parliament.

*(Applause from the left)*

I shall now repeat my request, and there is still time enough for it to be dealt with before the votes are counted. What I am asking on behalf of the Green-Alternative European Federation is that the President should ask Mr Pflimlin whether he is prepared to state that he will not accept election to the Presidency if he is elected by a majority of less than 17 votes, that is to say, that he will not allow himself to be elected with the 16 votes of the Le Pen Group.

I would ask you to take action on this point of order.

*(Applause from the left)*

**President.** — I must point out to the speaker that that was not a point of order. Furthermore, it is not the

business of the oldest Member occupying the chair to ask any one of the candidates what he thinks about this or that person.

*(Applause)*

**Mr Klepsch.** — *(DE)* Madam President, I am sorry that I was not here in time earlier on to make the statement that I am now about to make. The vice-chairman of my group, Mr Vergeer, asked for the floor but did not get it, and perhaps rightly so under the terms of the Rules of Procedure.

This morning a newly constituted group declared that it would vote for our candidate, Mr Pflimlin. On behalf of my group I should like to make it quite clear that this group was neither asked for its vote by the Group of the European People's Party or its candidate, Mr Pflimlin, nor did we conduct any negotiations with regard to the delivery of this vote.

Furthermore, we are convinced that a majority of this House will support our candidate in any case.

*(Applause from the centre)*

I am quite convinced that the result of the vote will bear me out beyond any shadow of doubt. There is one further thing, however, that I should like to say. We take this matter very seriously, Mr Graefe zu Baringdorf, but various groups in this House do not have the same fastidious approach to the whole question. I should like to make that quite clear, because on other occasions in this House votes have been gladly accepted which we would not have welcomed! However, all I really want to do is to make it quite clear to you that on this matter our group takes the position I have just outlined.

*(Applause from the centre)*

**President.** — I would now ask the tellers to proceed with the counting of the votes.

*(The sitting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.)*

**Mr Le Pen.** — *(FR)* Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to raise a matter relating to the Rules of Procedure, and let me remind you that I have a perfect right to do so. Members have had distributed to them in their official letter-boxes . . .

*(Violent protests from the left)*

. . . a tract issued by a parliamentary group in this House which includes a number of terrorists recently freed from prison. This is a defamatory tract, which I formally repudiate. Furthermore, I would ask the Chair to condemn this action.