

AGLIETTA

also believe that at this stage the President of Parliament must be the person making the utmost effort to strengthen democracy in our institution, notwithstanding our earlier objection. We now hope we have chosen such a President and in this task he will have the full support and cooperation of the Green Group.

LE PEN (DR). — (FR) Mr President, I hope you will forgive me if I express a political point of view, but this is not a social gathering, we are a political assembly.

I am glad to see that the Presidency of the Assembly, which could have been socialist-communist since that is the majority, has moved a little nearer the centre than it was before. Nevertheless, this was due to a deal, as Mr Cot reminded you when he asked you to bear in mind the requirements of the Socialist Group concerning the Rules of Procedure. But when all is said and done, you have been elected by a majority and you are only accountable to your conscience and the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

Let me therefore express the wish, Mr President, that you will always bear in mind that democracy is not just the expression of the will of the majority but also scrupulous respect for the rights of minorities. I have very good reasons to think that the latter have been threatened once again in the allocations to delegations and committees. This is why, Mr President, knowing you to be a man of good will, as you have demonstrated on a number of occasions, I am sure that you will give particular attention to defending the rights of Members individually and of groups in Parliament, even if they did not vote for you.

(Applause)

PIQUET (CG). — (FR) Mr President, I shall not congratulate you on your election because I did not vote for you and everybody knows it, but I will say one thing: we shall continue to work together as we have done for many years in the past. And on the basis of this experience, Mr President, I am sure that each of us will carry out his responsibilities in those areas for which he is responsible.

As far as my group is concerned, we shall continue to work within the framework of the Rules of Procedure of our Assembly to ensure that the pluralism which exists in the House can continue to be expressed. This is the major criterion for the smooth running and general authority of our Parliament and we will give you every support in working towards this end.

(Applause)

PANNELLA (NI). — (FR) Mr President, you have wanted to occupy this post for many years. Your strength of purpose honours the post which you are occupying which others had neither the courage nor the strength to acquire. I am sure that, notwithstanding the political agreement between two groups, you wish to be the President of the whole Parliament. There was no other political candidate because our colleagues, such as

Mr Barzanti whom we greatly respect, were simply an expression of the lack of political will on all sides. That is the reason why for the first time I did not stand myself as a candidate.

I hope then that you will be the President of each and every one of us and that your efforts will be crowned by success. I am happy to have made the choice I did although God knows it was difficult!

(Applause)

DELORS, *President of the Commission*. — (FR) Mr President, let me congratulate you on behalf of the Commission on your election.

Mr de la Malène rightly recalled your long service as a champion of the European cause who has been faithful to his ideas. You can now put these to the service of the extremely difficult task of presiding over the European Parliament.

Everyone recognizes, in the new context of public life, the difficulty facing parliaments and parliamentary work. These are even greater for the European Parliament for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, over the last few years the European Parliament has reaffirmed its presence more and more. Its political influence, and I am well able to judge, has been increasing even at intergovernmental conferences. Its joint role in legislation is beginning to become apparent.

I am sure that you will be concerned to follow up this work and you know that in this task you can count on the full support and cooperation of the Commission.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT. — Ladies and gentlemen, I should like to thank you all for what you have said and tell you what I expect to be my fundamental principle, based on the maxim of an old Swabian Pietist: God grant me the courage to change the things I can change. God grant me the forbearance to tolerate the things I cannot change and grant me the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.

(The sitting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.)

IN THE CHAIR: MR KLEPSCH

President

2. Address by the President

PRESIDENT. — Ladies and gentlemen, the second half of this parliamentary term will be marked by a new departure. The Community of the Twelve has made good progress along the road to European Union, the decisive step being that this process has been made irreversible.

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The flaws in the Community's democratic structures have been considerably reduced but not yet completely eliminated.

As elected representatives of the 340 million citizens of the Community, we Members of the European Parliament must continue over the next few years with our fight to ensure that the future European Union is endowed with the solid democratic parliamentary structures it now needs more urgently than ever. The 'progressive clause' worked out in Maastricht four weeks ago must not become a mere sop to Parliament, lacking any substance.

I therefore see the office to which you have elected me today as an obligation to serve, together with all of you, the cause of Europe and its unification in freedom, and to work towards the completion of European Union with a strong European Parliament.

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to you for giving me your vote and thus your confidence. This demonstration of confidence is a great honour to me. But above all, of course, it means that you have given me a job to do; I realize how important and responsible this job is, and you will rightly expect me to fulfil it. I promise to do everything within my power to discharge the responsibilities you have given me.

To those of you who felt unable to give me your vote I should like to say this: as President of the European Parliament it will be my special endeavour to seek cooperation with all Members of this House and to be indefatigable in the defence of its interests against the other Community institutions. I hope I may have your support in this.

