

The European Council of Maastricht - December 1991

What was being established was the capacity to move forwards together, to make the transition from Community to political, economic and monetary Union and subsequently also to incorporate the key dimension of citizenship and progress towards the democratic consolidation of the emerging union and its willingness to welcome new members: a creative response in historical terms.

I have to admit that this was a very moving time for me personally. The time had come for me to take my leave and I did so with this very important step. And when I concluded my speech, what I had said met with prolonged applause from the European Council. I felt utterly complete in that moment because, in historical terms, it was such an emotionally charged moment.

Conclusions - The defence of the double legitimacy

There is no question that I defended double legitimacy. Strangely enough, I later learned that President Mitterrand — France and Spain were seated next to each other in the Council, according to the alphabetical order of their names in French — so President Mitterrand, who was a master of irony, asked Felipe González: "To which party does this president belong?" He knew me very well and, moreover, knew that we were all from the same political family. As if to say "what is he playing at?" he said "because I was elected by the people of France and he was elected by 400 members of parliament" – that's how many we were at the time.

Well then! The fact is that I felt quite comfortable because at the press conference held later by Mitterrand, and also Andreotti and De Michelis, I managed to create controversy around double legitimacy, and that is what really mattered.