Let us set to work together. The Maastricht Summit was a milestone, but we must not stop to rest on the way. The remaining two and a half years of this parliamentary term will call for hard work from all of us.

Our task is the completion of European Union, and beyond this the unification of Europe under the banner of democracy, freedom and peace, economic prosperity and social justice. I am confident that the Community will achieve this goal speedily and with determination.

This is not the right time to look into every detail from every angle. I should, however, like to refer at least briefly to some points which I consider particularly important.

There are now 352 days left till the final opening of internal borders on 1 January 1993. It was the European Parliament — and I should like to emphasize this once again — which repeatedly urged and called for the final completion of the internal market, which is one of the objectives of the Treaties of Rome. National interest groups, Councils of Ministers and national bureaucracies have repeatedly succeeded in raising obstacles. It is not without reason that the Euro-jargon term 'non-tariff trade barriers' has become a familiar concept.

I think I speak for all of us in expressing my thanks at this point to Jacques Delors, President of the Commis-

sion for taking up this call from Parliament, since it was under his authority and that of the then Vice-President Lord Cockfield that the White Paper on the completion of the internal market was published as a programmatic declaration.

The vast majority of the necessary legislative work at Community level has already been done. However, there remain a few tough nuts to crack. For as long as anyone can remember, whenever money — for which read taxes, whether direct or (as here) indirect — is involved, governments and their finance ministers have of course always been particularly keen to invoke supposedly inviolable national interests.

As I said, the legislative work at Community level is done. Progress has not been so good in the incorporation of internal market directives into national law in the twelve Member States. I hope that by 31 December of this year everything will genuinely be complete, for there is really no alternative. The citizens of Europe have a right to expect that the internal market, and the stimulus to employment that it implies, will not be delayed.

We need the internal market completed by the due date, and not a day later, to enable the Community to develop to the full as an economic power, not only in the interests of its own citizens but also in the interests of Europe as a whole and the Third World.

The social dimension of the internal market is also essential, and it is therefore good that at least 11 Member States have agreed to implement it. I hope the twelfth member will not persist in refusing to take this vital step towards the Citizens' Europe.

The most recent opinion polls on Europe have shown once again that a large majority of the citizens of the European Community want Europe to be united. They have been prepared to be patient on many occasions, since they know that countries which have developed separately for hundreds of years cannot, in spite of their common roots, be reunited overnight, with all the legal, political and economic implications of such reunification. Development needs time, if it is to take place under conditions of freedom, and only under such conditions will it achieve the desired result.

Forty-two years since Robert Schumann's historic declaration are only a short time against the background of a millennium, and since then much has been achieved which is now, thank God, taken for granted by those born since. These achievements must now be pursued with renewed vigour. The European Council of Heads of State or Government, the Council and the Commission must now look still further into the future.

More than any other institution of the Communities, the European Parliament must remain the advocate of European Union and its driving force. The intergovernmental conferences which led to the results of the Maastricht Summit came about thanks to pressure from Parliament. This European Parliament will ensure that

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further milestones follow on the achievements of Maastricht. Of that I am sure.

Let us not forget the prophecies of doom which preceded the entry into force of the Single European Act with its minimal reforms in favour of the European Parliament.

There were many who thought that the extension of Parliament's powers, at least in some areas, would create even greater problems for the decision-making power of the Community.

But what has happened since then in reality?

Since 1987 things have moved much more quickly. Can the Council of Ministers explain how, when in the past it sometimes took often a decade to take a decision on a single subject, it is now suddenly able to put on a spurt in a matter as complicated as the internal market legislation? The cooperation procedure has had a positive effect on speeding up work, even though it does not yet represent co-decision-making in the type of bicameral system we have advocated.

Without the European Parliament Europe would not be where it is now. And without a European Parliament endowed with the rights and powers which naturally belong to a parliament in a free democracy, there can be no European Union.

At the Maastricht Summit my very respected predecessor, Mr Enrique Baron Crespo, impressively reiterated Parliament's demand for the completion of the Community's democratic structures. I think I am speaking on behalf of you all in expressing particularly warm thanks to him for the indefatigable commitment he has shown over the last two and a half years to Europe, to democracy and to Parliament.

Like his predecessors, he has repeatedly obtained a hearing for the admonitory voice of the European Parliament. I cannot list them all by name here, but I would mention as representing them all, Pierre Pflimlin, a committed European who formed the bridge between the founding fathers and the present day.

And now, after glancing at the past and the present, let us look into the future, for this is the direction in which we have to go. We want to build a united Europe, a European Union, partly for ourselves, for those acting and bearing responsibilities now. But the matter cannot end there.

What is the purpose of our endeavours if not to create a united Europe for those who will come after us? Can we simply leave them a building site on which the outlines for the house to be built can hardly be made out under the rubble of building materials?

Of course not. Our vision must become reality.

It is our duty to bequeath to future generations a well-ordered, united Europe of peace and freedom. After the disasters of tyranny, destruction and contempt for human rights which disfigured our continent so cruelly in this century, there can be no question of even considering any other objective. We call on the youth of

the European Community to step forward boldly in pursuit of this goal: we need them and the contribution they can make.

When, just two years ago in 1989, the last bastions of totalitarian tyranny finally fell, when 'actually existing socialism' was finally unmasked as what it always had been, namely one of the greatest and most repulsive deceptions ever carried out, the European Community was justly able to claim that it contributed to the system's downfall.

The Community offered a model of cooperation and a supranational organization of States working on the principle of freedom, not for the greater glory of an ideology but for the benefit of human beings.

We have never claimed that the creation of the European Community was an end in itself without regard for what is happening elsewhere in the world.

It is particularly important today, on the way to European Union, to the Federal State of Europe — in view of the historic upheavals in the East of our continent, but also with regard to the ever-increasing problems between North and South, between the richer and poorer countries — that Europe should not be the be-all and end-all, and that we should face our responsibilities in the world.

Throughout the world, problems are arising which we can only solve jointly, problems of the environment and the protection of creation, the danger to human rights, the rising tide of refugees, famine, the ever-increasing dangers to health, and over-population in many parts of the world. These call for our undivided attention and our total political, economic and social commitment.

Inter-ethnic conflicts sometimes reaching the proportions of civil war are breaking out on our doorstep. With the end of the Soviet Union, Marxism-Leninism has left such a devastating legacy that those who have now been placed in positions of responsibility by democratic elections are faced with the most difficult challenges. We must not leave them alone. Their problems call for European solidarity.

The Community must create all the necessary instruments to enable itself to act on its own. Let us be honest about it: the Yugoslavian crisis has exposed the institutional weaknesses of the Community, the lack of a real common foreign policy. This cannot and must not continue.

We should not however harbour any secret dreams of becoming a new superpower. Our sole concern should be to ensure that Europe has the political means to use its spiritual, moral and economic resources to the full to preserve peace and to strengthen democracy.

For this reason among others, our European house must therefore be built as quickly, and as solidly, as possible.

The enlargement of the Community will become an acute problem over the next few years. In order to tackle the resulting problems, we need good foundations and reliable, fully functional structures. By no means the

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least of these problems will be the further reform of the Community's financial system, which must be tackled in 1992. The EFTA States which wish to join the Community, and especially the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe which are also aspiring to membership, have a right to know who we are and what we want. It is the special responsibility of the political parties, and of this Parliament, to help build up new democratic structures there.

The European Parliament must not close its mind to these problems but must, here again, take on the role I referred to earlier, the role it has so often played as the originator of ideas and motive force in Europe.

It would be irresponsible for an economic giant like the European Community to leave its political potential virtually untapped.

One key to improving the efficiency of the European Community is, and will continue to be, the institutional reform of the Community institutions. This reform has commenced, and has made some progress, but it is by no means complete.

Even after Maastricht the weight of national interests, and the influence of cumbersome national bureaucracies concerned to protect individual interests, is still too great.

The debate on the constitution for European Union is well under way. The European Parliament must state its positions clearly in this debate and ensure that they are heard. Our case is a formidable one.

We are not seeking a centralized super-State, nor a super-bureaucracy which would not only be very hard to supervise, but would also be directly against the interests of ordinary people at local and regional level.

Supervision over the power of bureaucracy is essential, and can only be achieved in close cooperation with the national parliaments, cooperation which we must continually seek to improve.

The 'People's Europe' has for us never been a mere buzz-word, void of substance, but an essential prerequisite if we are to win people over to the idea of Europe and obtain their personal commitment to European Union.

Europe's strength lies in its diversity which it has manifested so impressively over thousands of years of European culture. This is something that should be preserved, promoted and reinforced. Europe is more, much more, than just an economic community. It is, above all, a community which derives its strength from the moral and cultural values which are our common heritage. Europe will not be cobbled together in bureaucrats' and ministers' offices, by endless haggling and in language which the people directly concerned by it cannot understand.

In this situation the European Parliament must first ensure that its own performance enhances its credibility. We all know that there is much room for improvement here. A large number of initiatives have

been taken over the last twelve years to improve the efficiency of Parliament's work; some of these have been successful, but too many have foundered.

We must concentrate our work in plenary on the most important decisions, and communicate these decisions to the people in a clear and comprehensible form. We should seek to adopt our many decisions on matters of a technical and technological nature in committee meetings open to the public.

I consider that one of my main tasks will be to pursue energetically the reform of our parliamentary procedures, and in doing this I hope I will have the support and assistance of you all.

The quality of the united Europe, its internal and external credibility, are directly dependent on the quality, credibility and competence of its Parliament. Anyone who thinks this is an exaggeration will find that he is mistaken come 1994 when the voters of Europe go to the polls once again.

The Maastricht Summit resulted in an extension of the powers of the European Parliament. We have achieved the first step on the road to co-decision-making. The Commission can no longer be appointed without Parliament being involved. Progress has been made towards creating watertight parliamentary democratic structures, and we welcome this fact.

I hasten to add, however, that many questions remain unanswered. There is still much room for improvement. The balance of power between the Council, the Commission and Parliament has not been guaranteed to the extent needed for European Union.

One trend which I consider particularly unfortunate, and which continued to be followed in Maastricht, is the Council's continuing resistance to the growth of Parliament's powers; this endangers the transparency of the decision-making procedures. It is damaging to the credibility of European Union when, because of their excessive complexity, these decision-making procedures can no longer be satisfactorily explained to the public.

I should like now to make this urgent appeal to you: let us do our utmost, acting resolutely, responsibly and effectively and in a way which is comprehensible to the people of Europe, to make use of the powers which Parliament has just acquired. It is up to us to show that the European Parliament has a convincing case in demanding that the institutional reform process be completed as quickly as possible.

I also appeal to the men and women of our Community: do not release the politicians from their duty to place the unmistakable stamp of democracy on the European Community by further strengthening the European Parliament, for this is essential in all our interests and for the future of a free and peaceful Europe.

In these times of historic change, Europe's message to the world must be one of freedom and humanity.

PRESIDENT

Let us set to work without delay. May God grant that our efforts are crowned with success.

(Sustained applause)

3. Election of Vice-Presidents

PRESIDENT. — The next item is the election of the Vice-Presidents.¹

FORMIGONI (PPE). — *(IT)* Mr President, I wish to withdraw my nomination for Vice-President of the European Parliament. I would thank my friends who put forward this nomination and the colleagues who offered me their support but it is not possible for me to accept this office and I therefore would be grateful if you would note my decision.

PRESIDENT. — I note your decision. As, under Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure, the candidates must give their consent, Mr Formigoni's nomination is hereby withdrawn.

MATTINA (S). — *(IT)* I should like to draw your attention and the attention of the House to the fact that we have not dedicated one moment to commemorating the five Europeans killed in Yugoslavia in pursuit of their peace mission.

Our cynicism is quite incredible when you consider that these people killed on this mission were serving under the European flag. I should like to know when the Assembly intends to deal with this tragic incident.

PRESIDENT. — Mr Mattina, you are quite right and we will be discussing this whole issue with the Council on Thursday morning.

We now come to the election of the Vice-Presidents. The tellers are the same as for the election of the President.

I have received the following nominations:

Mr Anastassopoulos,
Mr Barzanti,
Mr Capucho,
Mr Cravinho,
Mr Estgen,
Mrs Fontaine,
Mrs Isler-Beguín,
Mrs Lehideux,
Mrs Magnani-Noya,
Mr Martin,

Mrs Pery,
Mr Peters,
Mr Romeos,
Sir Jack Stewart-Clark,
Mr Verde i Aldea.

All the candidates have advised me that their nomination took place with their consent.

(The election took place)

We shall now adjourn the sitting to count the votes.

(The sitting was adjourned at 6.50 p.m. and resumed at 8.10 p.m.)

PRESIDENT. — The results of the first ballot for Vice-Presidents were as follows:

Members voting: 460
Blank or void votes: 21
Votes cast: 439
Absolute majority: 220
The following candidates received an absolute majority:
Mrs Pery: 324 votes
Mrs Fontaine: 307 votes
Mr Barzanti: 290 votes
Mr Martin: 279 votes
Mr Peters: 276 votes
Mr Cravinho: 269 votes
Mr Anastassopoulos: 266 votes
Mr Romeos: 246 votes
Mr Capucho: 246 votes
Mr Estgen: 244 votes
Sir Jack Stewart-Clark: 234 votes
Mrs Magnani-Noya: 233 votes
Mr Verde i Aldea: 232 votes

I congratulate these colleagues on their election.

The remaining candidates received the following votes:

Mrs Isler-Beguín: 208 votes
Mrs Lehideux: 37 votes

As there is one post remaining to be filled, a second ballot is required. Unless there are any objections I shall regard the nominations from the first ballot as still valid.²

(The election took place)

The result of the election will be announced tomorrow morning at the beginning of the sitting.

(The sitting was closed at 8.35 p.m.)

¹ *Requests for urgent procedure — Procedure without report — Change to legal base — Deadline for tabling amendments and motions for resolutions: see Minutes.*

² *Election of quaestors (deadline for nominations) — Speaking time — Agenda for next sitting: see Minutes.*